



Talking Points on Vaccines

1. The federal government has recommended first responders be placed in Tier 1A with other essential healthcare providers. However, the distribution plan is implemented at the state level, so we must ensure our state officials keep us in Tier 1A when a vaccine is ready for distribution.
2. To date, the IAFF has had nearly 30,000 members exposed to COVID-19, 11,430 members placed in quarantine, 5,502 members in isolation and 134 members hospitalized, as well as 17 line-of-duty deaths due to COVID-19.
3. It is critical that our nation's first responders be protected through vaccinations to maintain their readiness to respond to COVID-19 emergencies, as we have clearly entered the second wave of the disease amidst flu season.
4. We must be able to maintain a sustainable workforce to handle all routine emergencies and major incidents, including natural disasters and acts of terrorism.
5. Fire departments and EMS agencies provide pre-hospital emergency medical care and transportation to ill and injured patients. Each year, more than 30 million patients enter the healthcare system via ambulance, and COVID-19 patients are no exception.
6. Fire fighters and EMS personnel place themselves in harm's way when caring for COVID-19 patients in uncontrolled environments, such as a patient's home or in an ambulance.
7. Healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, are afforded the opportunity to work in a controlled environment with properly ventilated rooms and other protective measures that are not available to first responders operating in the pre-hospital environment.
8. All patients must be treated as if they have COVID-19, requiring first responders to don the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) on all calls, which is a minimum of an N-95 mask, eye protection, gloves and gown. A vaccine will further protect our responders

from contracting the disease as departments across the country are still facing supply shortages of PPE.

9. A delay in providing COVID-19 vaccinations for first responders could cause staffing shortages in the community as they contract the virus, placing personnel on the incident scene and the residents they serve at risk. Additionally, response times may increase due to a shortage of personnel staffing emergency apparatus, again putting our communities at further risk.
10. First Responders take an oath to protect life, property and the environment throughout their career. Delaying early receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine will clearly impact that oath they promised to keep. Please keep your promise – **don't delay vaccinating your first responders!**