



March 17, 2020

## West Metro Implements Local Disaster Emergency Declaration

*Decision Allows More Flexibility in Response*

**Lakewood, CO** – Effective immediately, West Metro Fire Rescue is implementing a local disaster emergency declaration in light of the current COVID-19 outbreak. The fire district is facing a local disaster based on the imminent threat to life and public health resulting from the pandemic spread of the virus. The declaration allows West Metro to have access to additional resources to aid in the effort to control and contain the virus in the community.

The declaration communicates the seriousness of the situation to the district's municipal, county, state and federal partners; and creates an incident management team to coordinate efforts. It also gives the Fire Chief greater authority to develop, implement or alter policies and procedures. The initial declaration is for seven days. West Metro's Board of Directors will vote tonight on extending the declaration until further notice.

West Metro has already taken several aggressive steps to combat the virus, including implementing protocol to protect the community and firefighters who respond on medical calls. West Metro crews are using full personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, eye protection, respirator half-mask, and coveralls. This PPE protects firefighters and also breaks the chain of infection, slowing the spread in the community.

During this outbreak, everyone can take steps to limit their exposure. The most basic:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick

In order to continually provide the highest level of service, West Metro asks that if you have non-life-threatening flu like symptoms please contact your primary care physician (PCP) prior to calling 911.

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### **About West Metro Fire Rescue:**

West Metro Fire Rescue is an ISO 1, internationally accredited, full-service, all-hazard, fire and rescue agency. We serve nearly 280,000 residents in the cities and towns of Lakewood, Morrison, Golden, Wheat Ridge and Edgewater. The District also serves sections of Jefferson and Douglas County and unincorporated Littleton, Colorado. WMFR is committed to providing professional fire protection, emergency medical services, life safety and community service with a vision that shapes the future. Visit us at [www.westmetrofire.org](http://www.westmetrofire.org).

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