



GENERAL ORDER 22-002

TO: All Personnel
FROM: Derek Parker
DATE: January 18, 2022
SUBJECT: COVID Staffing Reduction Guidelines

COVID-19 cases are on the rise and we need to remain diligent, with not only our response to emergency calls, but in how we staff the department. The health and wellbeing of the membership is our most critical asset. We cannot realistically expect to have all members stay healthy through a spike in COVID and not have it impact the staffing of the Fire Department. With that stated we understand that there will be vacancies which occur due to COVID. Management and the Association have met to discuss the content of this document and are in agreeance with the intent, do not overwork the membership just to staff the stations. With many of the COVID transmissions occurring in the station the membership may benefit from pauses in staffing which may present in the form of a Brown Out.

MFD will identify three tiers of COVID Staffing:

- Tier 1 – Normal Staffing
- Tier 2 – Brown Outs
- Tier 3 – 2-Platoon System

Brown Out

The intent of the Brown Out is to not fill vacancies created by COVID which are not able to be filled by voluntary overtime and/or out-of-class hiring.

One to Two Vacancies (regardless of rank) to Mandatory Hire

- If 1 to 2 vacancies exist MFD will mandatory hire the vacancies



City of Merced Fire Department

Derek Parker, Fire Chief

- Every Monday a report of mandatory hires will look to see if those hired have been placed off on COVID leave
- If 2 or greater mandatory hire personnel are now off on COVID leave MFD will suspend mandatory hiring for 2 weeks
- Fire Chief will be notified in order for notifications to City Management

Three + Vacancies (regardless of rank) to Mandatory Hire

- If 3 or greater vacancies need to be mandatory hired a Brown Out will occur
- Units to Brown Outs will be:
 - E51
 - E52
 - E54
 - E55
- Brown Outs may be broken down to 12 hour increments based on availability of personnel to fill vacancies
- Personnel will be distributed across vacancies to staff remaining units
- Consideration of response augmentation
 - Augmentation of public assist, medical aid, and fire alarms
- Fire Chief will be notified in order for notifications to City Management

Return to Tier 1

- When no Brown Outs have been required for 7 days MFD will return to Normal Staffing.

2-Platoon System

Currently there are multiple South Ops departments who have migrated to a 2-platoon system due to the lack of personnel to staff stations. MFD is making additional contingency plans in the event which a 2 Platoon System is necessary. The minimum time period would be 12 days however any additions would have to be at a factor of 6 due to the 56 hour work-week/FLSA. The shift work would be 3 on, 3 off. The trigger point for initial discussions with the Association and City Management are when two (2)

Proudly Serving Since 1873



City of Merced Fire Department

Derek Parker, Fire Chief

or greater brown-outs occur for 10 or greater days out of a 30 day time period. When implemented all vacation leave will be cancelled and no new vacation requests will be approved.

An example of this schedule is:

Emergency/Disaster Staffing		3 on, 3 off - Leave Cancelled	
D-1 Shift			D-2 Shift
Station 51			
9	E51A	9	E51C
	TR51A		TR51C
	E51B Capt		E51B Eng & FF
	TR51B FF's		
Station 52			
4	E52A	5	E52C
	E52B FF		E52B Capt & Eng
Station 53			
6	E53A	6	E53C
	E53B		TR51B Capt & Eng
			E55B FF
Station 54			
5	E54A	4	E54C
	E54B Capt & FF		E54B Eng
Station 55			
4	E55A	4	E55C
	E55B Capt		E55B Eng
Daily		Daily	
28		28	

- The duty chief's will not convert to Emergency/Disaster staffing
 - Duty chief's will remain on 56-work week and will be covered by administrative staff in the event of COVID illness
- Intent of Emergency/Disaster staffing is that we ensure that adequate staffing on the apparatus occurs
- Personnel may be left behind at the station to ensure that rest and wellness occur

Proudly Serving Since 1873



City of Merced Fire Department

Derek Parker, Fire Chief

- Minimum of 3 persons on apparatus response
- If Emergency/Disaster staffing occurs there is no intent to hire back personnel to the shift
 - The minimum staffing is set at 18
 - This leaves each Emergency/Disaster shift overstaffed by 10
 - If companies begin to staff below 18 brown-outs will occur
- As personnel become ill and are removed from duty the roster may need to be adjusted to maintain staffing
 - Personnel are not to be hired back for overtime
- Timeframes will be a minimum of 12 days however the staffing model can be extended in 6-day blocks

Return to 3-shift schedule

- At the conclusion of 12, 18, 24, or 30 days (depending on staffing) when there is a positive increase in available personnel for 5 days in a row, staffing will return to a 3-shift schedule
- Minimum number of total of 45 available line personnel will have to be met to return to a 3-shift schedule
- No single shift is impacted greater than the other
- 5 days is important as members would be recovering