



April 13, 2020

Governor Laura Kelly  
State of Kansas  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Governor Kelly,

On behalf of Kansas' nearly 14,000 firefighter personnel, we would like to thank you for all you have done so far to combat the current COVID-19 pandemic. Your administration has shown constant leadership. We know you will continue to work hard to fight this terrible situation we face, and will continue to work to keep our communities safe.

The state's career and volunteer firefighters respectfully come before you today to ask that an Executive Order be issued by your office that would allow for our members to receive workers' compensation and reasonable coverage for medical treatment in the event they are diagnosed with COVID-19 or are quarantined because of exposure to the virus while at work.

The need for this Order is great. As you are aware, as of April 8, 2020, over 60 Kansas fire responders have been potentially exposed or quarantined due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, as you know, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortages continue to plague the state. We recognize the need of delivering this equipment first to hospitals and other medical facilities who are treating patients who have been infected with the coronavirus. However, this has left our first responders, who are often in close proximity with the community members they serve, extremely exposed to the virus.

Specifically, in Kansas, nearly 80 percent of our fire responders are volunteers. This change would provide those members assurance that even if they were incapacitated due to exposure while on the job, they would still have a way to provide for themselves and their families. This would help ensure these men and women will continue to assist Kansas communities when called upon.

During this pandemic, other states have passed similar laws or orders to address the issue we are bringing to your attention today. As an example, an emergency state rule will take effect in Missouri the week of April 13, 2020 and will be retroactive to cover first responders who have already been diagnosed with the virus or are under quarantine. It creates a presumption that a first responder's illness was directly related to their duties as an essential worker.

Representatives from our groups would be happy to allow their expertise and experiences from across the country in helping your office draft an Order to address our issue. Again, we appreciate your continued leadership and work in helping our state and nation overcome this pandemic. We hope that you will be able to assist us in addressing this crucial issue to the first responder community.

Respectfully submitted,

**Tim Smith**  
President, Kansas State  
Association of Fire Chiefs

**Kevin Flory**  
President, Kansas State  
Firefighters Association