



CITY OF KIRKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Kirkland became the focal point of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States. The Kirkland Police Department has received inquiries from other agencies asking for any lessons learned that can be shared. Here is a summary of the agency's response:

Exposure:

- On February 28th, the City learned that a resident of Life Care Center of Kirkland, a nursing home specializing in both short term and long-term care as well as inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, was the first COVID - 19 death at Evergreen Hospital. In addition, the first health care worker from Life Care tested positive. Initially, there were 17 firefighters quarantined but through an exhaustive investigation of calls for service associated with Life Care that number increased to 31 firefighters and 4 police officers. On March 8th, the first positive COVID19 test was received for a Kirkland Fire Fighter.
- A local college had 18 nursing students and 4 nursing teachers who were exposed at Life Care.
- Life Care Center staff moved between care facilities, which was later traced to an exposure and positive test in Issaquah.

Communication:

- The City of Kirkland activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). A "code red" text was sent to city employees advising them of the activation. The Police Chief and Fire Chief established unified command and staffed the EOC during all hours of operation. The Chief participated in conference calls with the King County Fire EMS Medical Director & neighboring Fire Departments. These conference calls occurred daily.
- The first workday after the EOC was activated, directors briefed employees at all city facilities.
- The Police Chief sent police employees an update, via email, at the beginning and end of each day.
- Command officers attended each patrol briefing in order to reinforce the Chief's updates and answer any other questions.
- Additional briefings occurred with civilian and corrections personnel to ensure that they had the ability to get their questions answered.
- The Kirkland Fire Department (KFD) EMS Health Officer provided an educational briefing on the COVID19 virus to the Guild Executive Board to include quarantine/isolation and testing procedures.
- Frequent communication went a long way to reassure employees and address their concerns.
- Inaccurate news was monitored in the EOC. The Seattle Times incorrectly reported on March 6th that 10 Kirkland firefighters were going to be housed in a South King County (Kent) COVID19 quarantine site. The PIO section was able to get this story pulled. Kirkland provided its own quarantine facilities and never discussed using the Kent facility.

Quarantine & Isolation:

- Quarantine = COVID - 19 exposure, no symptoms.
- Isolation = COVID - 19 exposure, symptoms
- KC Public Health required 3 officers to quarantine for 14 days based on a review of calls they had responded to that involved a COVID - 19 positive person.
- Employees who were quarantined by KC Public Health were placed on paid administrative leave. Firefighters were also on admin leave.
- A number of Firefighters were out of state or lived in Eastern Washington. This required significant coordination with Logistics to get them safely back to Kirkland for testing and or quarantine.



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- The city outfitted (beds, furniture, pots & pans) a vacant parks department building to allow EMS personnel to quarantine away from their homes if they chose. Meals were provided at this location by the EOC logistics section
- A single Fire station was designated for those who were in isolation and chose to be away from their homes. Meals were provided at this location by the EOC logistics section
- The KFD EMS Health Officer was responsible for monitoring those employees in quarantine and isolation on a daily basis. This initially involved Staff making daily phone calls (twice a day) to gather symptom data. Mid-week, the information was collected using an online “survey 123” type system. This information was then downloaded into Azure Arc GIS and provided a visual dashboard, tracking symptoms and vitals.

Testing procedures:

- Evergreen Hospital was the first COVID19 testing location for first responders. They conducted “drive up” testing and prioritized first responders and health care workers. Testing occurred by appointment only and patients were directed to a parking garage, where they stayed in their car while health care workers conducted testing. KPD coordinated with Evergreen Security personnel.
- Initially there was only one State lab for testing. We were told that this resulted in a backup that rendered the samples from 2 police officers and a number of firefighters untestable. They waited for test results for 5 days before the lab confirmed they could not test these samples. The KFD Health Officer was able to expedite additional testing.
- On March 11th, the State lab corrected their earlier message (that the tests were no longer viable) and provided test results for all of these police officers and firefighters that were “negative”. The lab advised they had prioritized reporting positive tests and had just not reported the negative test results of our staff.

Personnel Protective Equipment:

- Police and corrections personnel were provided N95 masks, glasses, gowns and gloves.
- All had to be fit tested for the N95.
- Additional supplies were made readily available, so that they could be replaced whenever needed.
- Additional PPE was added to existing aid kits in all department vehicles.
- Personnel were ordered to shave to not interfere with the effectiveness of their N95 respirators.

Sanitizing:

- Cleaning efforts were increased at the police department and jail. Janitors began cleaning more frequently and thoroughly.
- Additional hand sanitizer stations were setup in the facility.
- Staff were supplied additional disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer. It was refreshed by the EOC each day.
- Staff were encouraged to wipe down their workstations frequently.
- Electrostatic Sprayers were purchased to decontaminate the prisoner transport area of vehicle’s (only if symptomatic subjects were transported).



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Response to Calls for Service:

1. The police department worked with dispatch to develop additional precautions on non-emergency calls to increase distances when possible. Call takers implemented the following protocols:
 - Strongly Suggested Online Reporting whenever possible
 - a. If a Reporting Party Specifically asked for an officer – one was sent.
 - b. Call takers were encouraged to ask complainants to do an online report if the circumstances allowed for it.
 - For any *non-emergency calls* (i.e.- routine calls for service of a non-violent nature), if the complainant needed an officer to respond to a residence and they were ambulatory, and it was safe to do so, *they were asked to meet the officer outside.*
2. All Staff were encouraged to utilize PPE when encountering anyone with flu like symptoms.
 - We placed surgical masks on any one in custody who we believed might be sick.
 - KC Public Health advised that we were **ONLY to conduct chest compressions** if the need arose to perform CPR.
3. Death Investigations:
 - Patrol officers responding to a death investigation, that was potentially associated with COVID-19, were told to use an abundance of caution – use PPE and contact the EOC. They were told there was no need to rush into a death investigation at a care facility or adult family home.
 - Police personnel were provided the same safety equipment being worn by firefighters at these scenes.
 - Officers were advised that we would be coordinating with the Fire Department, the Medical Examiner, KC Health and the CDC if there should be a death investigation at the Life Care Center.
 - By Wednesday, March 4th, the Medical Examiner stopped responding to unattended deaths involving COVID - 19 patients. It became a “natural death” within just a few days of the outbreak. This included COVID - 19 police & fire calls in which CPR was performed in an attempt to save a life.
4. Officer Safety “alerts” to don PPE, were placed on care facilities that had positive COVID - 19 patients.
 - As of March 11th, 2020 there were 3 locations (not including the Hospital).
5. NORCOM dispatch center screening all non-emergency calls.

Jail Operations:

- Provided PPE for Staff and surgical masks for inmates with symptoms.
- Inmates with symptoms were placed in isolation until they could be checked by the nurse.
- Additional questions at intake to screen for inmates that might be sick.
- Additional cleaning by janitor in Staff areas. Increased the cleaning of cells by inmates to twice a day.
- The Nurse began daily medical screening of all inmates, not just at intake
- Purchased flu vaccines and flu test kits for inmates.
- COVID19 quickly became the newest way to attempt to get out of going to jail, replacing “chest pains”. Jail staff isolated these inmates and monitored symptoms until the Nurse was available to screen them.



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Return to work protocols:

KFD Medical Program Director provided guidance on the return to work. In addition, the City Manager's Office made policy decisions on returning to work, the use of leave banks during the COVID19 State of Emergency and telecommuting for work.

- COVID19 test after a known exposure, negative result & no symptoms = 14-day quarantine & return to work
- COVID19 test after a known exposure, negative result & symptoms = 14-day quarantine. Return to work 72 hours after employee is symptom free or with a note from a doctor.
- Officers who tested negative but still had symptoms after the 14-day quarantine, used sick leave until they were able to return to work.
- Several uninvolved officers tested positive for the flu during this time period.

Statistical data of interest:

- As of March 11, 2020 there were 22 deaths out of 26 in King County attributed to Life Care Center in Kirkland
- As of March 11, 2020 a total of 33 Fire Fighters were quarantined or in isolation and 4 Police Officers.
- There were 22 COVID19 tests conducted on Kirkland first responders with only 1 of which was positive.
- As of March 13, 2020 the City estimated it had spent \$240,000 dollars on this incident to include overtime and logistical purchases.

Questions or comments are welcome,

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