



# ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to excellence in the Fire Service*

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With the release of the International Association of Fire Chiefs position statement this week urging fire chiefs to advocate for mandatory vaccinations of their response personnel, the IFCA has received many calls and emails regarding this position. We have also had in depth discussions among the IFCA leadership. Realizing that fire service organizations are diverse in many ways throughout Illinois, it is not surprising that we have heard a variety of opinions on both sides of the issue. The issuance of an Executive Order by the Governor on Friday, requiring Healthcare Workers, as defined in the Executive Order, to be vaccinated has led to further discussions, calls and emails.

Evidence has demonstrated that vaccinations are safe, effective, and ensure maximum protection to firefighters. Vaccinations also guard the general public against dangerous illness and disease, hospitalization, and death. With the recent full approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of the first such vaccine, the IFCA highly encourages COVID-19 vaccinations among all fire and EMS personnel. It is the IFCA's position that doing so will protect both personnel and the public who rely on them.

The attorney for the IFCA has issued an opinion that the new Executive Order requires all personnel who provide or assist in the provision of medical services (including all EMTs and Paramedics, as well as many firefighters) be vaccinated against COVID-19—or at least to have received the first of a two-shot regimen—by September 5, 2021. Upon receiving their first shot, the order additionally requires covered personnel to receive their second within thirty days.

We have heard from other members who indicate that their attorney does not feel that the Executive Order applies to firefighters, only to the healthcare facilities. However, this might be a complicated situation. While the IFCA's counsel is clear, it has become obvious that other attorneys may have a differing opinion. Because of this, the **IFCA strongly recommends you contact your labor attorney** for direction. This IFCA Board vigorously supports the vaccination of all firefighters against Covid 19 and will continue our discussions aimed at protecting firefighters throughout Illinois.

*Donald Shoevlin*

Chief Donald Shoevlin

IFCA President