



San Juan County FPD #5



Shaw Island, Washington



ORCAS ISLAND FIRE & RESCUE



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIRE & EMS RESPONSE TO NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Your San Juan County Fire & EMS agencies want to keep you informed about their plans to respond to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Below you will find answers to questions you may have about COVID-19 that are specific to our Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Like all of you, EMS is grappling with challenges that are complex and dynamic. Patience, common-sense, rational and realistic approaches and expectations, and a very healthy dose of island spirit will see us through. We're grateful for the chance to serve you, even during this difficult time. We are always available to answer any questions you have, and look forward to talking with you.

When do I call 911?

Please do not call 911 if you are mildly sick and suspect you have a respiratory illness. **911 should be reserved for life-threatening emergencies.** Remember, there is only one full time ambulance per island, and there may be neighbors that also need this vital resource.

If you have symptoms that make you worried about a life threatening emergency please call 911. These symptoms may include:

- Breathing more than 30 times per minute**
- A heart rate more than 120 beats per minute**
- Increasing shortness of breath**
- Confusion or altered mental status**

If you are feeling mildly ill but feel you do not require emergency medical care, please call your doctor's office or the WA State Department of Health's call center from 6am-10pm 7 days a week at 1-800-525-0127.

What about other medical emergencies?

For life threatening emergencies please 911 as you normally would, but there may be a strain on the EMS system because of the viral outbreak and response times may be delayed.

If I do call 911 for a medical emergency, what can I expect to happen?

Know that even if you are infected with the COVID-19 virus, it does not mean you will require a trip to the hospital. Up to 80% of infected patients will have mild symptoms and are able to stay home and rest without further treatment.

When EMS arrives, they may be wearing gowns, masks, and gloves. Remember that they are doing this for the safety of you as the patient, the EMS crew, and the community. They will knock on your door and ask if you or anyone in your house has a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If yes, the EMS crew will ensure they are properly protected, enter the house, introduce themselves, and begin treatment.

The EMTs and Paramedics may decide you do not need to be transported to the hospital. They may ask you to stay at home and self-quarantine. Before they leave you will be given instructions and information on what to do next.

Do we anticipate any disruptions to air ambulance services off island?

Our air ambulance partners are committed to help transport patients from the islands to the most appropriate destination regardless of infectious risk. They will be taking special precautions but otherwise will continue to provide the same level of professional service you have always expected.

Do our Fire & EMS agencies have adequate supplies of masks, gowns, gloves, and other supplies?

All of our EMS agencies have adequate supplies to safely take care of our patients. We have identified pre-staged reserve stocks of equipment at the county and state level, and can access those if needed.

Will our Fire & EMS agencies be performing testing of COVID-19?

Our ambulances will be equipped to test patients on a very limited basis. There will be certain situations when we feel it is safest to test patients inside their homes. Most of the time, however, we will encourage our patients to be tested at their doctors' offices, where they may also be further evaluated.

How will our Fire & EMS agencies manage to provide service given the possible surge of patients due to COVID-19?

Much like a busy day in the summer, we have procedures in place to handle simultaneous calls for service. They will allow us to identify and treat the sickest patients first and most efficiently handle the demands for service. There may be a wait time if your illness is not the most severe call requiring our assistance.

I have more questions about this or your services, who do I call?

You may call or visit our offices at the addresses and phone numbers below:

Lopez Fire & Rescue: (360) 468 - 2991 2228 Fisherman Bay Rd.

Orcas Fire & Rescue: (360) 376 - 2331 45 Lavender Ln.

San Juan Island EMS: (360) 378 - 5152 1079 Spring St.

San Juan Island Fire: (360) 378 - 5334 1011 Mullis St.

Shaw Fire & Rescue: (360) 298 - 0995 44 Squaw Bay Rd.