



# CHARLOTTE FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Since the Covid-19 vaccine became available to the public in the beginning of 2021, the Charlotte Firefighters Association Local 660, as long with the IAFF have stood firm in encouraging all members to get the vaccinated but against mandatory shots. Since the Delta variant has come along and shown that Covid can still be spread by vaccinated individuals, even asymptomatic people, the vaccine must not be considered the end goal. While the vaccine will lessen the effects of covid, it does not stop the spread. We need to have a consistent message from city leadership where their actions back up their words. Asking employees to do something as invasive as a vaccine but not doing the most basic safety measures to stop the spread is not a consistent message. Further, we should mention that our employees are overly exposed and hosting super spreader for the public to join is against CDC recommendations and helps proliferate spread. This goes against our core values of public safety first. In addition to encouraging the vaccine, a holistic approach to prevent the spread of Covid through the department should be implemented. This is a list of suggestions that the Local 660 has put together after talking with other departments across the nation and recommendations from CDC that would be included in an all-inclusive policy:

- Reinforce and hold accountable all members of the department as to the proper PPE that is needed when responding to calls and out in public.
- Cancel in-service training- It has been proven that the highly contagious Delta Variant spreads rapidly through gathering people. A replacement can be to push the training out to the battalions and stations so crews can stay separated.
- Cancel Saturday training- Taking 5-7 companies 45 minutes outside the county to Gaston College During this pandemic is putting firefighters at an extra, unnecessary risk at this time. Like the in-service training, it is extra chance of gathering people together to spread the virus.
- Cancel in-person classes such as officer development. These classes, and some of the firefighter one optional classes should be canceled. Meeting in person still puts the risk of spreading because of gathering firefighters in classroom settings and on breaks. Also, the Incident Management Team just cancelled all training until next year because of the risk of exposure. These should be postponed until next year, or delivery can be done through online learning.
- Cancel public events such as baseball, soccer games and station open houses. These events provide opportunities for virus spread because of the firefighter contact with the general public. While we can control employee behavior, we cannot control the publics. Inviting the public to stations, which are our second homes, should be unacceptable at this time.
- Stations should be closed to visitors- Manager Jones has closed the government building to the public to protect his workers. Chief Johnson should follow his lead. It can be tough to prohibit visitors and families to not visit firefighters, especially on holidays, but we need to control access to our work places. The stations should be closed to all visitors, even City Officials until Manager Jones lifts the ban on the government buildings.

**:: ADDRESS**

2601 East 7th Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

**:: PHONE**

(704) 331-9515

**:: FAX**

(704) 331-0726

**:: WEB SITE**

[www.cffa660.org](http://www.cffa660.org)

- Find money, either through grants or city funds, to immediately purchase individual regulators for operations. We check out our airpacks every day and use one regulator per position on the truck. While we can attempt to clean the regulators, we cannot get to all parts. Charlotte Fire Department used to have personal regulators but have gone away from that as a cost saving measure. This should be done to assist in stopping the spread of Covid, but other illnesses also.
- Encourage all employees to get vaccinated, and if applicable, get a booster shot if needed. This has been proven to lessen the effects of Covid.
- Follow proper hygiene by washing hands often using soap and water. If that is not available use hand sanitizer.
- If you are in a public area (grocery store, etc..) when you are around people more than your immediate family or coworkers, wear a mask and maintain social distance
- If you are sick, please stay home. If you become sick during your shift, notify your supervisor immediately and go home. The beginning of Covid symptoms and mirror “allergies”, so do not make the assumption that is what it is.
- Reach out to local doctors and medical professionals to discuss the long-term natural immunity that people that have had Covid and see if antibody tests can be performed for City Employees to see if they are immune.

We must all do our part to stop the spread of Covid-19 and the variants so we can be ready to take care of the citizens of Charlotte. These suggestions that Local 660 has made can be part of an encompassing approach to stop the spread rather than a one size fits all vaccination demand.

Professionally,

Thomas Brewer, President  
IAFF Local 660