



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2020

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, COMMISSIONER FORD GRADUATE 34 NEW PARAMEDICS AS
PART OF EFFORTS TO FIGHT COVID-19**

*Graduating class accelerated over past month to immediately move emergency personnel on
the streets amid COVID-19*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) Commissioner Richard C. Ford II today held an early graduation ceremony for 34 Fire Paramedics as part of the City's latest efforts to maximize emergency medical resources in the fight against Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Following guidance from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Department last month broke down courses into smaller groups to ensure candidates practiced social distancing while still receiving the necessary training.

“The COVID-19 crisis has changed everything – including this graduation – but it’s also revealed just how important the roles of our paramedics are,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “As this new class graduates today, they’ll be put on the front line of this crisis that is entirely without precedent in our city. Chicago needs our first responders now more than ever; I want to thank each of our new paramedics for stepping up to serve that call.”

Today's class of Fire Paramedics is graduating weeks ahead of schedule as the Department accelerated the training courses at the Robert Quinn Fire Academy, where they completed basic personal protective equipment (PPE) training and passed all critical testing for the Department and emergency medical services within EMS Region XI. While all paramedics are licensed by an accredited institution before joining the Fire Department, each candidate also received advanced training which allows them to intubate, defibrillate and administer medications to patients in an emergency.

“The COVID-19 virus has forced us to maximize and leverage all of our resources, including recruits, in a way that we have never done before,” said Commissioner Ford. “To our newest members – your bravery, professionalism and compassion starts as soon as you walk out that door. You will face long days, long shifts, and countless patients. You will be tested to perform expertly under pressure. This will be the epitome of ‘trial by fire.’ It is now up to you to provide the faith and that hope that Chicago and her people need right now.”

Today's graduating class includes 34 new paramedics, 41% who come from minority backgrounds and nine who are females. The new members will begin their district assignments with CFD Emergency Medical Services starting tomorrow, where they'll be teamed up with a veteran paramedic on their ambulance over the next couple of months.



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Over the coming weeks, members will continue to receive e-learning instruction on non-critical tasks, such as Adult and Pediatric Assessments.

CFD worked closely with CDPH to ensure all firefighters and paramedics responding to emergency calls have been provided with PPE specifically designated to keep them safe during this time. Furthermore, the Department has implemented training protocols for CFD personnel on how to respond to emergency calls where there is a chance that disease transmission is possible. And, as a precaution, these training videos and protocols have been made available across the Department for all members.

For more information and updates on COVID-19, text COVID19 to 78015, email coronavirus@chicago.gov or visit [Chicago.gov/coronavirus](https://chicago.gov/coronavirus).

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