

Distributed on April 1, 2020



## A Message from the Safety Director

### Junior Fire & EMS Cadet Programs – Guidance During the COVID-19 Outbreak

It should not be “business as usual” for Junior Firefighting and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Cadet programs. While fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement are essential municipal services and will continue during the COVID-19 outbreak with appropriate protections for the responders, the Safety Director believes junior firefighter and EMS cadet programs should not be considered as essential services.

Junior firefighter and EMS cadet programs must adhere to New Jersey Child Labor Laws. Two provisions that are especially relevant during the COVID outbreak:

**N.J.S.A. 40A:14-98. Rules, regulations governing Junior Firemen's Auxiliary**

.... no junior fireman shall be required to perform duties which would expose him to the same degree of hazard as a regular member of a volunteer fire company.

**N.J.A.C. 12:58-4.9 Toxic and hazardous substances**

(c) Minors shall not be employed, permitted or suffered to work in occupations which involve the handling of infectious or contagious disease or the removal or disposal of waste generated in the treatment of such diseases.

**For these reasons, the Safety Director strongly recommends that Fire Districts and Municipal Fire and EMS agencies suspend their Junior Firefighter and EMS Cadet Programs for minors under the age of 18 years.** We believe any response for fire or emergency medical care can be reasonably expected to expose a junior firefighter or EMS cadet to a COVID-infected patient, victim, or contaminated equipment. Additionally, as a non-essential organization, meetings and training should also be considered unnecessary gatherings under Governor Murphy’s Declaration and, therefore must be temporarily suspended until the Declaration has been lifted.

Please contact your Safety Director with questions on this Message. Visit the MEL COVID-19 page [www.njmel.org](http://www.njmel.org) for more information. We encourage you to download the app to be alerted when additional guidance is provided by the Safety Director.

***Please share this information with fire and emergency medical services in your municipality.***