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News Release

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Durham County and City of Durham Governments to Modify Emergency Call Responses *Temporary Changes Effective April 7*

DURHAM, N.C. – Emergency responders play a critical role in the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. In order to protect the public and employees during this pandemic, Durham County and City of Durham Governments are making temporary changes to emergency call responses.

Following guidance from the [North Carolina State Office of Emergency Medical Services \(OEMS\)](#), Durham's fire departments will continue to respond to all fire incidents, but will only respond to the most critical medical emergencies starting today. Examples of critical medical emergencies include, but are not limited to, cardiac arrests and motor vehicle accidents.

Durham County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will maintain its response to all medical emergencies as outlined in the OEMS system plan, with fire crews available if additional aid is required. Lebanon, Bahama, and Redwood Volunteer Fire Departments will continue to assist on calls that require lifting assistance. The Durham Fire Department will also continue to provide assistance as requested from its other partner agencies, including the Durham Police Department, Durham County Sheriff's Office, and other fire departments.

According to Durham County EMS Assistant Chief Lee Van Vleet, despite these challenges, Durham's public safety agencies remain dedicated to providing care and support to ensure a healthy and safe community. "These temporary changes are in response to the COVID-19 crisis that has gripped the nation, and will only be for the duration of the pandemic," Durham County EMS Chief Van Vleet said. "We continue to urge our residents to stay home during this time, and only travel for essential needs, such as food and medical appointments. Together, we can slow the spread of this virus and return to normal as soon as possible."

For questions about the updated call responses, contact Durham County EMS Assistant Van Vleet at (919) 475-4704 or Durham Fire Department Deputy Chief Chris Iannuzzi at (919) 605-5161.

To stay abreast of the COVID-19 situation in Durham and to learn more about how to help reduce the potential spread of this virus, residents are encouraged to visit <https://www.dcopublichealth.org> or follow the department's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) pages.

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