

The Missouri Division of Fire Safety (DFS) is excited for the return of certification testing for written exams. As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the agency has implemented increased safety and sanitation protocols to help protect the safety and health of all responders and staff at all locations where testing will be conducted.

The purpose of this document is to communicate those protocols and to convey expectations of all persons involved in the delivery of this testing. Adjustments to any of these plans or protocols will be made as necessary in order to comply with new or updated guidelines issued by the CDC, State of Missouri, host site local jurisdiction or as deemed necessary by the DFS.

IMPORTANT NOTE: While the implementation of the additional safety and health protocols explained in this document will help mitigate the risk of spreading or contracting the COVID-19 virus, the DFS cannot eliminate the risks associated with COVID-19 completely. **All responders and staff retain personal responsibility for their individual health and safety. Any individual who feels unsafe or ill at any time during the delivery of this testing, or any event associated with the delivery of this testing is required to immediately notify a DFS staff member and cease engagement in any or all activities.**

Section 1: Changes to the Delivery of Written Certification Exams to Mitigate COVID-19 Risks:

- All responders and staff are encouraged to wear facial masks during the sign-in and turn-in portion of the exam delivery process. While seated at the desk observing the six-foot distance, testers will not be required to wear facial masks.
- Venues have been chosen for the ability to allow for appropriate spacing and ventilation between testers. Airflow will be increased by opening doors when possible.
- Each tester will be required to provide two sharpened Number 2 pencils for use during the examinations.
- Responders taking Hazardous Materials Awareness or Operations examinations will be required to provide a 2016 EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDE, without notes, for use during the exam. Students not providing an ERG will not be allowed to take the examinations. Students will not be allowed to share guidebooks.
- Responders taking Driver Operator Pumper or Inspector I or II examinations will be required to provide a calculator for use during the exams.
- Responders and staff will not be allowed to congregate in the test site common areas before or after the examinations. Maintain appropriate social distancing at all times during break periods.

Section 2 - Implementation of Best Practices/Safety Protocols:

The COVID-19 virus is thought to be spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs, sneezes or talks. Recent studies have suggested that the virus may be spread by people not showing any symptoms of illness.

The DFS recommends that all students and staff treat all interactions with others as a potential asymptomatic carrier of the virus and follow the CDC guidelines.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring for signs of illness is essential for the safe delivery of this testing.. **Any individual displaying any symptoms of illness must remove themselves from examinations and report their illness to a DFS staff member immediately. Emergency personnel will be contacted in response to individuals displaying emergency warning signs or symptoms.**

Hand Washing/Sanitation

Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If handwashing is unavailable, a hand sanitizer that contains a concentration of alcohol of 60% or greater should be used, rubbing hands until dry.

Responders and staff are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands frequently, especially after touching any exposed hard surface, such as door knobs and light switches.

Social Distancing

During all testing events, the DFS requires social distancing of at least six feet in accordance with state and federal guidance. Additional restrictions may be required by local jurisdiction.

Students and staff will be required to practice self-discipline and awareness at all times to avoid personal contact and maintain the required social distancing.

CDC Guidance:

The DFS adopts the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on how to protect oneself and others from the COVID-19 virus.

This guidance includes:

- Knowing how the virus spreads
- Frequent hand washing/sanitation
- Avoiding touching one's eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed/unsanitized hands
- Avoiding close contact with other people
- Covering one's mouth and nose with a cloth cover when around others
- Covering coughs and sneezes using a tissue or the inside of one's elbow
- The frequent cleaning and disinfecting of regularly touched surfaces

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

In addition, the CDC recommends an awareness of COVID-19 symptoms and the constant self-monitoring signs of illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days following exposure to the virus and may vary from mild to severe.

Symptoms include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

The following are **emergency warning signs** and symptoms of COVID-19 that may suggest the need for urgent medical attention:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to be awakened
- Bluish lips or face