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EMS Agencies Work Through New Coronavirus Concerns

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Photo/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Emergency management services across the United States are preparing their workers who are on the front lines as cases of COVID-19 rise.

Washington County/Johnson City EMS in Tennessee is training EMS workers and 911 operators how to handle the spread.

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“We’re educating staff on what to look for, screening questions to ask patients that may be exhibiting flu-like symptoms,” Chief Dan Wheeley told [WJHL-TV](#). “We’re working with 911 to screen patients also when they call.”

EMS workers there have extra cleaning supplies and masks and gloves in preparation. Wheeley says he may have to contact state and federal authorities to access to their stockpiles.

Cabell County EMS in West Virginia that the concerns and response are similar to the Ebola scare. Gordon Merry, the county’s EMS Director, told [WSAZ-TV](#) that each ambulance is equipped with special masks, gowns and gloves.

Nursing homes and other care facilities will be screening paramedics as they come in to pick up patients, Merry said.

The Center Point Fire District in Birmingham, Alabama, told [WBRC-TV](#) the biggest goal is to not get healthcare workers infected.

“We don’t want to be a route of transmission of the disease throughout the public. That was a problem with the SARS disease in Toronto and we learned a lot from that,” Wes Ward, EMS Battalion Chief for Center Point Fire District.

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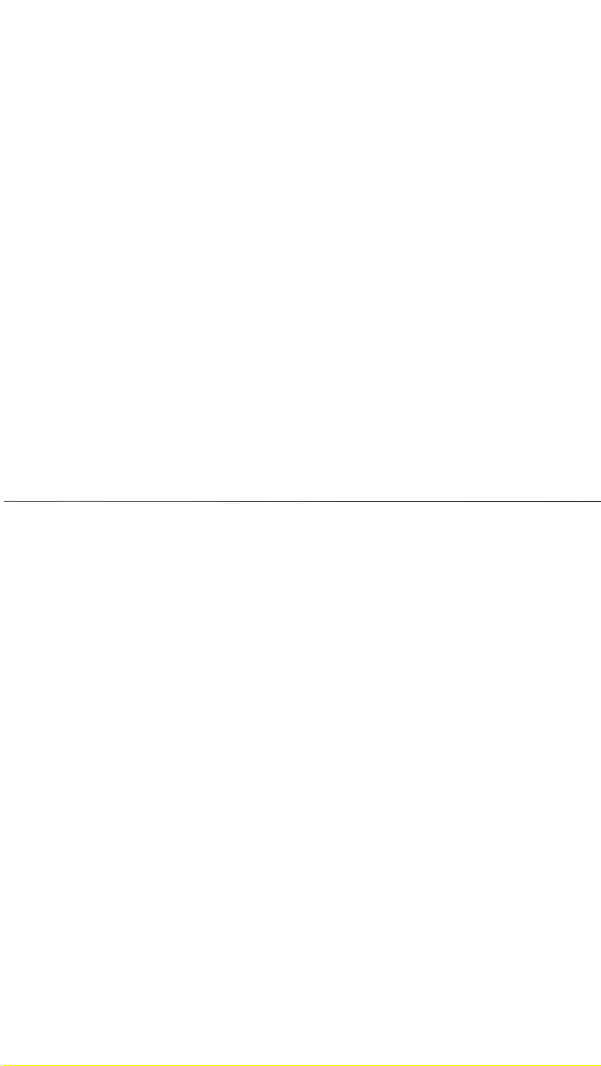
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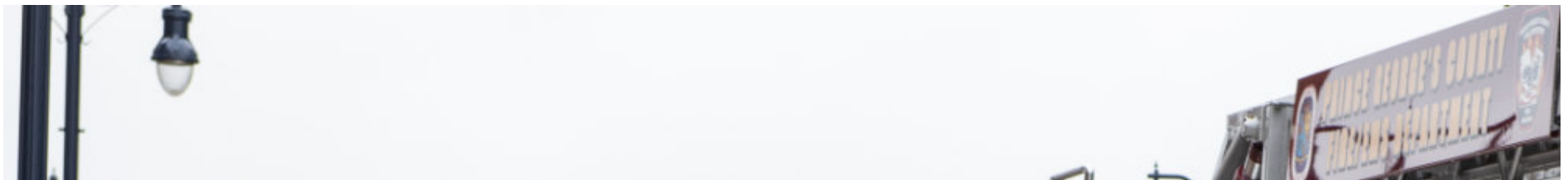
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