



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE
MISSOURI STATE LODGE

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Protects First Responders Exposed to COVID-19

First responders are on the front lines every day with potential exposure to COVID-19. Although we take every precaution available, the risk of a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or other first responder being infected with COVID-19 is significantly greater than that of the population we serve. It is important that our law enforcement professionals be able to focus on their job of protecting the citizens of Missouri during this unprecedented crisis. Officers need to know that if exposed to a potentially fatal disease while serving the community, they will be protected. Because of this concern, we requested the Governor issue an emergency rule or order declaring that first responders who contract COVID-19 shall be eligible for benefits under Missouri Workers' Compensation Law. We are grateful for Governor Parson's response in addressing this concern for us. By directing the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Orders 20-02 and 20-04, to declare COVID-19 as a presumed occupational disease for first responders, the Governor has answered loud and clear that protecting our first responders is of paramount importance.

We are also grateful for the coalition we formed with other law enforcement representatives to safeguard our members on the front line. Without the partnership of the

Missouri Police Chief's Association, Missouri Sheriff's Association, Missouri State Troopers Association, and the Missouri Peace Officers Association this may not have been possible. We are likewise proud to have collaborated with the Missouri State Council of Firefighters on this important issue. On behalf of all members of the first responder community, please know that we remain committed to the safety and well-being of our fellow Missourians.

Missouri State Lodge President Rick Inghima said, "We are thankful for the guidance and leadership of Governor Parson in taking this step. First responder families will rest easier knowing their loved ones are protected when they go about fulfilling their mission of safeguarding the public during these troubling times."

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States with more than 330,000 members nationwide and over 8,000 members in the State of Missouri.

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