

**MEDIA RELEASE/COMMUNITY ALERT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
July 20, 2020  
Contact: Fire Marshal, Robert Marshall  
650-678-1176  
www.smcfire.org**



## **FEMA Awards Over \$745,000 for Personal Protective Equipment for Local Firefighters**

**San Mateo** - FEMA is awarding \$745,240 in grant funding for vital personal protective equipment (PPE) that will help firefighters in 12 agencies across San Mateo County defend against COVID-19 as they serve the public.

The PPE, such as N95 masks, gloves, protective gowns, foot covers, and respirators, will protect nearly 850 firefighters serving in 19 separate cities, towns and communities across San Mateo County. This support will help them respond 24 hours a day to medical calls during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department was awarded the funds to purchase PPE on behalf of the 12 fire agencies in the county. In April, FEMA announced that fire service organizations nationwide would be able to apply for a share of \$100 million in funding to purchase PPE and supplies. The funding is part of the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act through the FEMA Assistance for Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP). As a condition of this grant, the local agencies will contribute \$74,524, for a total \$819,764 toward PPE for local first responders.

As local government agencies and fire departments experienced economic impacts from the pandemic, the San Mateo County Fire Chiefs Association agreed to work collaboratively on this regional grant proposal. Since 1999, fire departments in San Mateo County have participated in an Advanced Life Support Joint Powers Agreement (ALS-JPA), staffing each of the 70+ emergency response apparatus in the county with a nationally-accredited Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic. With support from San Mateo County Manager Mike Callagy, and Congresswomen Jackie Speier and Anna Eshoo, the grant proposal was submitted on May 15, when San Mateo County had only 1,575 positive cases of COVID-19 and 66 COVID-19-related deaths. Today, the number of positive cases of COVID-19 has nearly tripled and stands at 4,403, resulting in 114 deaths.

In late March, county fire departments depleted their PPE supplies with no expected re-supply due to systemic nationwide PPE shortage. The current countywide operational protocols and procedures were drastically updated to address the COVID-19 threat. These updates have included the need to procure and use various PPE countermeasures to prevent responders from contracting and exposing the public to the virus. "This grant will provide San Mateo County fire agencies with necessary PPE to continue the war against the Covid-19 pandemic," said San Mateo Consolidated Fire Chief, Ray Iverson. Every dollar spent to defend our first responders against the virus is a dollar we can use to keep our firefighters safe so they can continue protecting San Mateo communities.

###