

A recent event brought to light a very difficult thought:

On January 2nd, at a Monday evening football game between the Buffalo Bills and the Cincinnati Bengals, Safety, Damar Hamlin was at work and just after a tackle he collapsed on the field. Emergency responders worked diligently on the field and in route to the nearby medical center where Damar was placed in the hands of medical professionals for definitive treatment.



With all that took place surrounding the rescue, I am not certain that everyone captured the reaction of his teammates, other players, staff on the field, and the crowd of spectators. These incredibly strong, talented, and powerful people broke down in tears. The overwhelming shock of this tragic event affected them deeply, so much so that they had to Cancel the remainder of the Game. Media outlets and News anchors spoke about this event for several weeks after the event. Thankfully Damar is making a great recovery and I would imagine he will be back to work before we know it. (Our prayers are with Damar and his Family during his recovery)

The difficult thought I had (you may ask?) is as follows: Your emergency responders not only here at the IFPD but throughout this great nation respond to these "tragic" events every single day. Responding to millions of emergency incidents annually and transporting medical aid patients to medical facilities and to air flight units for transport daily. These events affect your responders every day, not just once in a lifetime.

Our First Responders build relationships; and they also build close Friendships with those we serve over decades of service throughout these communities. Our responders do have resources available should the cumulative effect of these "tragic events" begin to overwhelm them. What our responders cannot do is Cancel the remainder of the incidents that follow, they cannot "Cancel the game" Your responders run horrific incidents, these incredible men and woman comfort families and friends after working to intervene for their loved ones every day. Your responders see horrific tragedy at Fires, Traumatic Traffic Collisions, Domestic Violence Incidents and so very much more. Day after Day, Month after Month and Year after Year your responders climb onto Fire Engines, Ambulances, Helicopters, Tankers, Rescue Equipment, Hazardous Materials Units, Patrol Cars, and Emergency Rooms in their dedicated and continued efforts to serve and put the lives of others before themselves. It is no wonder, and so very unfortunate that we have recently seen a huge uptick in the overall percentage of Suicide Deaths in the Fire Service, which are up by approximately 19%. In fact, for the first time in History the amount of Suicide Deaths among Fire Service Personnel is now greater than line of duty deaths. This is a horrifying reality.

Please join me in not only "Thanking" All of our Responders in Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS, Flight Services and Medical Care Services, but also in truly supporting them throughout their many decades of dedicated and selfless service.

A closer look locally, your IFPD responders average 9.25 hours on incidents daily, averaging 3.12 incidents each day of every year. Your responders average 3.5 hours of training everyday (to ensure that they meet the rigorous minimum 360 hours of annual ongoing training) Your responders also have several additional and special duties above and beyond EMS Medical Aids and Fire Suppression Incidents. These additional duties include but are not limited to items like: Training Officer, Fire Prevention Specialist, Grants, Vehicle repair and maintenance, Reserve Coordinator, Deputy Fire Marshal and much more. In addition to these responsibilities your responders also spend up to and in some cases over 2400 hours annually providing mutual aid in our ongoing effort to ensure that we provide for the emergency needs not just this community, but also that we are relied upon to reciprocate with these critical services for those throughout other communities during their times of need.

Thank you to all our First Responders!


Mark LaMont

Fire Chief, Idyllwild Fire Protection District.