



Keeping you safe - City of Manassas Fire & Rescue



Even in the midst of added challenges resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, every day the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue System is at work early, preparing for what is often a grueling 24-hour shift. It's an indication that the department's 66 paid staff—with assistance from the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company (MVFC) and Greater Manassas Volunteer Rescue Squad (GMVRS)—view their life-saving work as a calling.

"While our shift officially starts at 7 a.m., most employees get there at least an hour early," explains Firefighter/Medic Lindsey Blasius. "This helps get them ready for the 24-hour shift, as well as provides relief for a 'late call' for the off-going shift if something comes in between 6 and 7 a.m."

Before the shift briefing, firefighter/medics load up their gear in an assigned vehicle so they are ready for a call at any moment. If there are no immediate calls, the crew completes mechanical, equipment, and drug box checks on every apparatus (fire trucks and ambulances) and gets up to speed on important updates from officers. It takes three shifts working 24 hours on/48 hours off, as well as several operational and administrative staff who work during the day to keep the

department on track. GMVRS members staff a basic unit several nights a week, and the MVFC supplements Engine staffing a few nights a week as well.

Do not expect to see these firefighter/medics waiting around the Centreville Road or Center Street stations for an alarm to go off at any time of the day or night.

Without a cleaning service, every staff member has

house duties (or chores) that include cleaning bathrooms and common areas like the kitchen, washing bay floors, scrubbing showers, or tidying the exterior. The crew trains every day, practicing everything from intubations on mannequins to pulling and stretching hose lines at apartment buildings. Every day they wash the apparatus and do PT (exercise) in the gym area where weights and cardio equipment keep them in shape. With an average of 15 emergency calls a day, the crew often has meals, training, or chores interrupted.

The pandemic hasn't changed the department's daily schedule but has added new routines.

"Our responses on emergency medical incidents consume more time, as we have to perform decontamination after the majority of our calls. Our policies and procedures change weekly pertaining to COVID-19, as do our EMS protocols. Our air shop that supplies all of our respirators has been extremely busy ensuring everyone has the proper breathing apparatus for the pandemic as well," says Blasius.

Social distancing rules have also meant that the crews have to eat meals in shifts, create an additional bunkroom,

increase cleaning and disinfecting at the station and on the apparatus, reduce the number of staff at in-person meetings, and prohibit visitors. Department members, like everyone in this pandemic, worry about the safety of their loved ones at home, so they have their temperatures taken at the start and halfway through every shift, and watch carefully for any signs of illness.

The 100 educational presentations that the Department makes every year are also on hold. If you have ever watched the eyes of kindergartners light up as they sit inside a real fire truck with lights flashing, you know how beloved these presentations are to both the firefighters and to the community.

Even if you won't see City firefighters/medics showing off their rigs anytime soon, they say there are simple things we can all do to support their work: ensure you have a working smoke detector in your house; practice calling 911 with your children; be sure all windows and doors are free of storage and furniture because fire crews need to get in and out; have a "fire plan" for your family; keep non-ambulatory people on the first floor of your house, if at all possible; and remember that medic units are there to respond to emergencies and not for routine rides to the hospital.

You can keep up with the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CityofManassasFRD and at www.manassascity.org/fire.

A Message from the City Manager



City Manager
W. Patrick Pate

We are not heading into a typical summer just as the last three months have been anything but normal. The old axiom, “You never appreciate what you have until it’s gone,” is particularly relevant during this time as we are still searching for our new normal. Likewise, I am pleased to see so many folks taking up the mantle of supporting the “greater good” - of doing things that are to the benefit of the public, to more people than just oneself in order to flatten the curve and prevent a more virulent outbreak. Ultimately COVID-19 is about people and how we respond to each other in the midst of this adversity.

Like I suspect many of you do, I miss being at my religious services in person, dining in at one of the many wonderful restaurants in town, cancellation of summer plans, not being able to attend events that are the heartbeat of our community, or just being able to drop in for a haircut. The common element to this feeling of loss is interaction with others - talking, socializing, visiting. On the other hand, I also see the many ways that we are adapting to these circumstances with online services, meetings and social gatherings. Most people can be seen respecting the greater good and protecting each other by following physical distancing guidelines and wearing face coverings while in public. Businesses are also working hard to protect customers and staff by following state and health district directions despite some of the

individual hardships that may be a part of these restrictions.

During this time, we have continued to work with the agencies that are monitoring the specific factors leading to reopening. These factors include downward trends in the percentage of positive tests and hospitalization over a fourteen-day period. They include monitoring the available supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), hospital beds and intensive care capacity. The state also continues efforts to provide increased testing and contact tracing capabilities for those who test positive. All of these efforts are based on supporting the public health needs to lessen the impacts of the pandemic.

As we move into the various phases of reopening Virginia and the City of Manassas, the City continues to implement practices and policies to ensure as safe a reopening as possible for our community. We are still being encouraged to remind you that it is still “*SAFER AT HOME*” than to be out in public. While some businesses are reopening with changes in practices and safety restrictions, you are still being encouraged to telework if possible, continue to practice social distancing and to wear a face covering in public.

As a part of the phased reopening requirements, a variety of changes to typical City services have been implemented. Public Safety continues to operate on a normal basis with the exception of the suspension of non-essential community services. City

buildings will remain closed to the public at least while we are in phase one, but we are providing services, collecting payments and processing permits by phone or electronically each day. Regular trash and recycling pickups are ongoing. While outdoor parks remain open with physical distancing recommendations, indoor facilities such as the Manassas Museum, festivals and outdoor events like those held at the Harris Pavilion have been cancelled for the summer. The Farmer’s Market continues to be available based on the state guidelines for this activity.

Additional information on changes to City services can be found on the City website at www.manassascity.org/ Phase1. You can also use the website to find useful information on services that can help individuals and businesses impacted by the pandemic.

I encourage you to continue supporting your local businesses and restaurants in the coming months. They are our neighbors and need our support. Also fill out your census form. We are trending higher than the overall state numbers in online census completion, but we are still trailing the response rate in other Northern Virginia communities.

Thank you for doing your part to protect yourself, your neighbors and our local businesses during this pandemic. Please stay vigilant in the fight against this virus and stay hopeful, helpful and healthy!

A promotional graphic for the 2020 Census in Manassas. It features a photograph of a young child in a white shirt, smiling and looking to the right. The text "2020 CENSUS IN MANASSAS" is overlaid on the image in a white box. Below the image, the slogan "EVERYONE COUNTS" is written in large, bold, red and black letters. Underneath that, it says "Count everyone who lives in your house: children, parents, friends, roommates and renters". At the bottom, a green banner contains the text "Your information is protected & confidential" and "Learn more at my2020Census.gov".

2020 CENSUS
IN MANASSAS

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Phase 1 - What Does it Mean

In March, the City and much of our world came to a screeching halt because of a microscopic organism infecting people world wide. The coronavirus or COVID-19 has affected all of us. City buildings closed, restaurants and businesses closed and some will never reopen. Our lives have changed and a new normal is beginning.

As of this writing, we are looking towards reopening, or at least Phase 1 of reopening. What Governor Ralph Northam calls Forward Virginia; locally, we are calling it Mobilizing Manassas. So, what does this mean for the City of Manassas? We thought we would spell that out for you for as much as we know at this time. This is also an evolving situation that may change as we go.

The Commonwealth of Virginia's guidance says that Phase 1 looks like this:

- Some businesses re-open with strict safety restrictions
- Continued social distancing
- Continued teleworking
- Face coverings recommended in public

Remember, it is still SAFER AT HOME

The good news is that during Phase 1 City parks remain open (bathrooms remain closed) as long as you follow CDC guidelines for social distancing and wear masks if others, not in your family group, come within 6 feet. Also, the new banner art is up in the Historic Downtown which makes a great walking tour for getting outside and enjoying some fresh air.

Other things to note about parks follow:

- Stonewall Park Pool is closed for the season
- Summer leagues/field permits are cancelled for spring and summer
- Private pavilion rentals are prohibited until the Governor lifts the prohibition on gatherings; small groups of 10 or less are permitted

The Manassas Museum galleries will remain closed for now, but Echoes, the Manassas Museum store is open online at <https://manassasechoes.com>

with free delivery to City residents. You can find virtual programs and tours on [youtube.com/ManassasCityVA](https://www.youtube.com/ManassasCityVA). Museum outdoor programs and history tours will resume with reduced capacity, face coverings are recommended and social distancing rules in place.

Every spring and summer people anxiously await the City's free concerts and activities at the Harris Pavilion and throughout our downtown. This year, during Phase 1 and out of an abundance of caution for our residents and visitors, all live performances are canceled through August until the Governor lifts the prohibition on large gatherings. This includes the cancellation of Celebrate America on July 4th.

However, some performances will be live-streamed; a schedule is being developed to be distributed on social media and through this newsletter. The Harris Pavilion tables and chairs are available for outdoor dining as long as people keep their social distance. Private rentals of the Harris Pavilion are prohibited until the Governor lifts the prohibitions on large gatherings.

During Phase 1 of reopening the City's 15-Minute Parking spaces in Historic Downtown will continue to allow for easy takeout and delivery options from restaurants.

Business with the City

During Phase 1, City buildings will remain closed to the public except during official City meetings. Face coverings are encouraged for all participants at those meetings. The following is some helpful information for interacting with the City of Manassas during Phase 1:

Paying your Utilities and connections/disconnections

- Online: www.manassascity.org/paymybill
- Phone: (844) 278-9120
- Direct Debit: contact customer service 703-257-8245
- Dropbox for checks or money orders at 8500 Public Works Drive

Paying to the Treasurer's Office

- Dropbox: outside the Treasurer's office 9027 Center Street
- Pay Online - www.manassascity.org/paymybill.
- Unsure of the amount? Call 703-257-8242.

Permits and Plan Review

- Online permit system - www.manassascity.org/permitselfservice allows you to check the status of building permits and plan reviews, pay permit fees, schedule building/trade inspections, and verify the status of inspections.
- Email - permitstatus@manassasva.gov or call 703-257-8278 if you have any questions.
- Appointments available for customer consultations
- Large plan drop-off box located side door outside of City Hall

Building and Fire Marshal Inspections

- Annual hazardous use permit inspections suspended
- Interior building and fire inspections suspended or virtual only except for health and safety cases
- Exterior inspections virtual or by appointment with social distancing
- 3rd party inspections accepted www.manassascity.org/3rdparty

Code Enforcement

- Corrective work orders and violation notices for community appearance issues continue to be mailed (i.e. tall grass, parking on the grass, inoperable vehicles)
- Interior inspections have been suspended except for health and safety cases
- Commercial code inspections suspended (i.e. temporary signage) except for health and safety cases (i.e. junkyards) and signage placed in the medians and along the streets. This signage will continue to be removed.

Police Department

Please remember to call 703-257-8000 before coming into the station if you have a non-emergency situation to talk about.

#Stronger Together

As we look towards slowly reopening amid the COVID-19 pandemic our first priority continues to be keeping residents safe. We recommend everyone practice social distancing and follow the safety precautions recommended by the CDC.

That said, we know that as a community we are stronger together and Manassas businesses eagerly anticipate welcoming you back. By now, you may have started to see signs of life, literally, as storefronts and offices begin the process of reopening to the public. They are finding creative ways to not only ensure the safety of their workers but the visiting public. All are increasing sanitation efforts, practicing social distancing and some may require customers and their staff to wear masks. These efforts are meant to keep us all safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

If you are immune compromised, or not quite comfortable being in public spaces, we encourage you to continue shopping online from our many small retailers and order curbside pick-up or delivery. Our small businesses need us now more than ever. We are Manassas #StrongerTogether.



Trash and Recycling Resuming in June

The City of Manassas will be resuming the following services beginning in June. Please note that there will be some restrictions in place to ensure the safety of crews and residents.

- Scheduled bulk waste, television and computer monitor collections
- Courtesy Truck bookings.
- Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics drop-off days resume on June 6, July 11, Aug. 1, Sept. 5, Oct. 3 and Nov. 7. Residents are asked to wear masks or face coverings at the site and remain in their cars while the crews remove drop-off materials.

Call (703) 257-8252 to schedule bulk waste collections at least 24-hours before your collection day. Make sure that all items are set out the night before collection and are clearly visible at the curb.

Call (703) 257-8256 to book the Courtesy Truck. Be advised that all payments must be made before the booking can be confirmed. The Treasure's Office accepts online and dropbox payments. (see page 3)

We would like to thank all of our residents for their patience during the past months and wish everyone a happy and safe summer.

The Piano

Generations of Manassas youth learned to play piano under the stern but loving direction of Virginia Speiden Carper. Now the Steinway piano that she played for most of her 96 years will find new life during performances on the Osbourn High School stage thanks to a donation by her estate.

Mrs. Carper was a long-time Manassas Baptist Church organist, and estimated that she taught 1,000 students to play the piano, retiring only when she turned 90 years old. She was the first Woman's Club of Manassas sponsored music teacher in Prince William County, was the founder of the Manassas Community Concert Association, and helped to establish the Manassas Museum. She presented an annual award to a deserving firefighter from the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company in memory of her father Albert Speiden, who served as the first president of the company and was the famed architect who counted the Old Town Hall and Candy Factory among his many designs. Mrs. Carper died in 2005.



Photo by John Hartt. Thank you to Apollo Piano Moving for the assist.

City of Manassas and Manassas Public Schools

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 www.youtube.com/user/manassascityva

To contact the City of Manassas Connection newsletter, email prrince@manassasva.gov