



Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fire Department Utilizes Hypochlorous Acid to Protect First Responders from COVID-19

Troup County, Ga. May 13, 2020 – The Troup County Fire Department has begun utilizing a disinfectant solution known as Hypochlorous Acid (HOCL) to protect first responders from Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The department began using the solution last month, which is a mixture of salt, water, vinegar and electro-chemical activation, in order to protect firefighters during and after medical calls that involve person-to-person contact with the community.

Hypochlorous Acid (HOCL) is a powerful oxidant that is effective against attacking bacteria, fungi, and viruses. It is known to kill germs in as little as 60 seconds and is completely harmless to humans, which allows the department to use it on various types of equipment and surfaces. Under the leadership of Troup County Fire Chief John Ekaitis, the department acquired knowledge of the benefits of HOCL and began looking into the possibility of developing and/or obtaining the solution through a vendor; however, due to the components needed for the electrolysis system, the department was not able to produce HOCL locally. Once the department located an appropriate vendor for the purchase of the solution, crews developed an easy-to-use disinfect spray system using a breathing apparatus and other materials, which were provided locally with the assistance of Harbor Freight.

Since the solution is 100% safe and non-toxic, crews are able to use it to disinfect turnout gear, fire engines, and commonly-touched surfaces at each fire station, including the new Troup County Fire Administration Building, which houses the Troup County Emergency Operations Center that has been utilized frequently during COVID-19. In order to make the solution easily accessible to firefighters, a spray system has been placed in all fire engines to use in order to sanitize equipment after each medical call. The department is currently using the disinfectant to sanitize equipment daily, as well as to disinfect surfaces within other Troup County facilities.

According to Battalion Chief Roy Cadenhead and Lieutenant Scott Hester, the system has been a great asset to the fire department during the current pandemic, “It has allowed us to keep our first responders safe while limiting our exposure to COVID-19. Through this discovery, we are able to offer extensive decontamination to those who may have come into contact with the virus,” said Cadenhead. Battalion Chief Cadenhead and Lieutenant Hester have worked to study the benefits, assemble the disinfect systems, spray equipment and surfaces, and educate other members of the department on the solution. “The disinfectant system is a great tool for us to have as first responders because it’s safe to use, but it also kills the virus if we are exposed to it,” said Hester.

The agency plans to continue to utilize the disinfectant spray systems indefinitely as a way to protect members of the fire department while regularly interacting with those in need of medical attention.

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