

English version

Fire departments - operational readiness is the top priority

Despite the current restrictions on the containment of the corona virus, the Austrian fire brigades are performing their sovereign duties and are available around the clock to fight fires and save lives. "Traffic accidents, fires and many other urgent operations continue to be recorded every day. Maintaining the readiness for action and the appropriate use of our comrades is essential in order to be able to help in the usual quality over the coming weeks. However, like everyone else, we will of course make our contribution to overcoming this crisis," said Albert Kern, president of the Austrian Firebrigade Association.

Measures were taken at all levels of the fire brigade to maintain operational readiness. In addition to the cancellation of meetings and other events, the training and practice operations within the individual fire brigades were also shut down and maintenance and repair work reduced to the absolute minimum. All of these measures were set with the aim of avoiding the failure of an entire fire brigade for as long as possible.

"It must be prevented that firefighters are hastily used for other tasks that undermine the measures taken. Establishing various auxiliary activities by the firefighters or the use of fire stations as information centers or issuing points for the population would damage the entire system and endanger the operational readiness. Our power and infrastructure must now be protected so that we can help when our expertise and intervention is really needed. We will continue to bring our know-how to the staff on different levels. We cannot estimate how long this state of emergency will last. So we have to be more careful with our resources." The fire brigade commanders agreed on this access in a consultation last Thursday.

Due to the current situation and the constantly increasing number of infections, the fire brigades are also reminded once again that emergency personnel must be limited to what is absolutely necessary. The generally recommended hygiene measures and in particular the operational hygiene measures must be strictly fulfilled.

Firefighting schools ceased operations on March 16, 2020

The firefighting schools have also completely shut down operations to avoid breakdowns within the operational organization as much as possible. "We have to protect every single member these days. In the worst case, if only one firefighter becomes infected or comes into contact with an infected person, we will have to remove entire fire brigades from the system, which would be fatal," President Kern calls for understanding that the fire brigades will only work in the coming weeks to take action when it is really necessary.