



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR EMANUEL NAMES RICHARD FORD NEW FIRE COMMISSIONER**

*New commissioner is a 35 year CFD veteran who previously served as First Deputy Fire Commissioner*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that he has appointed Richard C. Ford II as the new Chicago Fire Department (CFD) Commissioner. Ford, who was most recently CFD's First Deputy Commissioner, will replace retired Commissioner Jose A. Santiago.

"Firefighting is a fraternity, a fellowship, and most of all, a calling," said Mayor Emanuel. "Richard Ford has the values, the fortitude and the experience to lead the Fire Department and continue to provide exceptional emergency services to residents."

Ford has been with CFD for 35 years and has served as the First Deputy Commissioner since February 2016 overseeing their day-to-day operations. He previously served as Deputy Fire Commissioner of Fire Prevention, a role in which he was responsible for CFD's enforcement of fire and building code compliance. He has also previously served as the Assistant Director of Training, Chicago Transit Authority Liaison and served as the Battalion Chief for Engine 42 Firehouse.

"I am humbly honored to take on this new leadership role at the Fire Department and strengthen our efforts to provide the best emergency fire and medical services to the residents of Chicago," said Acting Commissioner Ford. "The responsibility to the residents of this great city, to keep them safe and care for them in their time of need, is not one that I take lightly."

Ford received his Bachelor of Applied Science from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, in 2008. Born and raised in the Chatham neighborhood, Ford is a life-long Chicagoan. Ford began serving as Acting Commissioner on September 1, 2018. His appointment is subject to City Council approval.

Over the last seven years under Mayor Emanuel, the Department has expanded emergency medical services, including hiring 125 paramedics. Santiago also upgraded 15 Basic Life Support ambulances to Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances, making all CFD

ambulances ALS vehicles, and bringing the total department emergency medical fleet to 158 fully staffed vehicles provide paramedic care. In August, five new ALS ambulances were added to the CFD EMS fleet, increasing the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) fleet to a total of 80 ALS ambulances. The new ambulances are being deployed in West Pullman, North Lawndale, West Lawn, Beverly and East Garfield Park.

In 2017, CFD partnered with the Chicago Police Department, the Office Emergency Management and Communications and EMS System Hospitals on a new scenario-based crisis response training course to enhance the city's mental health response. The course brings together EMS providers, 911 call takers and dispatchers, and CPD officers with mental health providers to engage in a live simulation crisis intervention training to continue to improve collaboration in the recognition and treatment of a person experiencing a mental health emergency. The interdisciplinary, interagency class helps first response partners not only identify the underlying signs and symptoms of an acute mental health crisis, but also to develop protocols for screening, evaluation and transport.

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