



INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

July 15, 2009

TO: All Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Personnel **Memo #09-25**

FROM: Eugene A. Jones
Fire Chief

RE: Reduced Apparatus Response Directive

Every emergency response places personnel and citizens at risk, while at the same time sending lifesaving equipment and trained personnel to save lives and property. Over 20% of firefighter fatalities occur during an emergency response. This statistic does not reflect the number of injuries, civilians killed or injured, or the property damage that occurs during an emergency response. Sending the right amount of apparatus to emergency incidents should be our goal, without jeopardizing public safety. In order to improve efficiency, it is important to closely evaluate all aspects of how business is done. A careful evaluation of our dispatch policies will assist us in developing better strategies to assess our operational responses.

In order to evaluate the Department's performance regarding emergency responses, we will be undergoing a study which will, for a limited time, reduce the amount of responding apparatus to emergency incidents. Effective July 27, 2009, the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department will begin an evaluation, in which emergency responses will be reduced to two engines and two special services.

Incident Commanders (IC) will be required to provide feedback on every emergency call to which fewer apparatus responds. The feedback will include:

- Was the call a working incident?
- Did the two engines and two Special Services sufficiently cover the needs of the call? If not, why?
- Was it necessary for the proceeding units to respond? If so, why?
- Was any apparatus involved in an accident during this incident?
- Were there any injuries to firefighters or civilians on this incident? If so, explain.

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All personnel should thoroughly prepare for this change and it should be the focus at station and company drills between now and July 27, 2009. Questions should be directed through the chain-of-command.

The attached Data Sheet should be used on each incident and forwarded directly to the Emergency Operations Command office. The Duty Chief is responsible to ensure that the data is collected on every box alarm. It is anticipated that the evaluation will go for a minimum of 90 days. However, through the information gleaned, it may be determined that the evaluation process may need to be extended or shortened. It will be absolutely necessary to ensure accurate information in order to make the evaluation a success.

Thank you in advance for your support in this endeavor.

EAJ/VS/mjw/slt
2009.07.15 AFEMSP Memo #09-25 – Reduced Apparatus Response Directive.doc

Attachment



FIRE/EMS DIRECTIVE

Pilot Program on Reduced Responses on Structure Fires

July 2009

POLICY

Emergency responses inherently increase the possibility of motor vehicle collisions, resulting in injuries and fatalities to both emergency responders and civilians.

Since 1984, vehicle collisions have accounted for 20-25 % of fire fighter fatalities annually. This statistic does not reflect the number of injuries, civilian fatalities/injuries, or the property damage that can occur during an emergency response.

In order to conduct an evaluation on the Department's performance regarding emergency responses, we will be undergoing a study which will, for a limited time, reduce the amount of responding apparatus to selected structural fires. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify practices likely to improve the safety of personnel when responding to and returning from an emergency incident.

DEFINITIONS

PSC – Public Safety Communications.

Full Box Alarm – 4 Engine Companies, 3 Special Services, 1 Chief Officer.

High Life Hazard Occupancy – Occupancies that have heavy fuel loads and/or potential for large loss of life/injuries.

Working Fire Dispatch – Safety Officer, EMS Supervisor, BLS Ambulance and ALS Ambulance.

Reduced Response Box – 2 engines, 2 special services, 1 Chief Officer

PROCEDURES

General Guidelines

Effective July 27, 2009, the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department will begin an evaluation in which emergency responses will be reduced to **two engines and two special services** for structural fire incidents.

The following apparatus will be dispatched to all structural fire incidents:

- The closest engine
- The closest Truck
- The next closest Engine
- The next closest Special Service. (Truck or Squad)
- Battalion Chief

In non-hydrant areas, the following apparatus will be included:

- One Water Supply Company
- Three Tankers

Any reported structure fire known to be "high life hazard" occupancies shall have a full box alarm response. These include, but are not limited to:

- Churches
- Hospitals
- Highrise
- Lodging (Hotel or Motel)
- Dormitories
- Nursing Homes



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

- Schools
- Subway Incidents
- Any fire with a Report of a Person(s) trapped.
- Any call which, in the judgment of the PSC Supervisor, requires a full box alarm.

It is important for all responding personnel to understand that PSC may not be aware that a particular address is considered a “high life hazard.” Therefore, it is the responsibility of the responding personnel to inform the ranking officer that the occupancy is one of the above listed so that a determination can be made to request a full box alarm.

Responsibilities

All responding units will continue to operate as outlined in General Order 6-1, Fireground Standard Operating Procedure for Structural Fires.

Each Incident Commander (IC) must be cognizant of the responding units and staffing levels. It is up to each IC to request to fill the balance of the box (two additional engines and one additional special service) when needed.

Units will be dispatched in the following manner:

Three tones followed by:

“725 Elm Street, a reported house fire. Reduced response box 09-01.”

“Engine 891, 892, Truck 893, Squad 894, and Battalion Chief 890 respond.”

(IC determines the need for the balance of the assignment.)

“Battalion Chief 890 to Communications, fill the box.”

Two tones followed by:

“To fill the box, Engine 895, 896, and Truck 897 respond on the call to 725 Elm Street.”

It should be noted that the IC will need to request the Working Fire Dispatch in addition to the balance of the Box Alarm.

Reporting

Each box alarm will generate a “Reduced Response Worksheet” that will provide information required to make future decisions regarding this procedure.

The Duty Chief and the Volunteer Majors are responsible to ensure that a “Reduced Response Worksheet” is completed on every box alarm for their shift.

All IC’s are to complete the “Reduced Response Worksheet” and cooperate with the Major/Duty Chief to provide the information.

Each worksheet shall be completed and forwarded to the Emergency Operations Command.

REFERENCES

NFPA 101: LIFE SAFETY CODE®, 2009

The U. S. Fire Administration, Historical Overview, www.usfa.dhs.gov

FORMS

Reduced Response Worksheet

Reduced Response Worksheet

Incident # _____
Date _____ Address _____
Name of the Incident Commander _____ ID # _____
Chief Designation (Ex. Chief 801A) _____
Battalion _____
Time of Day: _____ 1500-0700 _____ 1500-2300 _____ 2300-0700

Was this incident a working fire?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Was an entire Box Alarm requested on this call?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
If yes, why (Answer all that apply)	<p>The entire box was dispatched by PSC <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>The first four units were understaffed <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>Some of the units were understaffed <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>If yes, how many? _____</p> <p>It was decided to request additional units because _____ _____ _____</p>

Other

- YES
- NO
- N/A

Other (please specify):

How many Fire Suppression units were used on this incident?

Number of Units Used

- 0 – Placed in service prior to arrival
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- More than 8

What was the staffing for each unit used?

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- More than 8

Answer the following:

Were there any firefighters injured?

- YES
- NO

Were there any rescues?

- YES
- NO

Were there any vehicle accidents or collisions?

- YES
- NO

Were there any operational problems?

YES

NO

If yes, what were they?

Answer the following:

Were there any benefits to having a reduced response?

Was a reduced response detrimental on this call?

Provide comments about the reduced response:

Provide comments about the Reduced Response Pilot Program: