



Division 03

Communication and Information Management/Technology

Chapter 11 – Standard Response Dispatch Procedure

October 2011

POLICY

This General Order shall establish specific procedures and guidelines for dispatch of fire suppression, emergency medical and specialty units. The criteria for establishing dispatch listings (run cards) shall be done in accordance with General Order 03-12, Tax Grid Dispatching System. Station alerting shall be done in accordance with General Order 03-10, Radio System Use and Station Alerting.

DEFINITIONS

Ambulance Local - a non-life-threatening medical emergency requiring a Basic life Support (BLS) ambulance only as determined by the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols

Automatic Vehicle Locator – a means of identifying the position of a vehicle, utilizing the Global Positioning System (GPS), in a geographic location.

Barrier Protection - at least one suppression unit shall be dispatched to all incidents on high Volume/High Speed Roadways. In addition to providing their primary emergency service, this unit will be responsible for establishing a protective area or lane for personnel operating on the incident scene in accordance with any existing Memorandum of Understanding with the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Box Alarm - a fire incident in a structure, not including a detached shed

Calculated Routing – a procedure used by Public Safety Communications, Computer Aided Dispatch, to determine apparatus response to an incident utilizing a GPS location in proximity to the incident location.

Command Officer - Career and Volunteer Chief Officers as established in General Order 01-03, Chain-of-Command.

Dedicated Staffed BLS - a BLS ambulance that will remain fully staffed on the emergency scene for treatment and immediate transport of victims

First Alerted Unit - the first EMS and/or fire unit dispatched to the incident.

High Volume/High Speed Roadway - a divided highway with two or more lanes in each direction and a posted speed limit of more than 40 mph. For the purpose of Fire/EMS operations, these are only the roadways which have limited access, have been approved by the County Fire Chief and are listed in Attachment #1.

Local Alarm - an emergency or non-emergency incident requiring the dispatch of usually one unit (i.e. auto fire, investigation, brush fire, etc.)

Medic Local - a life-threatening medical emergency requiring the dispatch of an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance as determined by EMD protocols.



Multiple Alarm (2nd, 3rd, etc.) - an additional street or box alarm assignment dispatched to help mitigate an incident.

Proceed - terminology used by Public Safety Communications (PSC) and/or the Incident Commander (IC) to indicate a non-emergency response. A non-emergency response requires units dispatched to an incident to continue towards the incident location within normal traffic flow while obeying all traffic laws, speed limits, signals, signs, and devices.

Quint - a unit that meets the specifications of both an engine company and a truck. For the purpose of dispatch, stations that have a quint will be dispatched as an engine company or a truck company. Furthermore, only those units that are approved by the County Fire Chief, and are listed in Attachment #2 shall be dispatched.

Rescue Engine - a unit that meets the specifications of both an engine company and a rescue squad. For the purpose of dispatch, stations that have a rescue engine will be dispatched as an engine company or a rescue squad. Furthermore, only those units that are approved by the County Fire Chief, and are listed in Attachment #2 shall be dispatched.

Rescue Local - a personal injury automobile collision or other incident with entrapment.

Rescue Local Woodrow Wilson Bridge – Specific call dispatch type that outlines responsibilities for responding units to calls on or in the area of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Respond - terminology used by PSC and/or the IC to indicate an emergency response; an emergency response requires the use of all audible and visible emergency warning devices, to include, lights and sirens as

outlined in General Order 8-04, Driving Regulations.

Special Service - truck, rescue squad, quint operating as a truck, or a rescue engine operating as a rescue squad.

Special Types of Alarms - an emergency involving special circumstances and/or requiring special apparatus or expertise.

Specialized Areas/ Apparatus/ Equipment - are only those areas, vehicles, and equipment, which have been approved for dispatch by the County Fire Chief and are listed in Attachment #2.

Street Alarm - an emergency incident requiring the dispatch of several units to investigate and mitigate a potentially hazardous situation.

Suppression Unit - an engine, rescue engine, truck, tower, quint, or rescue squad.

Task Force Alarm - a special alarm for a specific reason involving predetermined units (EMS, Mass Casualty, Fire, Water Supply, Rapid Intervention, or Haz-Mat).

Technical Rescue Emergencies - an emergency that normally requires the personnel to have a specific level of specialized training.

Working Fire Dispatch - terminology used by PSC and/or the IC to announce/request the dispatch of additional pre-determined units to the scene of a confirmed working incident.

PROCEDURES

1. Dispatch Procedures

All career and volunteer personnel are required to respond to all calls for service as dispatched and authorized in accordance with



this General Order. Failure to respond for a call for service or responding for calls for service in a manner not consistent with this General Order may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with Personnel Law.

The following units will be dispatched for an incident using Calculated Routing:

- Engine
- Truck
- Rescue Squad
- Quint
- Rescue Engine
- Minipumpers & Brush Trucks
- Tankers
- BLS and ALS Ambulances
- Career Battalion Chiefs
- Hazardous Materials Units

All other apparatus will be dispatched in order of the “run card” as determined by General Order 3-12.

Any issues related to the dispatch of apparatus will be addressed via the Chain of Command. Personnel may not pose challenges or argue with the staff of Public Safety Communications to address issues. Any issues that require immediate attentions will be forwarded to the Duty Chief. All others will be documented and forwarded to the Lieutenant Colonel of Emergency Operations via the chain of command.

Ambulance Local

In the event of non-life-threatening medical emergencies:

- One BLS ambulance shall be dispatched.
- When first and second due stations do not have an available BLS ambulance, PSC shall dispatch the closest available suppression unit in addition to one BLS ambulance.

- One engine shall also be dispatched for all medical incidents involving a shooting or stabbing.

In the event of BLS emergencies on High Volume/ High Speed Roadways:

- One BLS ambulance and one suppression unit shall be dispatched in the reported direction of the incident.
- At the discretion of PSC, they may dispatch an additional BLS ambulance and suppression unit in opposite direction of the reported incident if the exact location cannot be reasonably verified.

Medical Local

In the event of medical emergencies requiring the intervention of ALS medical procedures:

- One BLS ambulance and one ALS ambulance shall be dispatched.
- When the first due station does not have an available BLS ambulance or ALS ambulance, PSC will dispatch the closest available suppression unit in addition to one BLS ambulance.
- When no ALS ambulance is available from the pre-determined dispatch listing, PSC will dispatch the closest available suppression unit in addition to one BLS ambulance.
- One engine shall also be dispatched for all medical incidents involving a shooting or stabbing.

In the event of ALS emergencies on High Volume/ High Speed Roadways:

- One BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, and one suppression unit shall be dispatched in the reported direction of the incident.
- At the discretion of PSC, they may dispatch an additional BLS ambulance and suppression unit in opposite direction of the reported incident if the



exact location cannot be reasonably verified.

- Additionally, one ALS ambulance and a battalion officer shall be dispatched if any occupants are trapped or were ejected, have a decreased level of consciousness, or injuries which would likely require ALS.

Rescue Local

In the event of motor vehicle collisions with injuries on a roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 mph or less and no indication of entrapment or unusual circumstance:

- One engine company and one BLS ambulance shall be dispatched (Stations with a rescue squad have the option to respond with the rescue squad or engine company and the BLS ambulance).

In the event of motor vehicle collisions with injuries on an undivided roadway with a posted speed limit of more than 40 mph (Attachment #1) or with indication of entrapment or unusual circumstance:

- One engine company, one BLS ambulance, and a rescue squad shall be dispatched.
- Additionally, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched if any occupants are trapped or were ejected, have a decreased level of consciousness, or injuries which would likely require ALS.

In the event of motor vehicle collisions with injuries on High Volume/High Speed Roadways:

- One engine company and one BLS ambulance from the reported direction of the incident, one engine company and one BLS ambulance from the opposite direction of the incident, and one rescue squad shall be dispatched. If the station due with the rescue squad is closer than the engine company due in either direction, it is not necessary to dispatch an engine company behind the rescue squad.

In the event of motor vehicle collisions with injuries involving motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, mopeds, pedestrians, or bicycles:

- One engine company, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.

In the event of an industrial accident, farm accident or other incident with known or suspected entrapment:

- One engine company*, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, one rescue squad, the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.

Rescue Local - Woodrow Wilson Bridge

From Maryland

- 2 engine companies, 2 Basic Life Support Units (BLS), rescue squad and a command officer.

The first due engine responds to the *local lanes* from St. Barnabas Road.

The second due engine responds to the *express lanes* from St. Barnabas Rd.

All other units stage in the area of St. Barnabas Rd. at the Beltway to await instruction.

Additionally, one ALS ambulance, shall be dispatched if any occupants are trapped or were ejected, have a decreased level of consciousness, or



injuries which would likely require ALS.

one tanker, and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.

From Virginia

- 2 engine companies, 2 Basic Life Support (BLS) units, rescue squad and a command officer

First due engine responds to the local lanes.

The second due engine responds to the express lanes.

All other units stage in line of approach to the Beltway.

- Additionally, one ALS ambulanceshall be dispatched if any occupants are trapped or were ejected, have a decreased level of consciousness, or injuries which would likely require ALS.

Local Alarms

In the event of brush fires in non-rural areas:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched

In the event of brush fires in rural areas, dispatch assignments will be based on the daily Fire Classification as determined by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service:

- Class 1 (Low Fire Danger) or Class 2 (Moderate Fire Danger) - One engine company and one brush unit shall be dispatched.
- Class 3 (High Fire Danger), class 4 (Very High Fire Danger) or Class 5 (Extremely High Fire Danger) - two engine companies, two brush units,

For the purpose of determining dispatch assignments for brush fires, only those first due areas or box areas that have been approved by the County Fire Chief shall be treated as rural areas. The areas which have been approved are listed in Attachment #2.

In the event of vehicle fires:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched unless information is received indicating that more equipment will be needed.
- Two engine companies shall be dispatched on High Volume/High Speed Roadways (one from each direction).

In the event of wires down/ transformers:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched to proceed (non-emergency), investigate and standby if necessary. When a situation exists, i.e. wires arcing on the ground or on a structure, which could result in injury or property loss due to fire or other event an emergency response is required.

In the event of flooded conditions:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched to proceed (non-emergency). When a situation exists, which could result in injury or property loss due to fire or other event an emergency response is required.

In the event of an elevator incident:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched to proceed (non-emergency). When anyone on the elevator is sick or injured, an emergency response is required.



In the event of a lock-out/lock-in:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched to proceed (non-emergency). When this involves an endangered, sick or injured person or a situation that could result in property loss due to a fire or other event, an emergency response is required.

In the event of natural gas leaks reported outside a building:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched.

In the event of responding to remotely monitored Alarm Systems, an alarm system that is monitored somewhere other than on site:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched for monitored alarms received from an alarm company with no additional information from the scene to confirm fire or smoke in the structure.

In the event of responding to locally monitored Alarm Systems, any type of alarm system (water flow, manual pull, smoke detector, etc.) that is monitored on site:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched for monitored alarms received from an alarm company or from the scene with no additional information from the scene to confirm fire or smoke in the structure.

In the event of outside fires:

- One engine company* shall be dispatched for outside fires, such as trash, debris, mulch, etc.

In the event of service calls:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched to proceed (non-emergency).

The dispatch for local alarms shall be upgraded to a street or box alarm or from non-emergency to emergency response, immediately upon the receipt of additional information indicating a more serious and/or fire condition in the structure.

NOTES: * Stations that do not provide engine company services, shall respond with a special service in addition to the closest engine company on these local alarms.

** The first due station officer will determine which unit shall respond/proceed from their station at the time of the incident. He/she may allow a brush truck, mini-pumper, or foam unit to respond/proceed on the call if it is capable of handling the incident.

Street Alarms

In the event of a report of a fire with no visible fire, food on/in the stove/oven, fire reported out, odor of smoke with no smoke visible, electrical outlet/fuse box, appliance (i.e., microwave, dishwasher, etc. but does not include clothes dryer), natural gas leaks in any structure or a fire incident involving a detached shed, a street assignment consisting of:

- Two engine companies, one ladder truck and one special service and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.
- Two engine companies, one ladder truck, one special service, one tanker and a battalion officer shall be dispatched in areas without hydrants.

The dispatch of a street alarm shall be upgraded to a box alarm immediately upon the receipt of additional information indicating a fire condition in the structure. PSC shall dispatch the additional units necessary to complete a box alarm, inform the units dispatched of the additional information, and obtain an acknowledgement from the



ranking command officer and the 1st due engine.

Box Alarms

In the event of any structure fire, not including a detached shed:

- Four engine companies, two truck companies, a third special service (closest truck or rescue squad), and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.
- Four engine companies, two truck companies, a third special service (closest truck or rescue squad), one water supply company, three tankers and a battalion officer shall be dispatched in areas without hydrants.

Special Types of Alarms

In the event of Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat) incidents, events have been categorized into four different initial dispatch assignments based on the nature and/or severity of the incident.

Hazardous Materials Service Call -

In the event of an investigation or need to evaluate suspicious materials, substances, or mail items:

- One closest HAZMAT Unit (Primary or Support) shall be dispatched.
- In addition, notification shall be made to the Primary Hazardous Materials Unit (if not closest), the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and the Hazardous Materials Team Leaders.
- If packages present or could present and explosive hazard, Bomb Technicians will also be notified.
- Response to certain substances such as mercury or suspected biological agents requires the dispatch of the primary hazmat unit in lieu of the closest hazmat unit due to the need for specialized equipment.

Hazardous Materials Local -

In the event of an investigation involving the suspicion of a hazardous material release, small incidents involving hazardous materials commonly known (e.g., gasoline, fuel oil, diesel, etc.), or an investigation of potential incidents such as abandoned or discarded hazardous material containers with no evidence of a release, following the guideline of:

- Occupancies: Exterior, no exposures
- Automotive Fluids: Small Vehicles (< 5 tons GVW)
- Carbon Monoxide: Detector activation, no signs and symptoms of exposure

Then:

- One suppression unit** shall be dispatched.
- In addition, notification shall be made to the Primary Hazardous Materials Unit, the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and the Hazardous Materials Team Leaders.

HAZMAT Street Assignment -

In the event of an investigation for an unconfirmed presence or release of a hazardous material with possible victims, small incidents involving unknown hazardous materials or large incidents involving specific known hazardous materials, following the guideline of:

- Occupancies: Residential or exterior with exposures
- Automotive Fluids: Large Vehicles (greater than 5 tons GVW)
- Propane (LPG): Less than or equal to 40 pounds (fork lift bottle)
- Carbon Monoxide: Detector activation w/ signs and symptoms, or signs and symptoms in more than one person.

Then:



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- Two engine companies, one special service, one HAZMAT unit, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.
- In addition, notification shall be made to the Primary Hazardous Materials Unit, the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and the Hazardous Materials Team Leaders.
- In addition, notification shall be made to the Primary Hazardous Materials Unit, the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and the Hazardous Materials Team Leaders.
- The dispatch shall be upgraded to a Haz-Mat box alarm or include a task force alarm (i.e., EMS task force, mass casualty task force, etc.) as appropriate upon receipt of additional information indicating that there is a serious fire, chemical hazard, or life hazard condition.

Hazardous Materials Box Alarm -

In the event of an investigation involving the confirmed presence and possible release of a hazardous material with possible victims, confirmed release of any hazardous material greater than 100 gallons or an incident suspected to involve weapons of mass destruction:

- Four engine companies, two special services, one HAZMAT Support Unit, one Primary Hazardous Materials Unit, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer, two battalion officers, Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator, and Hazardous Materials Response Team Leaders shall be dispatched.

A Hazardous Materials task force assignment also exists for providing necessary hazardous materials resources to augment any assignment; See listing under task force alarms.

In the event of airplane crashes, train crashes, etc.:

- Two engine companies, one rescue squad, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, one HAZMAT unit, one foam unit, one brush unit, the EMS Duty Officer the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.

In the event of Metro Rapid Rail Emergencies” for:

- Fire or train derailment at a Metro station - four engine companies, two truck companies, one rescue squad, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, two battalion officers, the EMS Duty Officer, one breathing air unit, and the Metro liaison officer shall be dispatched.
- Fire or train derailment between two stations or a station and a fan/vent shaft – two engine companies (1st & 2nd due), one truck company (1st due), one rescue squad (3rd due special service), one BLS unit, one ALS ambulance, one battalion officer (1st due), the EMS Duty Officer, one breathing air unit, and the Metro liaison officer shall be dispatched to the closest Metro station. Two engine companies (3rd & 4th due), one truck company (2nd due), and one battalion officer shall be dispatched to the opposite Metro station or vent/shaft.
- Reported injury or attempted suicide involving a Metro train or track bed - one rescue squad, one engine company, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.



The dispatch to a Metro incident shall be upgraded to include a task force alarm (i.e. EMS task force, mass casualty task force, etc.) upon receipt of additional information indicating that specific resources may be needed or that there is a significant life hazard condition.

In the event of Bomb/Hazardous Devices responses for:

- Confirmed presence of a suspected explosive/hazardous device - a street alarm, one bomb disposal unit, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the on-duty Bomb Tech, on-duty fire investigators, the haz-mat coordinator, the EMS Duty Officer, and the bomb squad team shall be dispatched.
- The assignment shall be modified at the discretion of the bomb squad commander or his designee based on the information received about the incident.

In the event of a disturbance at a Correctional Facility:

- Two engine companies, one special service, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched. Units shall stage at the entrance until the facility has been secured.

Technical Rescue Emergencies

In the event of a Trench or Structural Collapse Rescue:

- Collapse investigation - one engine company, one rescue squad, one BLS ambulance, and a battalion officer shall be dispatched to investigate potential incidents, such as excavation problems, vehicle damage to structures, structural cracks, etc. This

is an emergency response when a life hazard is present. Notification shall be made to the technical rescue station via direct line or by radio.

- Confirmed trench or structural collapse - one engine company, one rescue squad, one truck company, one collapse rescue squad, one collapse response unit, one technical rescue support vehicle, one ALS ambulance, one BLS ambulance, the collapse response team, the EMS Duty Officer, and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.
- The dispatch for a trench or structural collapse shall be upgraded to a Haz-Mat box alarm, or include a task force alarm (i.e. EMS task force, mass casualty task force, etc.) as appropriate upon receipt of additional information indicating that there is a serious fire, chemical hazard, or life hazard condition.

In the event of a Confined Space Rescue:

- One engine company, one confined space rescue squad, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, one technical rescue support vehicle, one haz-mat support unit, one breathing air unit, a battalion officer, the technical rescue and confined space rescue team, and the EMS Duty Officer shall be dispatched to any rescue from a space that has limited means of entry or egress and is subject to accumulation of toxic or combustible agents, or due to oxygen deficiency.

In the event of a Water Rescue:

- Water/fluid/dive rescue or recovery operation - one suppression unit, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, one technical rescue support vehicle, three water rescue companies, the



EMS Duty Officer and a battalion officer shall be dispatched.

- A boat fire in the River (Potomac) – One fire boat, and an ambulance will be sent to the nearest location on land to accept a patient.
- In the event of a service call for a stranded boater in the main channel of the Potomac River a fire/rescue boat response will be instantiated.
- In the event of service call for a stranded boater, the Duty Chief will be contacted to determine the need for a response. Generally, boaters in need of a tow are to contact a private vendor for assistance

In the event of a High Angle Rescue/Overland Rescue:

- One engine company*, one tower company, one BLS ambulance, one ALS ambulance, one high angle rescue squad, one technical rescue support vehicle, the EMS Duty Officer, a battalion officer, and the technical rescue and confined space rescue team shall be dispatched to any rescue or recovery that is at an angle approaching vertical or unable to perform using standard Fire Department ladders, or any environment in which persons must be secured with rope and other equipment

Task Force Alarms

For EMS Task Force:

- Two BLS ambulances and one ALS ambulance shall be dispatched.

For Mass Casualty Task Force:

- Four BLS ambulances, two ALS ambulances, one Medical Care Support Unit (MSCU), one ambulance

bus, one rescue squad, and the EMS Duty Officer shall be dispatched.

For Fire Task Force:

- Two engine companies, one special service, and a breathing air unit shall be dispatched.

For Water Supply Task Force:

- One water supply company and one engine company shall be dispatched.
- One water supply company, one engine company, and two tankers shall be dispatched in areas without hydrants.

For Rapid Intervention Task Force:

- Two engine companies, one rescue squad, one ALS ambulance, one BLS ambulance, one breathing air unit, one battalion officer, and one thermal imaging camera shall be dispatched.

For Hazmat Task Force:

- Two engine companies, one special service, one HAZMAT Support Unit, one Primary Hazardous Materials Unit, one BLS ambulance (if not already assigned to the incident), one ALS ambulance (if not already assigned to the incident), one battalion officer (if not already assigned to the incident), the EMS Duty Officer (if not already assigned to the incident), the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and the Hazardous Materials Response Team Leaders.

For Working Fire Dispatch:

- One BLS ambulance (if no dedicated staffed BLS ambulance is responding on the call), one ALS ambulance, the EMS Duty Officer, a safety officer, and an additional command officer (if only one command officer is



responding on the call) shall be dispatched on all working fires.

Multiple Alarms

PSC will duplicate the initial dispatch sequence in response to a request for an additional box alarm on the same incident. Additionally, PSC shall ascertain from the IC if the following Specialized Apparatus shall be needed and dispatched on second alarm box alarms:

- One water supply company and/or one breathing air unit.

Stations that provide units which have been approved as Specialized Apparatus shall be responsible for providing that service first. It may be necessary for the PSC Supervisor to alter the second alarm assignment dispatch sequence in order to accomplish this.

Mutual Aide Response

All requests for mutual aid shall be dispatched in accordance with current mutual aid and/or Council of Government (COG) agreements. If two or more Prince George's County units are dispatched on emergency incidents outside of Prince George's County, a battalion officer shall also be dispatched for communication and supervision purposes. The Duty Chief has the final authority to determine the level of resources available for response outside of Prince George's County should events dictate the need to limit mutual aid.

2. Apparatus Response

The PSC Supervisor has the authority to alter an assignment based on the availability of units. PSC shall dispatch additional units requested by the incident commander.

The PSC Supervisor and/or the incident commander may be required to prepare a written statement as to the necessity of the alteration or additional units to the County Fire Chief through the chain-of-command.

Each alerted station is responsible to respond with the alerted unit.

If a station is alerted to respond with two (2) units, i.e. engine & ambulance or rescue squad & ambulance, the PSC Supervisor has the discretion, based on information received, to determine which unit shall respond on an emergency call requiring the response of two services when only one crew or one driver is in the station.

Driver only responses are not permitted, except for a specialized unit, such as: tanker, brush unit, mini pumper, light unit, breathing air unit, and any other miscellaneous support vehicle. Specialized units shall not be dispatched or respond as the first alerted unit.

- When driver only and dispatched for an emergency incident, Fire/EMS personnel shall immediately notify PSC via the direct line they are driver only.
- PSC will immediately adjust the assignment in accordance with current policies and procedures.

Multiple units from one station shall be dispatched when staffing permits, in accordance with General Order 06-29, Staffing Availability/Tracking. The first due station may respond with additional units for calls in their first due area. However, the additional unit(s)/personnel will remain uncommitted and report to the Incident Commander. Under no circumstances should the additional unit(s) assume any of the predetermined responsibilities of the units initially dispatched, unless directed to do so by the Incident Commander.



BLS ambulances shall be permitted to respond with any other alerted unit from the same station only when the personnel are needed to meet minimum staffing for that other unit or the BLS ambulance is part of the working fire dispatch.

Minimum staffing shall be:

- Engine Company - three (3) personnel.
- Truck Company - four (4) personnel.
- Rescue Squad - four (4) personnel.
- Rescue Engine - three (3) or four (4) personnel, depending upon which service (engine or rescue squad) the unit has been dispatched to provide.
- Quint -three (3) or four (4) personnel, depending upon which service (engine or truck) the unit has been dispatched to provide.
- BLS ambulance/ALS ambulance - two (2) personnel.
- Specialty Units - varies depending on the specific function of the unit.

According to General Order 06-14, Emergency Response Time, the turnout time objective for all calls for service (including transfers) for all units throughout the Department shall be one (1) minute. All Fire/EMS Department personnel will ensure that all calls for service are responded to promptly, without delay.

Approximately one (1) minute after the initial dispatch and after all stations/units have been alerted, PSC will call on the radio for the alerted units that have not indicated RESPONDING w/## via Status Messaging, beginning with the first due station and going through the stations in the order of the dispatch listing for the assignment.

PSC will then provide the ranking responding officer with the total personnel responding, and the units that are understaffed.

Ex: Communications to Battalion Chief 883, total of 24 personnel, Truck 26 is understaffed.

PSC will not give the number of personnel on each piece of apparatus unless requested by the ranking responding officer. PSC will adjust the assignment based on his/her direction.

For incidents other than street and box alarms, when a dispatched unit fails to respond within two (2) minutes, PSC will dispatch the next like service. At that time, PSC will attempt to contact the station/unit by telephone and/or radio to determine why the dispatched unit has failed to respond. If PSC has reason to believe a unit will fail to respond based on current staffing and/or recent dispatch information, PSC may at their discretion dispatch an additional like service without waiting the two minutes. If the unit that was believed to possibly fail does respond, PSC shall place the additional dispatched unit in service.

To improve the procedures for affecting both the method and time sequence of dispatching apparatus, PSC shall more effectively utilize units available on the radio. This is intended to reduce the practice of units available on the radio from having to respond back to the station for a different unit. Companies shall be dispatched according to the dispatch listing, but the unit that responds may fluctuate depending upon which units are available on the radio.

- In certain situations, units may still have to return to the station in order to respond with the service that is due. If



units are out of position to return to the station in a timely manner and another unit could be dispatched and be closer to the incident than the unit due, then PSC shall dispatch the next closest unit.

- If a unit is available on the radio and is directed by PSC to return to the station for another unit, the unit available on the radio shall respond back if the call is for an emergency incident. If the call is for a non-emergency incident, the unit available on the radio shall proceed back.

Units that are not dispatched, but available on the radio and are in such positions that they are in the immediate area (generally in the first due's box alarm area) of the incident, may request permission to respond. The unit will advise PSC of their exact location and request to respond on the call. PSC will notify the ranking responding officer at the time of the request who must approve the response of the unit and identify which unit(s) are to be placed in service. Units shall not respond until the request is approved by the ranking responding officer.

Example: On a 1 Box, Engine 50 is in Station 1's 1st due area and requests permission to respond on the assignment. Chief 1 approves the request and advises PSC to place the 4th due engine in service.

Units that are not dispatched, but become available (in-service from another incident) shall be dispatched if the PSC Supervisor determines they are closer than a unit(s) dispatched. PSC will place the further unit(s) in-service and notify the ranking responding officer of the adjusted assignment and notify the units responding of any change in their due assignment.

Whenever fire suppression units are alerted for an emergency call, that station shall be

considered unavailable for any additional responses until PSC is notified that additional personnel (minimum of two) are available. The first due station's alerting system shall be activated when that station is in an unavailable status and an incident occurs within their first due area. The unavailable station shall not be included in the dispatch sequence.

Dispatch of other units:

- Additional units shall be dispatched by request of the incident commander to accomplish or support a specific tactical operation. These units include those equipped with large diameter hose, vehicle extrication tools, thermal image cameras, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) cascade systems, etc. The units currently approved by the County Fire Chief are listed in Attachment #2.
- Stations that house a tanker, brush unit, light unit, metro support unit, and/or breathing air unit, may be dispatched with one of these specialized units, in addition to one other service (i.e., ambulance, engine, truck, rescue squad).

No unit shall respond or proceed without being dispatched or authorized to any emergency or non-emergency incident.

All calls for service shall be considered as an emergency response, unless specifically outlined in this General Order. When a call received presents circumstances not specifically addressed by this General Order, the PSC Supervisor will determine if it warrants an emergency response, based on the potential life hazard and/or property damage.

3. Transfers



Transfers shall be initiated upon first indication to PSC that there is a long duration incident, a working fire, or an excessive number of incidents in a geographic area.

An engine company, special service, tanker (if the incident occurs in a non-hydrant area), and BLS ambulance from the stations listed among the second alarm assignment shall be transferred to the first due station. Normally, this shall involve the next due engine company, special service, tanker (if non-hydrant), and BLS ambulance. However, the probability of the incident requiring multiple alarms and/or the availability of additional specialized apparatus/equipment should be considered during this process.

Transfers shall be dispatched as a call for service. Refusal to take a transfer when dispatched will be considered a refusal to take a call for service.

Subsequent "move up" and/or "backfill" transfers shall be made at the discretion of the PSC Supervisor. These transfers shall be made after considering the following factors:

- Geographical area left uncovered.
- Available special services in the area.
- Available engine companies in the area.
- Other Fire/EMS activity in the County.
- Stations that have multiple crews available.
- The necessity to keep specialized apparatus/equipment in service and available.

In addition to the above, BLS ambulances and ALS ambulances shall be transferred at the discretion of the PSC Supervisor to fill significant voids in EMS coverage due to above average call volume and/or a significant incident.

Transfers to other jurisdictions shall be made upon the approval of the Duty Chief using the next due units as listed in the established dispatch sequence with subsequent "move up" and/or "backfill" transfers made at the discretion of the PSC Supervisor.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1- High Volume/High Speed/Limited Access Highway Index & Highways with Posted Speed Limit of More than 40 mph Index

Attachment #2- Specialized Areas/Apparatus/Equipment

Attachment #3- Categorizing Hazardous Materials Incidents into Dispatch Assignments