

## Communications Procedure 2013

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The purpose of this procedure is to provide a framework for the proper and efficient use of the Montgomery County Fire Chiefs' Association Radio System. The scope of this document is meant to provide a guide for Fire Com staff to properly handle fire related emergencies from the time the call is received to the point it is under control and communications with the field units ceases. While specific MCFCA policies and procedures are referenced in this document they are meant for references and not replacement of existing polices. They have been truncated to allow for easier reference from the dispatch side of the system. This holds true for NENA and APCO standards as well. While it is the intent of this document to adhere to established APCO and NENA standards it is not a replacement of those standards which should serve as an ancillary to this written directive.

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### Glossary

**Abandoned Call:** A call placed to 911 in which the caller disconnects before the call can be answered by a PSAP attendant.

**Alternate Routing:** The capability of routing 911 calls to a designated location(s) if all 911 trunks are busy or out of service. May be activated by request or automatically, if detectable, when 911 equipment fails or the PSAP itself is disabled.

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act

**ANI/ALI:** Automatic Number Identification is the telephone number associated with the access line from which 911 was dialed. Automatic Location Identification is the location associated with the number being used to call 911 usually retrieved from the number being queried into the MSAG.

**APCO:** Association of Public Safety Communications Officials. Founded in 1935 it is an organization dedicated to public safety communications.

**CALEA:** Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The CALEA Public Safety Communications Accreditation Program provides a communications center, or the communications unit of a public safety agency, with a process to systemically review and internally assess its operations and procedures

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**Call Back Number:** A number used by the PSAP to re-contact the location from which the 911 call was placed. The number may or may not be the number of the station used to originate the 911 call.

**Civil Addresses:** Any address that includes a house number and street name is considered a civic address. A civic address includes a community name that may or may not be recognized by the USPS or be MSAG valid.

**Conroe Police Department (CPD):** Conroe PD maintains a Primary PSAP for 911 calls within the city limit.

**Enhanced 911 (E9-1-1):** A telephone system which includes network switching , database and PSAP premise elements capable of providing automatic location identification data, selective routing, selective transfer, fixed transfer and a call back number.

**Enhanced Digital Access Communications System (EDACS):** A competitor to the Motorola Smartnet trunking system it is a part of the Harris RF Communications. The Montgomery County Hospital District (MCHD) and the City of Conroe maintain an EDACS system to which many MCFCA VHF channels and some Tx Warn talk groups are patched. The MAESTRO radio consoles are a part of the MCHD EDACS radio network.

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** A central command and control facility that is a part of an emergency management or disaster management program activated during a local or regional emergency. The EOC is tasked with the strategic functions of an emergency.

**Emergency Service Number (ESN):** a three to five digit number assigned to a 10-digit NANP number that directs a 911 call from a TELCO tandem office to the correct primary PSAP and with directions on which secondary PSAP is appropriate for police, fire or EMS services in the area for that number.

**Geocoding:** Translation of one form of location into another, typically a civic address into an X, Y coordinate.

**GIS:** Geographic Information System A system for capturing, storing, displaying, analyzing and managing data and associated attributes which are spatially referenced.

**Intergraded TTY:** TTY/TDD functionality that has been intergraded within a computer work station.

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**Layer:** A special dataset containing a common feature type. Layers are also referred to as themes.

**Montgomery County Emergency Communications District (MCECD):** a political subdivision responsible for providing support for the primary and secondary PSAPs in Montgomery County.

**Montgomery County Fire Chiefs' Association (MCFCA):** A non-profit organization created to promote the exchange of information and experience to benefit all fire departments located within Montgomery County.

**Montgomery County Hospital District (MCHD):** A political subdivision that provides health care to needy residents of the county, provides 911 ambulance service to the county, maintains a trunked 800 radio system, a VHF radio system and a secondary PSAP in the County.

**Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) :** Primary law enforcement agency for unincorporated areas of the County. MCSO also operates the County jail and provides the primary PSAP for the entire County with the exception of the City of Conroe.

**Mobile Data Computers:** GIS based mobile computers designed to use mapping software and AVL information to route emergency vehicles and track their locations.

**Master Street Address Guide( MSAG):** A database of street names and block numbers with community names that define emergency service zones (ESZs) and their associated emergency service numbers (ESNs) to enable proper routing of 911 calls.

**National Emergency Number Association (NENA):** A non-profit organization established in 1982 to further the goal of "One Nation One Number." NENA promotes research, planning and training.

**Next Generation 911 (NG 9-1-1):** An IP-Based system comprised of managed IP-based networks, functional elements, and databases that replicate traditional E9-1-1 features and functions and provides additional capabilities. NG9-1-1 is designed to provide access to emergency services from all connected communications sources and provides multimedia data capabilities for PSAPs and other emergency organizations.

**North American Numbering Plan (NANP):** Use of 10-digit dialing in the format of a 3 digit NPA (Number Plan Area) followed by 3-digit NXX (central office code) and 4-digit line number.

**Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP):** A PSAP to which 911 calls are routed directly from the 911 control office .

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**Secondary Public Safety Answering Point:** A PSAP to which calls are transferred to from a primary PSAP.

**Teletypewriter (TTY):** Also known as a **TDD** (telephone device for the deaf) a device capable of information interchange between compatible units using a dialup or private line telephone network connections as the transmission medium.

**Texas Wide Area Network (TxWARN) :** APCO P25 trunked 800 and 900 radio system that currently has 9 counties on the Motorola based system, including Montgomery County. The MCFCA participates in this radio system.

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**I. Radio Channels**

Effective dispatching is vital to the safety of the citizens of Montgomery County and our firefighters alike. The dispatcher must be confident and properly trained in this dispatch procedure. It is the purpose of this procedure to merge the dispatching and radio needs of the various agencies that adhere to this document.

**A. Call Sign**

The call sign for the MCFCA is WPTM 741. Any channel monitored by FireCom or any backup facility shall use the appropriate call sign for the designated channel when necessary.

**II. Channel Use**

**A. MCFD 1-8**

1. FD1 shall be used for dispatching alarms, paging, sending messages and emergency messages from Fire Com to field units. This channel shall be monitored by Fire Com at all times.
2. FD2 is the primary response channel for **still** alarms. This channel shall also be used to notify Fire Com of any walk-in, on-view or anytime a unit has been notified of an incident. This channel shall also be used when a unit is going out of service when the use of a telephone is not practical. Fire Com shall monitor this channel at all times.

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3. FD 3 is the primary response channel for **medical calls**. This channel shall be a shared channel between Fire Com, Alarm and the MCHD and FD responders.
  4. FD 4 is a response channel for motor vehicle extrication calls (eventually with MCHD ambulances).
  5. **FD 5-8** are overflow **response channels**. FD 5-8 should be assigned as a response channel for **all box alarms**. Fire ground traffic will be conducted on a simplex (direct) VHF channel (FG10-16).
- B. In addition to the VHF simulcast system, 6 VHF channels are reserved for major incidents. The repeated side is referred to as TAC channel. The **non-repeated** or **direct frequencies** are known as **Fire Ground channels (FG)**. In order to provide the safest possible fire ground communications, **all interior fire ground operations** should be conducted on a **direct (FG) channel**. It may be necessary, depending on the location of the incident, for the Incident Commander to monitor both a fire ground channel and a response channel. When assigning a fire ground channel, Fire Com should assign the FG associated with a close TAC channel when available. This will allow the IC's radio traffic to be monitored and recorded by Fire Com.
- C. TX WARN Talk Groups
1. Training N, S, E and W
  2. Events 1-5
  3. 8 Lake Rescue 1 and 2
  4. OPS 1-3
  5. Hazmat 1 and 2
- D. Interoperable VHF Channels
1. V Fire 21, 22 and 23
  2. V MED 28 (AMP LZ)
  3. TX Air 2
  4. CFD 1, CFD 2, CFD 3 and CFD 7(800)

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E. Assignment of FG channels

FG channels should be assigned to **all box alarms**. Following the dispatch sequence a response channel should be assigned (FD5-8). As units go en route the dispatcher shall give additional information to the responding units. At that time a FG channel shall be assigned. **After units go on location on the response channel they shall switch to the assigned FG channel (FG10-16).**

III. **System Maintenance**

The Montgomery County Hospital District will coordinate maintenance on the system. Problems which may signal performance issues with the radio system should be brought to the immediate attention of the MCFCA Communications chairman and the MCFCA president. An alpha page shall be sent to the "County Radio Group" if a system problem is likely or has occurred.

The County Radio Group shall include:

- Dispatch Manager
- Radio System IT Tech
- [Fast@MCHD-TX.org](mailto:Fast@MCHD-TX.org)
- Chair of the MCFCA Communications Committee
- [WFDRadio@TheWoodlandtownship-tx.gov](mailto:WFDRadio@TheWoodlandtownship-tx.gov)

IV. **County Fire Departments**

The following departments/agencies are dispatched by FireCom:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Prefix</b>	<b>ESD</b>
Cut-N-Shoot	2	12
Lake Conroe	3	3
Montgomery	5	2
Needham	6	4
Caney Creek	8	9
N. Montgomery	9	1

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Woodlands	10	TWT
S. Montgomery	11	8
Porter	12	6
County Fire Marshal	13	NA
Timber Lakes	14	14
New Caney	15	7
Splendora	16	11
River Plantation	17	5
Magnolia	18	10

The following departments are not dispatched by FireCom but have the assigned prefix for coordination purposes.

<b>Department</b>	<b>Prefix</b>
Conroe	1
Huntsman Chemical	19

**IV. Apparatus Definitions and Numbering (See apparatus list *Appendix A*)**

**All Terrain Response** 4-wheeler type vehicle for use in wildfire fighting or patient extrication from remote locations.

**Attack** A specialized piece of equipment designed for low profile access to such areas as parking garages that carry a pump and small tank to access small fires in areas that pose an access problem for traditional apparatus.

**Booster** Any apparatus with a pump capacity of less than 750 gpm and may be four-wheel drive.

**Cascade** Any support vehicle that has the ability to refill SCBA bottles.

**Decon** A hazardous materials support vehicle

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<b>Engine</b>	Any apparatus with a pump capacity of 750 gpm or more with a water tank of not less than 600 gallons.
<b>Foam</b>	Specialized vehicle used for the carrying or dispensing of various classes of foam.
<b>HazMat</b>	A support vehicle designed to hazardous materials operations
<b>Hose</b>	A specialized truck designed to carry supply line and/or drafting Equipment.
<b>Ladder/Truck</b>	Any apparatus with a chassis mounted ladder 50' or longer.
<b>Rescue</b>	Any support vehicle designed for rescue operations.
<b>Tanker</b>	An apparatus with a water tank of 1,000 gallons or more with a rapid dump device and ideally a portable water tank.
<b>Special Equipment</b>	Any vehicle used to carry equipment/personnel that is not described above.
<b>Special Response Vehicle</b>	A vehicle with specialized combined capabilities, such as, but not limited to, cascade, rehab, command or off road operations.
<b>Collapse Trailers</b>	Trailers that are equipped with structural collapse rescue tools.
<b>Fire Boat</b>	A boat dedicated and permanently docked at Lake Conroe that is designed for lake patrol, rescue and recovery.
<b>Watercraft</b>	Any customized boat designated for fire department or other public safety use.
<b>Rescue Boat</b>	Specialized marine craft that should meet all USCG regulations and designed for use on inland lakes and waterways.
<b>Squad</b>	A non-transport EMS support vehicle



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**Battalion Chief** A utility vehicle designed and operated by a chief officer with all equipment needed to act as a command post on major incidents.

**Medical Response (MR)** This may be a vehicle used for EMS first response or a radio designation for a department's alerting system indicating a medical call assisting MCHD or other EMS transport agency.

**Heavy Equipment** A designated piece of equipment used for specific tasks such as but not limited to: heavy lifting, earth movers, lighting and concrete boring.

**V. Radio Numbering System**

**A. Numbering System for Apparatus**

Category type and prefix number shall be assigned to all apparatus. For departments with more than one apparatus of any type the last digit will indicate the sequence for that apparatus that may or may not relate to the station within that department.

**Examples:**

Booster 21 (B21) Cut-N-Shoot booster at Station 21.

Engine 81 (E81) Caney Creek engine at station 81.

**B. Numbering System for Fire Chiefs**

The radio number for each fire chief will be the prefix assigned to their department.

**Examples:**

The chief of the Lake Conroe Fire Department: Number 3 (#3 in CAD)

The Chief of the North Montgomery Fire Department: Number 9 (#9)

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**C. Numbering System for Battalion Chiefs**

Some departments have a “battalion chief” or “duty chief.” These officers will use the standard apparatus assignment with their departments prefix preceded by the word “battalion.”

**Examples:**

The battalion chief for Montgomery Fire Department: Battalion 51.

The battalion chief for The Woodlands Fire Department assigned to Station 101: Battalion 101.

The battalion chief assigned to Station 108: Battalion 108.

**D. Individuals on an Apparatus**

Driver (D)

Firefighter behind Driver (C)

Firefighter behind officer (B)

Officer (A)

Additional personnel: E, F, etc.

**Examples:**

E101 A to E101 D (E101 officer to E101 driver)

**VI. Run Cards**

Within each fire district there are a number of response areas known as boxes. Each box is a geographical area that will have a predetermined apparatus response for each response code as well as a lineup of apparatus for each type for that particular area. The fire chief of each department is responsible for the accuracy of the spreadsheet that lists their department’s boxes. FireCom is responsible for accurately entering the data into the CAD system. A box card change request must be in writing. FireCom shall maintain an electronic and hard copy of all box cards for review and updating. This should be reviewed annually. Box cards streets should be reviewed annually by each department to ensure updates have been received on street data files. This information

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can be obtained from the Montgomery County Emergency Communications District (MCECD). (See **Nature and Response Codes Appendix B**)

**VII. Response Codes**

The response code and the box card will determine the type and number of equipment sent to an incident. Factors such as road access, availability of hydrants, available mutual aid resources and high-life safety issues play a role in determining how a response code will be planned out for a particular box. Units can be individually assigned to different response levels. If that unit is not in service it will affect the response to an incident. Each type is listed out in the order of preferred response. Units may have more than one type, e.g. an engine can be an engine and jaws, a ladder can be an engine or ladder, an engine an engine and tanker, etc.

Example:

Box 3101

E: E31 L31 E32 E33 T31 E51 E5...

L: L31 L51 L1 L91...

J: E31 L31 R5...

**VIII. Resource Types**

B Booster

C Cascade

E Engine

HM HazMat

L ladder/Truck

R Rescue

T Tanker

SE Special Equipment

D Decon

AV Special terrain vehicle

MR Medical Responder

RH Rehab

J Jaws

TF Task Force

FS Forest Service

PS Public Service (e.g. Red Cross)

WC Watercraft

FB Fire Boat

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CH Chief	AD Automatic Defibrillator
BC Battalion Chief	FM Fire Marshal
U Utility	PC Power Company
HE Heavy Equipment	M Media
1013 Multiple Alarm Supervisor Notification	

**IX. Additional Resources**

OEM Office of Emergency Management  
EMC Emergency Management Coordinator  
EMS Montgomery County Hospital District  
ARC American Red Cross  
SA Salvation Army  
SO Montgomery County Sheriff's Office  
CHPL Chaplain  
(Mutual Aid Apparatus List *Appendix C*)

**X. Coverage's and Changes of Quarters**

During the course of the day it is sometimes necessary for an apparatus to either physically change quarters to replace another piece of equipment or to cover the run area of another piece of equipment while staying in and taking calls in their territory. A change of quarters, like a back-in assignment, is the physical relocation of the apparatus. It may or may not be responsible for coverage within their jurisdiction.

**XI. Placing Units Out of Service**

When placing a unit out of service the preferred method is by telephone with the second choice being using MCFD 1. The person placing the unit out of service should give a name and rank over the phone or a radio designation if by radio. At 19:00 FireCom shall encode each department that placed a unit out of service on that date,

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and has not been placed back in service, and announce that piece of apparatus is out of service. This is to ensure a unit does not have an incorrect status in CAD.

**XII. Individual Paging**

Individuals may be paged for the following reasons:

- A response
- At the request of the IC
- For an urgent administrative need

FireCom will conduct encode tests as time permits.

(Encode List *Appendix D*)

**XIII. Use of Radio System**

E.1.0 As a member of the MCFCA you are authorized to use the radio system. Tactical procedures or a special situation may arise which dictate EMS units or law enforcement agencies to use one of the frequencies licensed to the MCFCA. EMS units will use either a medic unit designation or an EMS designation. The same applies to law enforcement. They will use their agency name first followed by their unit number.

Examples:

“Splendora 3711 to FireCom.”

“Medic 21 to FireCom.”

“EMS 8601 to FireCom.”

**XIV. Phonetic Alphabet**

To aid in eliminating confusion the NATO phonetic alphabet shall be used:

A-Alpha	J-Juliet	S-Sierra
B-Bravo	K-Kilo	T-Tango
C-Charlie	L-Lima	U-Uniform
D-Delta	M-Mike	V-Victor

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E-Echo	N-November	W-Whiskey
F-Foxtrot	O-Oscar	X-X-ray
G-Golf	P-Papa	Y-Yankee
H-Hotel	Q-Quebec	Z-Zulu
I-India	R-Romeo	

**XV. Fire Com Emergency Procedures**

In the event of unusually high call volume FireCom may assume “Abnormal Operations.” During this event field units should restrict their radio traffic to changes of status (responding, on location, in service, etc.). All other traffic should be kept to a minimum. Dispatch shall announce over MCFD 1, 2 and 3 that “Abnormal Operations” is in effect. They shall also encode the County All Call and announce which TAC channels are in use and the command name. When the event is over, FireCom shall announce “resuming normal operations.” During Abnormal Operations there shall be a marker alert beep over FD 1 2 and 3 indicating that traffic should be kept to a minimum.

**XVI. Radio Operations**

Quality radio transmissions are the responsibility of everyone who uses the radio system.

- Use the channel/talk group assigned at time of dispatch. Do not go e route on FD1.
- Prepare your statement prior to transmitting.
- Ensure that mobiles and portables are of high quality, are properly serviced and have an appropriate antenna.
- Listen for other radio traffic before transmitting.
- Key the microphone for at least one full second before talking.
- Speak in a normal conversational tone and speed.
- Speak distinctly and clearly and pronounce each word carefully.

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- Use either common radio phrases or simple, plain English. Do not use technical jargon or ten-codes.
- Use phonetic spelling when necessary.
- Restrict radio use to what information is pertinent and needs to be said.

#### **XVII. Radio Use and Limitations**

To ensure airtime is available for proper use, some guidelines are needed:

- Only chief officers and apparatus should advise status changes over the radio.
- Apparatus shall not announce that they are standing by for a driver, crew, etc.
- When the first unit arrives on location, they shall give a brief description of the incident, if applicable, and name the command per normal ICS procedures.
- It is not necessary to establish command over the radio for single unit responses. It is also unnecessary to 7-1 incidents involving a single unit response.
- If the incident is a multiple department response or the scope of the incident warrants, Command shall request a TAC channel.
- Units will respond on the assigned frequency. Once arriving on scene, they should switch to the talk-around side of that frequency, if applicable.
- Do not use words such as “sir,” “ma’am,” “please,” or “thank you.”
- The dispatcher has the initial authority and responsibility for maintaining discipline on the radio. The license holder has the ultimate authority and responsibility.

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### A. Role of the Dispatcher.

The dispatcher is responsible through the appropriate chain of command for the following guidelines set for in this procedure:

#### 1. Call-Taking

##### CALL-TAKING GUIDELINES

The call-taker shall remain calm and quickly and accurately obtain information. The call-taker shall take control of the call in a professional manner. 911 calls should be answered within 10 seconds ninety percent of the time. The calls should be processed and dispatched in under one minute. The call-taker shall verify all addresses reported. If the address provided by the caller matches the ALI display, the address may be considered verified. In the event of a discrepancy, additional steps must be taken to verify the location of the incident being reported. Address verification is critical to the delivery of emergency services°. With GEAC it is best to enter the numbers and the first three letters of the street name, i.e. enter 21 N Havenridge Dr as 21 Hav. Intersections should be entered the same way. For example, the intersection of College Park and Gosling would be entered as COL/GOS. Be sure to use your 911 map and Cassidian resources but **always verify** ANI/ALI information. If the address contains multiple businesses, suites or apartments, type a “?” in the **APT** field to obtain a list of possible choices, or you can type your own, up to six digits.

Determine the type of emergency and enter this into GEAC. Use the F? command if you cannot recall the correct code.

Obtain the caller’s name and phone number. If the caller is at a location that is different than the location of the emergency enter this information into the call notes.

Obtain a specific location of the emergency; this would be a more specific location for the responder such as the part of the building, house or property.

Obtain the name of the business, if applicable.

Determine the cross street and make sure that this is the correct part of the county.

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° NENA Standards (If address is verified by ALI this should be noted in CAD with the speed note AV (\* ADDRESS VERIFIED ALI). If the address needs to be verified by repetition due to the information not being verified by ALI this should be noted in CAD with VV –! Verbal Verification



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Determine if the caller is in danger. If the caller is in danger give them the proper directions to get out of danger. Determine if anyone else is in danger.

Determine if the caller has any specific needs.

Obtain specific directions, house description or vehicle descriptions as needed.

If call volume allows, check priors for that location. Be sure to do this through the GEAC PI screen.

### **2. Triage**

The dispatcher shall answer all 911 calls first, then 10-digit emergency lines then administrative lines. All emergency calls for service shall be processed in 60 seconds or less (from the time the address is verified to the time the en codes are activated).

Emergency lines shall be answered "Fire Dispatch, what is the address of your emergency?" Non-emergency lines shall be answered "Fire Dispatch (name optional)."

**All Applicable NENA and APCO Standards shall be contained in Appendix E**

### **3. Emergency Need for Law Enforcement/Unstable Scenes/Staging**

All pertinent information shall be relayed to the responding units. If Alarm has noted that they will be staging that information shall be relayed to the units along with any details regarding the incident. The units will determine how they will respond or stage. If we receive call of an immediate danger on scene that may request a modified response the dispatcher shall sound a mono alert tone (2-3 seconds) and give the information to the unit.

If a field unit calls Fire Com and uses "emergency," all radio traffic will stop transmission on that channel/talk group until the emergency radio traffic is completed. If a unit adds "X-ray" to their apparatus number this will indicate an immediate need for law enforcement and that the crew is in a situation of immediate physical danger. The appropriate PSAP shall be immediately contacted and informed there is an assault in progress involving a fire department/first responder crew.

**4. Logistics Coordination**

The dispatcher must maintain sight of the “big picture” The dispatcher should remain cognizant of the location of incidents and resources, such as units available in their station, units backed-in or covering other stations, and committed to active scenes. The dispatcher should also be aware of out of County resources and resources that belong to other County Agencies. Whenever there is a multi-unit response, or multiple incidents within a department or part of the County, the dispatcher should be aware of the need to move resources into that area to provide coverage.

**1. Resource Networking**

The dispatcher is the information and resource hub of an incident. The dispatcher has the capability of gaining access to support resources such as, ambulances, law enforcement, utilities, chemical information, poison control information, federal and state resources, and many others that the IC may need. Within proper bounds, under extreme instances, a quality dispatcher can be creative and innovative in knowing how to obtain resources in a given event.

**6. Anticipating Needs**

The dispatcher must be familiar with modern fire service delivery methods. As such, the dispatcher must be knowledgeable of common operating procedures used by the departments as they apply.

**7. Dispatch Sequence**

\* Encodes Activated

\* Alert Tone 1 for Fire Incident Alert Tone 2 for Medical Incidents; Tone for 3-5 seconds

\* Announce Units to Respond

\* Announce Type of Call

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- \* Announce Location
- \* Announce Business Name, if Applicable
- \* Repeat Unit (s), Type of Call, Location, and Business Name
- \* Announce Cross Street and Map Pages
- \* Announce Response Channel/Talk Group
- \* Announce Time at End of Dispatch

Additional directions and call information should be given as units go en route or updates become available. When information becomes available it should immediately be given to the responder(s). This should be noted in the CAD notes that information was given to fire (IGF) and that the information was acknowledged (IAF).

All apparatus or officer will complete all calls for service., If a caller calls back and states that service is no longer needed, the dispatcher shall relay this information to the highest ranking officer or first due apparatus. The officer will make a decision to continue emergency or non-emergency and which units, if any, to cancel.

When sending units out of county they shall be advised what department they are assisting in the dispatch sequence. If command has been established they shall be dispatched to "assist" that command.

### **8. Re-Dispatching and Box Completion**

If no apparatus has responded in three minutes Fire Com shall re-dispatch the original assignment. If after one minute no units have gone en route Fire Com will attempt to contact any unit from that assignment on the air. At that time it is acceptable for any unit to respond on the air. If there is no reply the next unit up shall be dispatched. Fire Com should include the original encode with the dispatch and announce that that unit respond for the unit that did not go en route. When there is a box alarm, if all units have not gone en route after seven minutes, Fire Com shall notify the first due apparatus, or the ranking officer, and ask if they wish to complete the box.

**9. TAC/Response Channel/Talk Group Operations**

**10. Maintaining Radio Traffic Control**

It is the role of the radio operator to maintain, as much as possible, control over the radio. The dispatcher shall correct responding units to respond on the correct channel/talk group at all times. When circumstances warrant, such as a box alarm, heavy call volume, multiple alarms, severe weather, the dispatcher may have to coordinate many resources over many channels/talk groups. To aid in this endeavor, when multiple units are responding to the same incident over different radio channels/talk groups the dispatcher should multi-select FD1-3 in addition to any TAC channels are appropriate and sound a 5-7 second Alert Tone 3 and announce what channel/talk group an incident has been assigned. Units should not be assigned a TAC direct until **after** they have arrived on location.

Dispatcher should avoid over-relying on the instant replay recorder. Dispatcher should never state that the unit was readable when that is not the case. If the traffic is missed for whatever reason, ask them to repeat. Do not blame the system or the field operator if that is not the accurate situation.

**11. Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)**

During a structure fire Command should be advised that a PAR is due twenty minutes after the initial call was received. PARs will then be requested every 20 minutes after completion until Command advises discontinue PARs or the incident is declare under control (7-1).

Command may request a PAR timer be kept under other circumstances such as hazardous material calls, water rescue operations, mass casualty incidents, etc.

**12. Working Fires**

WORKING FIRE NOTIFICATION

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- Provide needed support to fire ground operations by notifying dispatch that there is a working fire at the scene.
- When the first apparatus or officer arrives on scene, or at any point during the incident, Command has evidence of a working structure fire, Command shall announce to FireCom that there is a “working fire.”

**Example:** Engine 102 arrives on location with flames through the roof; they shall announce the size-up and make a notification of a working fire. “E102 FireCom, E102 on location of a two-story single family dwelling with flames through the roof. E102 is establishing Gosling Command, this will be a working fire traffic to Tac South” FireCom will sound a short alert tone and state, “FireCom received, E102 on location, fire through the roof, establishing Gosling Command on Tac South, advising a working fire.”

**Example:** Command has been established and during the investigation it has been determined that there is a working fire. Command shall advise FireCom that there is now a working fire. “Riva Row Command, FireCom, we have a working fire.” FireCom will sound a short alert tone and announce, “FireCom received, Riva Row Command advising a working fire.”

When FireCom has been notified of a working fire, they shall document in CAD with a speed note that shall prompt the following actions:

- EMS shall be notified to send a medic unit for a fire standby.
- Law enforcement shall be notified for traffic/crowd control.
- The electric provider for that area shall be contacted to respond to the scene.
- The County or appropriate municipal fire marshal shall be notified.
- Fire Com shall make the proper back-in assignments.

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**13. Special Calls**

When Command advises dispatch of the following operations the dispatcher shall transmit a Tone 3 Alert for 5 seconds and announce the action being undertaken. These calls include:

- Master Stream Operations (**5 second alert tone**)
- Evacuation of Structure by Fire Fighters (**5 second alert tone**)
- Size-up/Establishing Command (3 second alert tone)
- Command Initiated PAR Request (3 second alert tone)
- Signal 7-1 – Incident under Control (3 second alert tone)

**15. Mayday (Truncated)**

(MCFCA Mayday Procedure *Appendix E*)

A Mayday occurs when a firefighter becomes trapped, lost or disoriented. The purpose of the fire ground Mayday procedure is to produce a coordinated accountability and rescue operation. A Mayday may be initiated by radio traffic, verbal indications from within a structure or a third part on the scene. The Incident Commander will be responsible for implementing this procedure according to the guidelines set forth in the County Mayday Procedure.

The individual should issue the Mayday on the fire ground direct channel (aka talk around channel, simplex, non-repeated channel) and state "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday." The individual should provide as much information as possible:

**Location**

**Unit Number**

**Name**

**Assignment (sector, division, etc.)**

**Resources Needed**

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- Pass Device should be activated (Personnel Alert Safety System)
- Lost or trapped firefighters should remain together
- Shine flashlight at ceiling
- Make noise

**15. IC Response to Mayday**

- All traffic not directly related to the Mayday shall switch to Texas Fire 1. The channel on which the Mayday was declared shall be dedicated to that operation until the emergency is over.
- After the Mayday has been received the next highest alarm will be issued. An additional ambulance will be request from MCHD/CCEMS. Any additional special resources will be requested, such as a rescue truck, ladder truck, heavy equipment, etc.
- A brief progress report to Fire Com will be given with assignment of channels/talk groups for fire ground operations and the status of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).
- PAR will immediately be conducted on a channel/talk group different from the Mayday Operations.
- The IC shall notify Fire Com to announce the conclusion of the event.

**Fire Com shall:**

- Issue the next highest alarm
- Coordinate with IC the channel/talk group assignments
- Contact Alarm/Com Center to have at least one ambulance for the fire ground and one ambulance for the Mayday
- PARs shall be at 10 minutes during the Mayday event
- All fire ground traffic should move to Texas Fire 1. The channel on which the Mayday was declared shall be dedicated the Mayday.

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**16. Back-in Assignments**

Upon notification of a working fire, Fire Com shall initiate back-in assignments. The IC will be updated with the status of their back-ins and what truck has been assigned to which station. In general, these stations will be the ones covered when applicable:

21	11-1
32	11-2
51	121
61	151
81	161
91	172
101	181
102	184
104	186

**17. Incident under Control**

When command has determined that an incident is under control command shall advise Fire Com. Fire Com will transmit a 3-5 second Tone 3 alert and announce the 7-1 and the units being held by command

**18. Fire Marshal Notification**

A. Montgomery County (FM1-5 in CAD).

The MCFMO should be notified for routine investigations for these incidents:

- Any structure fire (including extinguished fires), explosions or any burn (excluding thermal burns from cooking, excessive exposure to solar effects, etc.)
- Fire or explosions involving county property or property owned by public officials, regardless of location.



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- Bomb threats
- Any fire suspected of having been intentionally set.
- Any fire that causes the activation of a fire alarm, sprinkler activation or fixed chemical system or any activation of a water flow alarm, sprinkler head activation or fixed chemical system activation.
- Any fire suspected to have been started by juveniles.

The MCFMO should be notified for immediate investigation for the following incidents:

- Death or serious bodily injury caused by fire or explosion.
- Incident Commander requests an investigator to the scene.
- If requested by another agency, i.e. Law Enforcement, BATF, FBI, DPS, etc.
- Citizen request for a MCFMO response or contact.
- Any major hazardous material response at a fixed location (excluding fuel spills).

#### **B. Harris County Fire Marshal's Office**

The HCFMO should be notified for the following incidents:

- Any fire suspected to be intentionally set
- Any structure fire where the IC cannot determine the cause or origin.
- Any large grass/woods fire that is threatening a large number of homes.
- Any vegetation fire that causes the Texas Forest Service to be requested.
- Any fire or explosion that causes significant bodily injury or death.
- Any fire that occurs in a commercial establishment, public building or multi-family dwelling of 4 or more units.
- Any fire involving a fire alarm, sprinkler system activation, malfunction or false alarm.

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- Any fire from a violation of an outdoor burning ban, outdoor burning rules or fireworks violation.
- Any fire believed to have been started by juveniles.

**C. Municipal Investigations**

The City of Shenandoah Fire Marshal or the City of Oak Ridge Fire Marshal should be notified of incidents similar to the MCFMO notification list when they occur within the city limits of those two cities. If an incident occurs within the City of Conroe but is within the jurisdiction of an ESD and there is a request for a fire marshal, contact Alarm and give them all the needed information.

**D. CAD should provide sufficient notification for the MCFMO routine investigations. For immediate notification refer to their list or call Jimmy Williams first then Scott Burlin. Contact the Cypress Creek Com Center for the HCFMO. Call the two city fire marshals directly.**

**XVIII Evacuations**

It is the duty of law enforcement to conduct evacuations. Should an incident commander notify Fire Com of a need for evacuation, this information shall be given to the correct primary PSAP. We shall provide as much information as requested but it shall be law enforcement's role to determine how the evacuation shall be conducted. A common talk group on the TX WARN system should be found to aid in this endeavor.

**XIX Facility Emergencies**

A. Generator Activation

- In the event of generator activation send a notification to SHPWR in CAD. If there are any warnings or errors on the panel located by Position 1 include those in the notification page. If the UPS failed to hold while the generator started please note this as well.

B. UPS power

- If the generator fails and we are on UPS power, send a page with this information to SHPWR in CAD; include any error message or warning on the UPS panel with this

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notification. Turn off all non-essential devices to save battery time: consoles not in use, network computers, television, printers, MCHD computers, lights, etc.

C. There are some situations that will require the evacuation of the office such as hazardous materials, fire, the loss of structural integrity, etc. The following procedure should be followed in this event:

1. Call Alarm, MCSO and CPD and notify the supervisor on duty that Fire Com is down and will be evacuating and relocating to the backup facility (MCHD's location unless otherwise instructed). Alarm will need to dispatch fire units. MCSO and CPD will need to reroute fire calls until the alternate routing activation has begun. If Shenandoah PD is not already aware of the situation, inform them as well.
2. Activate the "Make Busy" switch inside the server room and activate the DRS through AT&T. Send an message to FCOM through CAD if possible to notify oncoming shift of relocation.
3. Contact the Dispatch Manager, the Deputy Chief of Support Services and or the on-call supervisor.
4. Notifications should be made to all mutual aid agencies in the immediate area, Cypress Creek EMS, Harris County Emergency Communications, Cleveland, and so on.
5. Once on-duty staff has reached the back-up location resend FCOM page with update. Take whatever supplies you feel you may need but be sure to include: headsets with amplifiers, Key Maps, Woodlands Township GIS map book, Township laptop computer.
6. Contact Russ or Roberto with MCECD and alert them of the relocation and the need to check that the alternate routing has taken place.
7. When returning to Shenandoah remember to undo the DRS and "Make-Busy Switch."
8. When operations have returned to normal send update to FCOM.