

WASHTENAW AREA MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION POLICY

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PUPPOSE:

This procedure defines when and how radio talk groups are assigned to an incident for operations, and defines common radio procedures for regional use by Washtenaw County Fire Departments.

SECTIONS:

- I. Definitions
- II. Assignment of Talk Groups
- III. Dispatching Incidents
- IV. Response to an Incident
- V. Hazards Zone Incidents
- VI. Alarm Assignment on Scene
- VII. Routine Radio Traffic
- VIII. Sample Initial Dispatches
- IX. Sample Apparatus Run Down

I. DEFINITIONS / COMMON TERMINOLOGY:

The following terminology is meant to be used by fire departments operating in Washtenaw County so that dispatchers and fire personnel understand what is meant when used over the radio on a fire ground operation or other emergency scene.

1st Box / 1st Alarm - An incident requiring the response of multiple pieces of apparatus or stations. This is generally a statement from the commander on the scene of a Still Alarm requesting the dispatch center to *“Balance out the Box”* otherwise meaning to send the First Box alarm.

2nd And Additional Box Alarms - The incident has progressed to a situation where multiple departments, apparatus, personnel and officers are needed to handle the situation on various talk groups at the scene. These types of alarms are handled using

the predetermined Box cards.

All Responding Companies – All apparatus/companies/units dispatched and responding to the emergency.

Apparatus Run Down – Often requested by the Incident Commander, a run down, or apparatus run down is a verbal report of all resources currently responding to an incident. The dispatcher would provide this information based on the units and apparatus that have called responding to the incident. The dispatcher should always be prepared to provide this information when requested.

Automatic Mutual Aid (AMA) - are (signed or unsigned) agreements between departments to respond together in certain situations to incidents. Dispatch centers will maintain pre-built run cards specifying certain pieces of apparatus to respond.

Balancing a Box Alarm Assignment– Balancing a 1st alarm box, fill-out the assignment, balance the box, or upgrade the box are all terms frequently used interchangeably. Balancing a 1st alarm from the initial assignment where a department uses a portion of the full 1st alarm assignment (Still Alarm) as an initial response until more information on the extent of the emergency (typically a structure fire) is better determined. The initial arriving Officer(s) of the assignment must fill-out, or balance, (request the remaining elements of the 1st Alarm assignment not yet sent) before requesting resources greater than the 1st BOX Alarm assignment.

Washtenaw County Box Alarm Cards establish provisions for a Still Alarm, which is likely a reduced level of apparatus response (lesser than an alarm assignment). The next level on the card is identified as a “Box”. Filling out the box would require the dispatcher to add the resources listed in this section to the dispatched resources. The STILL ALARM plus BOX will equal a 1st Alarm Assignment.

Box Card / Alarm Card / Run Card – A written predetermined response plan that this dispatched to a reported fire or other emergency. Cards are generally constructed based on geographical area(s), type of incident, and a predetermined resource response plan by alarm level.

CAN Reports – Conditions, Actions, Needs (CAN) reports establishes a format for operating units to provide a consistent way to report back to the Incident Commander (IC) on their progress and needs. CAN keeps things simple and delivers the IC the information needed to keep the strategy and Incident Action Plan (IAP) current.

Note: CAN reports may sometimes referred to as an L-CAN report (Location, Conditions, Actions, and Needs). As an example; Livingston County utilizes this style of CAN report.

Company – A staffed piece of fire apparatus (Engine, Ladder, Tower, Tanker, etc.),

Defensive Fire - A defensive fire situation is where the incident problem has evolved to

the point that offensive tactics are no longer effective or safe. The entire defensive strategy is based on protecting firefighters, then property in that order. Firefighter safety is the number one defensive priority and typically results in attacking the fire from the exterior using well placed heavy caliber water streams. When performing suppression efforts on a defensive fire, crews are said to be working in the defensive mode.

Dispatched assignment – A predetermined response that is dispatched to a reported fire or other emergency, following the department’s Box Alarm Cards, or predetermined apparatus response plan for the given type of emergency.

Dual Response - This is a request for automatic mutual aid when the distance to the incident of the primary agency could be closer to a neighboring agency station. Agreements have been reached to send both departments/stations simultaneously to the incident to mitigate the situation until the primary agency arrives. The dispatcher will announce over the radio the response is a dual response at the initial dispatch.

Elapsed Time Notifications (ETN) – When a Working Fire or Working Incident is declared, it will prompt the Dispatcher to begin elapsed time notifications (an IC can also request ETN’s whenever they feel it is necessary). The dispatcher will announce over the tactical frequency and elapsed time notification every ten-minutes (10:00) until the Incident Commander requests to discontinue or restructure the ETN’s. The Incident Commander must verbally acknowledge each 10-minute notification. The Incident Commander may also re-announce the current incident’s strategy over the assigned tactical radio frequency. ETN’s will continue until the Incident Commander requests to discontinue or restructure the notifications.

Emergency Traffic – May be announced by the Incident Commander to alert personnel to evacuate or of other emergency radio traffic, or may be announced by any personnel encountering any immediately dangerous situation such as wires down, collapse etc...

Evacuate / Evacuation – Term used by the Incident Commander instructing personnel operating within a structure to vacate the structure immediately. This term may also be used to “evacuate” personnel from the hot zone if necessary for other types of situations.

Exit the Structure – Is defined as an orderly withdraw where interior lines and equipment will withdraw and repositioned/shut down when changing to a defensive strategy.

Greater Alarms/Boxes - Request for a 2nd or Additional Alarms, which are dispatched in accordance with the specific department’s Box Alarm Cards. Typically reflects a duplication of the resources of a full 1st alarm assignment.

Level 1 Staging – The Incident Commander may direct inbound units to Level 1 Stage, this directs units that have not yet arrived to not commit to the scene, but to stage in the vicinity with the following direction:

- Engine Companies shall not pass the last available fire hydrant or applicable water supply.

- Truck Companies shall not pass the last traffic point, which would allow them to position on any side of the structure without rerouting.

Level 2 Staging – The Incident Commander may direct inbound units to Level 2 Stage, and then announce the location of the staging area. Level 2 staging is typically reserved for larger parking lots or areas large enough to accommodate multiple pieces of fire apparatus which may be a short distance from the incident scene.

MABAS Alarm - An incident in the state or nation that requires the use of apparatus to respond and assist with mitigation of an incident for (24) hours, (72) hours or several weeks deemed by the state. The incident will be processed following the MABAS Alarm Activation policy in the dispatch center to notify Washtenaw County of an activation.

Note: A MABAS alarm is not the same thing as the Washtenaw County Box Alarm system.

Mobile Data Computer / Terminals (MDC's / MDT's) – Electronic devices utilized to transmit and receive digital information within an emergency response vehicle.

Move-Up / Fill-in / Back-fill– A unit or units sent to stand-by at fire stations vacated by units deployed to an active emergency. Used for maintaining effective service coverage for a given community / area.

Mutual Aid - When a primary agency responds to or is on the scene of an incident, requests a specific piece of apparatus or another department to respond to the incident. The dispatcher will announce over the radio the response is a mutual aid at the initial dispatch.

Next Due - When an incident is calling for a single station response only and the crew or apparatus is not available to respond, the officer may request Central Dispatch to dispatch the Next Due. The dispatcher will then dispatch the next due station to respond. This may be a mutual aid resource if a department is fully committed on an incident, or may be another resource within the department that is not fully committed.

Example: Ann Arbor City Fire Engine 1-4 is committed on an MVA at Washtenaw and Huron Parkway and another incident occurs in Engine 4's area. The next due would be the next closest Ann Arbor City fire resource.

This also may be used as part of the multiple alarm system when only a portion of the next alarm level is needed. This would indicated to a dispatcher to reference a box alarm card and modify the alarm assignment based on the order of the resources listed on the box card.

Example: an Incident Commander may request for Central to send me my next due tanker. The dispatcher would look on the box card and dispatch the next due tanker listed on the box card.

Offensive Fire – The basic offensive working fire control strategy is a fast, aggressive well-placed interior (offensive) attack on the fire. Crews are committed to and working directly in the Hazard Zone. When performing suppression efforts on an offensive fire, crews are said to be working in the offensive mode.

On-Deck - A crew of personnel that have been assigned to a forward staging location just outside the immediate hazard zone, in a safe distance from the entrance of a tactical position, Sector / Division (S/D). Once a crew is assigned “On-Deck”, they are first and foremost a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) until they are given an assignment into a hazard zone. The absence of an “On Deck” crew should serve as red flag to the Incident Commander, additional resources are required on-scene. An “On Deck” crew will be supervised either by the S/D Officer or the Company Officer, and shall remain “On Deck” until assigned by the Incident Commander or S/D Officer.

Order Model Radio Traffic –The Order Model for scene management purposes lessens the overall amount of scene radio traffic; enhances the accountability process; and prevents deployment mistakes, directional mistakes and freelancing. It progresses as follows:

1. Sender contacts receiver. "*Central (receiver) from Engine 1-4 (sender)*";
2. Receiver states readiness to receive. "*This is Central, go ahead Engine 1-4*"
3. Sender transmits message/order. "*Engine 1-4 will be Main Street Command*".
4. Receiver briefly restate message to confirm understanding the message. "*Central copies, staging 2 additional Medic units 1 block north of your location...*"

The message is complete at this point; there is no need for additional radio traffic about this order (Engine 1-4 does not need to "clear" the message if it is repeated back correctly. It is understood to be correct by both parties at this point.), unless Central misrepresents the request as they are stating it back to Engine 1-4. Should that occur, Engine 1-4 will restate the order again and Central will repeat it back correctly; both parties are now ready for additional radio traffic at this incident as conditions warrant.

Original Company – a company assigned as part of the initial dispatch to an emergency incident.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) – A method of ensure all firefighters on the fire ground are accounted for. The personnel accountability report or PAR involves contacting each supervisor that has a crew assigned to assure that each crew member is accounted for. For the crew leader, a PAR is a confirmation that members assigned to their crew are accounted for.

Priority Traffic - This shall be the term used when calling the Incident Commander by any functional unit, or by dispatch for an urgent request or need when there is a significant amount of radio traffic, so that the Incident Commander can put a priority on the radio traffic.

Recycle - A timely and efficient means of air replacement and re-hydration of assigned companies while still maintaining their assignment.

Rapid Intervention Team / Crew - A Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) is a dedicated crew of firefighters who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue lost or trapped members. The function of the RIT is to constantly assess the situation, maintain situational awareness, monitor communications, assemble rescue equipment, and remain properly outfitted and ready to respond should rescue of interior crews become necessary.

Roll Call – Is used to account for each individual personnel by name, or ID number. When a roll call is conducted each members is contacted and verified that they are accounted for.

Routine Radio Reports - Routine radio transmissions are the most common communications performed on the emergency scene. In most instances, routine radio traffic should be initiated by the IC.

Sectors, Divisions, Groups – Sectors, Divisions, and Groups divide the incident scene, and command responsibility, into smaller more manageable units, allowing the Incident Commander to maintain a reasonable span of control. This improves accountability and crew safety. Once assigned to a Sector, Division, or Group, crews will communicate directly with their tactical boss (not the Incident Commander) by radio or, when practical, face-to-face.

- **Building Sides**, the four external sides of a build are labeled as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta, starting with the front (generally the address side) and proceeding clockwise around the structure. Labeling the four sides does not automatically make any given side a sector; these labels are primarily directional indicators or reference points so all working units communicate and are on the same page directionally regarding assignments and conditions. However, it is frequently common that these designations evolve into formal sectors as the incident progresses and units are assigned to each separate area.
- **Divisions** are used in our structural operations to designate interior levels within structures. For example, the first floor is designated as division 1, the second floor as division 2...and so on. For below grade situations, the designation is subdivision 2, subdivision 3 and so on.

Note: Some fire departments use divisions as sectors to divide up the incident scene. In this sense, they are interchangeable depending on local preference.

- **Groups** are an organizational subdivision established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic area.

Special Call Assignments – A request for specific resources/apparatus to supplement working units at an incident, yet not requiring a full 2nd or greater alarm assignment, i.e., only one or two Truck/Ladder companies, an extra engine or two, additional chief officers,

etc. The Incident Commander will simply ask that the needed units be dispatched.

Staging – See Level I and Level II staging definition.

Status Change Report - a status change is defined as; moving from an assigned geographic work location to a different geographic work location or when exiting the hazard zone.

- All status change reports should include a PAR of the unit transmitting the report.
- A status change report should be transmitted to the Incident Commander as soon as possible, but the report should not be structured as priority traffic and the Order Model must be used.
- When a Sector / Division has been upgraded with tactical level supervision, companies should report status changes face to face to their assigned SD boss when exiting the hazard zone

Still Alarm - Local alarm level that involves one or more resources from the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). This alarm level may include resources external from the AHJ.

Working Fire / Working Incident – Indicates a situation that will at least require the commitment of all responding companies, which may be communicated to Central by the statements:

- Declaration of a working fire
- Declaration of a working incident
- The statement “*holding all companies*”

This report advises Central Dispatch that the companies will be engaged in tactical activities and will be held at the scene for an extended period of time. Central will monitor radio traffic on all incidents to anticipate the needs of Command. This requirement will not be required if technology does not allow for this to occur such as when talk around channels such as 8Tac Channels.

II. ASSIGNMENT OF TALK GROUPS:

All incidents dispatched by Washtenaw County Central Fire Dispatch (“Central”) will be dispatched over the activated departments primary assigned talk group of the Michigan Public Safety Communication System (MPSCS). The following are the assigned primary talk groups:

81 Fire 1

- Ann Arbor City Fire Department
- Pittsfield Township Fire Department

81 Fire 2

- Ann Arbor Township Fire Department
- Superior Township Fire Department
- Ypsilanti City Fire Department
- Ypsilanti Township Fire Department

81 Fire 3

- Augusta Township Fire Department
- Chelsea Area Fire Authority
- Dexter Area Fire Department
- Manchester Fire Department
- Northfield Township Fire Department
- Salem Township Fire Department
- Saline Area Fire Department
- Scio Township Fire Department

Incidents will either be managed on the departments primary assigned talk group, or may be assigned a different interop talk group by the dispatcher based on the nature of the incident. The assignment of an interop talk group should occur at the time the units are dispatched. Incidents will be assigned a talk group based on the anticipated radio traffic.

Additional **INTEROP** talk groups, at the request of the Incident Commander, will be assigned to an incident for on-going support operations, such as Sectors / Divisions / Groups; Staging, Water-supply; Rescue, Triage; Logistics, etc.

OVERLOAD SITUATIONS - When the county is inundated with multiple incidents such as a storm, **INTEROP** talk groups can be used to handle 3-4 incidents (generally the same agency or neighboring agencies) on one talk group. This will promote efficiency for those department(s) affected by the storm and provide command and control for the dispatch center.

Note: When communications are hampered due to construction and/or design of a building:

- Fire crews should consider using 8TACT93D (radio to radio).
 - Dispatch will not be able to monitor this channel given the limited range of radio to radio.
- Fire crews should consider using the UofM radio system when operating in UofM buildings.

Note: When communications are hampered due to system overload:

- Consider utilizing the UM radio system.
- Consider utilizing the (old) Analog 800 Mhz. Washtenaw County system.
- Consider using the NPSPAC (Zone F) system.

EMS/AMBULANCES RESPONSES – EMS/Ambulance units responding to an assigned incident shall monitor the same talk group assigned to the responding fire department to facilitate communications at the incident.

Fire department resources wishing to talk with the responding EMS units would do so by hailing them by the incident location.

Example: *"HVA unit responding to Plymouth and US-23 from US-23 Command"*.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES – The Interop channel assigned should be communicated to the appropriate law enforcement dispatcher.

III. DISPATCHING INCIDENTS

Incidents will be categorized into either low demand, medium demand, or high demand incidents. This categorization determination will dictate whether or not an interop channel is assigned at the time of dispatch.

At no time should Central Dispatch cancel a fire related (fire alarms, smoke in the building, or High Mechanism MVA's, etc.) call for service without authorization from the responding fire department. In these instances Central Dispatch should dispatch the incident as normal along with any additional information about the incident.

When dispatching Still Alarms, or Box Alarms, the dispatcher must be sure to announce which alarm level is being dispatched.

Low Demand Incidents include:

- Medical emergencies
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Fire alarms (for departments that dispatch a single unit)
- Car fires with no exposures
- Wires down with no hazards

These incident types would typically be managed on the departments primary talk group. However, when the primary talk group becomes overloaded, the dispatcher or Incident Commander can assign or request an interop talk group.

Medium Demand Incidents include:

- Michigan MABAS mobilizations - Coordination
- Motor vehicle accidents with 2 or more departments responding
- Potential heavy rescue (rollover, pin-in, extrication)
- Inclement weather causing multiple incidents in an area (i.e.; section of I94)
- Any incident with multiple fire departments (2 or more) that are not categorized as a significant incident.

These incident types would typically be managed on a single Interop talk group. Central dispatch shall assign an unassigned Interop talk group for these types of incidents. Any unassigned interop talk group maybe assigned, either odd or even number.

Example: A medium demand incident is dispatched. Interop 4 would be assigned, Interop 5 would be left unassigned (but would be available for the next medium demand incident),

and Interop 6 and 7 would be the next significant incident Interop paired talk groups assigned. This is done so as to not break up paired talk groups, which if done would interfere with programmed scan lists.

High Demand Incidents include:

- Still alarms
- Greater alarms / BOX alarms
- Structure Fires
- Hazardous Spills
- Technical Rescues (Confined Space, Water Rescue, Trench Rescue, Collapse, high / low angle rescue)
- An incident with the potential of a fire (i.e.; Alarms, odor of smoke, light smoke)
- Active violence situation or terrorist situation
- Mass casualty or potential of a mass casualty.

These types of incidents typically require coordination of multiple companies or departments. These incident types require that an Interop talk group be assigned to conduct all radio traffic. This incident type would likely need an additional Interop channel (total of 2 Interop talk groups) to manage the incident. Additional Interop talk groups will be assigned at the request of Incident Commander.

Note: All structure fires / significant incident types will have a pair of adjacent Interop talk groups assigned. Assignments must start with an even number Interop. Pairing of channels are as follows:

- Interop 4 / Interop 5
- Interop 6 / Interop 7
- Interop 8 / Interop 9
- Interop 10 / Interop 11
- Interop 12 / Interop 13
- Interop 14 / Interop 15 – Note: these are encrypted talk groups.

The main Interop and the following talk group Interop channel to be utilized for operations as needed, and as directed by the Incident Commander. The additional talk groups will be held by the dispatcher, but will not be assigned without the Incident Commander authorizing their use. The Incident Commander will advise Central when the Interop(s) are no longer needed.

Example: The report of a structure fire would be dispatched on all of the departments that are assigned to respond. An Interop talk group would be assigned at the time of dispatch. The dispatcher would also hold the next successive Interop channel in case the Incident Commander requests the additional Interop talk group.

- Interop 4 Assigned
- Interop 5 Reserved, but not broadcast unless requested by the incident commander.

When an Interop is assigned, the assigned channel shall but entered in the CAD and Active 911 notes.

IV. RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

Dispatched acknowledgment: All agencies responding to an incident shall acknowledge Central by MDC / MDT if equipped, and/or by radio.

If Central has assigned an Interop channel all radio traffic pertinent to that incident shall be transmitted on the assigned Interop channel. This includes units calling enroute, on scene etc....

For Career/Staffed departments

If Central does not receive an acknowledgment within the departments designated scramble time of the 1st tone out:

1. Dispatch the incident a second time
2. The dispatcher will request acknowledgment by radio on all talk groups (starting with the assigned talk group and Fire Dispatch).
3. If there is still no acknowledgement, the dispatcher would then attempt to contact the station by phone.
4. If there is no response, Central will dispatch the next closest station from the primary department.
 - a. If the primary department does not have any additional resources available, Central shall dispatch the next closest department.

If Central is unable to contact the original station/department, the station will be placed unavailable and the Battalion Chief / Captain / Chief notified of the circumstances.

For Paid-On-Call/Non-Staffed departments

If Central does not receive an acknowledgment within the departments designated time frame of the 1st tone out, the dispatcher will request acknowledgment by radio on all talk groups (starting with the assigned talk group and Fire Dispatch talk group). If no response, Central will then re-tone (2nd tone out of incident) the department.

If no response after the departments designated time frame, the dispatcher will request acknowledgment by radio on all talk groups (starting with the assigned talk group and department's primary dispatch talk group). If no response after the designated time frame, the dispatcher will follow the Delayed Response Policy and dispatch the next closest department.

As a general rule, responding fire companies will leave a radio on the departments primary talk group with a second radio monitoring the assigned talk group. The first unit arriving on scene will transmit their Initial Radio Report (IRR) to Central on the assigned Talk Group. All communications for the incident will take place on the assigned talk group.

Central Dispatch will repeat the nature of the call, the address and other pertinent information including: address, cross street, nature of incident, and any other critical information, to the first apparatus to call responding from the primary fire department. The repeating of the information is an indication to the responder that they are the first one on the air responding.

V. ON SCENE COMMUNICATIONS

Some incidents may require the use of multiple radio Talk Groups in order to support operations. Examples include Level 2 staging, Rehab, Safety, Planning, Logistics, etc. Each additional talk group activated for the incident should have a dedicated person assigned on-scene to manage that Talk Group at all times.

The IC is responsible for the operation of one (1) tactical radio Talk Group while on the scene of an incident. All other talk groups assigned to the incident when needing to speak with Incident Commander shall switch to the talk group the Incident Commander has operations on. Central dispatch will also only need to monitor the primary talk group that the Incident Commander is working from.

In the event that additional calls for service are received for the primary responding department, who are operating on an assigned Interop talk group, dispatch shall notify the Incident Commander of any additional calls for service in their response area on the assigned incident Interop Talk Group.

VI. ALARM ASSIGNMENTS ON SCENE

For the purpose of standardizing terminology there shall be three ways of requesting mutual aid companies in Washtenaw County:

Change of Quarters (Move-Up):

For the purposes of covering fire stations without a response to the scene by mutual aid companies, the Incident Commander may instruct dispatch to *“move-up or change of quarters”* mutual aid departments to cover vacant fire stations. Change of quarters should be accomplished by requesting the next due mutual aid department listed under the change of quarters / coverage box on the box card system.

Special Call:

This method is used to summon a particular piece of equipment to an incident and should not be used for incidents that are likely to escalate requiring the use of the Multiple Alarm System.

Example:

le... *“Central from US-23 and Geddes Command, special call Pittsfield Fire with an Engine”*.
le... *“Central from US-23 and Geddes Command, special call Pittsfield Fire for their jaws and extrication equipment”*.

Multiple Alarm System:

When the incident exceeds a departments internal resources and mutual aid is needed beyond a special call type of situation, they will be requested by alarm number.

If the Incident Commander on a Still Alarm states "*fill the box*" they shall receive all of the resources listed in Still Alarm section of the box card as well as those listed on the Box Alarm section of the card. This action will provide all of the resources for a First Alarm Assignment.

An Incident Commander who requests either "*...give me the second box*", or requests a "*...second alarm*" would indicate to the dispatcher to upgrade the alarm level to a second alarm / second box.

If the Incident Commander bypasses a level on the Box card (for example: command requests a 3rd alarm, but the 2nd alarm has not been struck) the dispatcher will strike the 2nd and 3rd alarm requested, or fill out any alarms not already dispatched.

I.e... "*Central give me a 3rd alarm...*" the dispatcher would dispatch all resources identified in all alarm levels up through the 3rd alarm.

Central Dispatch must identify and verbalize what resources (engine, tanker, truck etc.) are requested at the time of the dispatch.

Apparatus due to respond that may be out-of-service or not available, will have the next piece of apparatus on the card moved up in its place to fulfill the Box request. The dispatcher will announce over the radio the change in the response.

When this system is used it is recommended that after requesting the additional alarms that an apparatus staging area be established.

Modifying the Alarm Assignment:

The Incident Commander will also have the authority to modify or alter the alarm assignment.

I.e... "*Central from Warren Road Command, I am requesting a 3rd alarm, minus the truck company.*"

Central should dispatch all the resources due with the exception of any truck company identified on the box card.

Central Dispatch will provide continuous updates to responding agencies to assist them in deciding the correct response to an initial assignment. Central Dispatch does have the ability to fill-out or balance an alarm assignment based on developing information being received by Central Dispatch. However, once a member of the fire department arrives, the alarm upgrade shall only be at the direction of the Incident Commander. The responding officer will take updated information into consideration and determine the

balance of a box and/or request for additional BOX alarms.

For example:

- Central is receiving several calls reporting the incident;
- Responding units advise Central of a visible column of smoke in the general vicinity of the address;
- Caller reports seeing visible fire and/or that occupants are likely still in the structure;
- A reliable public safety official is on scene and verifies a working fire; or
- Anytime command orders the assignment filled-out to full first BOX alarm status

Working Fire Policy

The term “*working fire*” indicates a situation that will at least require the commitment of all responding companies for an extended period of time. When notified of a Working Fire, Central will check with Incident Commander to see if they would like Central to make the standard notifications (the standard should be the following):

1. Upgrade the incident to a full 1st BOX alarm assignment (fill out / balance the box), if not already done
2. Request law enforcement for traffic and crowd control
3. Request gas and electric companies as appropriate
4. Document progress/benchmark reports Conditions, Action, Needs (CAN) reports, Sectors, Divisions, Group (S/D/G) assignments, emergency traffic, and elapsed time notifications.
5. Consider assigning additional dispatchers when needed to monitor/support Staging and other Sectors, Divisions, Group created by the IC.
6. Dispatch any special agencies or equipment when the need is indicated.
7. Make notifications to pertinent personnel, as directed.
8. Inquire with command the need for a Fire Investigator
9. Dispatcher will notify the Incident Commander after a BOX alarm has been dispatched to the incident what pieces of apparatus are responding and what talk group has been assigned for staging.
10. Request EMS / ALS unit, and an EMS Supervisor.

Elapsed Time Notifications (ETN): When a working fire incident is declared, it will prompt Central to begin elapsed time notifications (an Incident Commander can also request ETN’s whenever they feel it is necessary). The dispatcher will announce over the tactical talk group an elapsed time notification every ten-minutes (10:00) until the Incident Commander requests to discontinue or restructure the ETN’s.

The Incident Commander may verbally acknowledge each 10-minute notification by re-announcing the incident’s strategy over the assigned tactical radio talk group until the Incident Commander requests to discontinue or restructure the notifications.

It is suggested that the Incident Commander report the incident strategy every ETN over the radio. This is a helpful reminder to determine if they should continue with the current strategy or adjust it based on the situation and reports coming into the Incident

Commander.

VII. ROUTINE RADIO TRAFFIC

It is recommended when communicating on a radio, the Order Model be followed.

Routine radio traffic communicates basic, routine communications that are typically performed on an emergency scene. This includes:

- Initial Radio Reports
- Follow-Up Reports
- Assigning Units
- Command Transfers
- CAN Reporting
- Roof Reporting
- Communicating with Central Dispatch

Routine radio transmissions are the most common communications performed on an emergency scene. In most instances, routine radio traffic should be initiated by the Incident Commander. Other routine radio traffic may include:

- Pump operator to company to coordinate critical work and water supply
- Company to company to coordinate critical work
- Company to Sector / Division supervisor to coordinate critical work and the work/rest cycle
- Sector / Division supervisor to company to coordinate critical work and the work/rest cycle

It is suggested all communications that details routine work performed in assigned areas should be done face to face whenever possible in the assigned work area and should not be transmitted over the tactical talk group.

Radio Discipline - When 3 to 4 units (or more units) are assigned to the incident site, the tactical talk group can quickly become clogged with unnecessary radio traffic. The two main reasons for this are:

1. Assigned units are communicating/contacting the Incident Commander with non-essential radio traffic.
2. The Incident Commander is communicating non-essential radio traffic

The Incident Commander maintains strategic control of the incident operation by controlling the tactical radio talk group. When the Incident Commander loses control of communications the incident operation is out of control.

The following radio guidelines are to be strictly adhered to when there are units assigned into a hazard zone:

- Know exactly what you're going to say before keying up the microphone to talk.
- Only communicate information on the tactical talk group that pertains to the completion of the tactical priorities and firefighter safety.

- Always let a communication loop close between two users before clicking the microphone button to talk.
- Always let the Incident Commander be the one to contact you (unless you have a status change, Priority or Emergency traffic)
- Always end every CAN report with a NEED assessment (or with “No Needs”).
- Don't get on the radio to give good news (All-Clears, Under Controls, PARs) unless it is requested by the IC, which typically is by way of a CAN Report
- Only break into the Order Model with Priority traffic.

Status Change Report - a status change is defined as; moving from an assigned geographic work location to a different geographic work location or when exiting the hazard zone. The following are examples of status changes that should be reported:

- All status change reports should include a PAR of the unit transmitting the report.
- A status change report should be transmitted to the IC as soon as possible, but the report should not be structured as priority traffic and the Order Model must be used.
- When a S/D (Sector/Division boss) has been upgraded with tactical level supervision, companies should report status changes face to face to their assigned S/D boss when exiting the hazard zone

VIII. SAMPLE INITIAL DISPATCHES

The following provide guidance for dispatchers on how to dispatch initial responses per type of incident. Information shown in the example is the very basic set of information. Additional information might include:

- Major cross streets to the incident
- Any established staging areas
- Any additional incident information such as reports of CPR in progress, Entrapments, Exposures, etc.
- Location of EMS response for any rescue incidents.

Sample Dispatch – Low Demand Incidents

“Ann Arbor Engine 1-4 respond to a diabetic emergency at 2000 Packard Rd. Your patient is reported to be unconscious”.

“Salem Fire respond to a diabetic emergency at 6000 5 Mile Rd. Your patient is reported to be conscious but confused”.

Dispatch would then dispatch the incident a second time.

Sample Dispatch – Medium Demand Incidents

“Dexter Fire respond to a MVA rollover with injuries in front of 6500 Dexter Pinckney Road. You are assigned Interop 5”.

“Ann Arbor Township Fire and Northfield Township Fire on Automatic Mutual Aid Respond to an MVA at NB US-23 North of the West Triple Decker. You are assigned

Interop 4”.

Dispatch would then dispatch the incident a second time.

Sample Dispatch – High Demand Incidents

“Ann Arbor Township Fire with mutual aid from, Superior with a Tanker, Northfield with 2 Tankers, and Ann Arbor City Ladder 1-5 respond to the report of a house fire at 4000 Warren Rd. You are assigned Interop 4”. (Interop 5 will not be assigned to any other incident and will be held in reserve for this incident if requested by the Incident Commander).

“Ann Arbor City Engine 1-4, move-up to Ann Arbor Township Fire Station #2 for coverage”.

Dispatch would then dispatch the incident a second time.

Sample Dispatch – Greater Alarm Incidents Utilizing the Box Card Below

“Ann Arbor City Engine 1-4, Dexter with an Engine, Scio with a Tanker, Salem with 2 Tankers, and Pittsfield with an Aerial, respond to Ann Arbor Township for a 2nd Alarm house fire at 4000 Warren Rd. Interop 4 is assigned”.

“Ypsilanti Township Engine 14-3, move-up to Ann Arbor Township Fire Station #2 for coverage”.

Dispatch would then dispatch the incident a second time.

IX. SAMPLE APPARATUS RUN DOWN

The following provide guidance for dispatchers on how to provide the Incident Commander with the apparatus rundown when requested.

The order of the apparatus is important and should be communicated as it is presented on the run card by apparatus type.

Example (Use the run card above for a dispatched 2nd Alarm Fire for reference):
“Central from Warren Rd. Command”

“Command go ahead”

“Central give me apparatus rundown for this incident”

“Command on the first alarm you have:

- *Engines 12-1, 12-2*
- *Tankers 11-1, 8-1, 8-2*
- *Ladder 1-5*
- *HVA Alpha 8123*

On the second alarm you have

- *Engines 1-4, 5-1*
- *Tankers 16-1, 9-1, 9-2*
- *Tower 10-2*
- *HVA Supervisor 81C2*
- *Hart*

Engine 14-3 is covering your Station 2”

“Command Copies”

When providing this information via radio, the dispatcher should realize that someone is attempting to write down this information. Dispatch will need to speak slowly enough to compensate for the time necessary to write down all the information on scene.