

**SUBJECT:** ALARMS AND RESPONSE GUIDELINES**SECTION:** 300.01**REVISED:** OCTOBER 12, 2009**PAGE(S):** 4

## PURPOSE

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- A. To provide uniform response guidelines to various emergencies and non-emergencies.
- B. To establish a time objective for turnout time.
- C. To establish a time objective for response time to alarms in the city.
- D. To identify inherent safety hazards in emergency responses.
- E. To establish safety guidelines during emergency responses.

## POLICY

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- A. The Reading Fire Department apparatus responses to emergencies, non-emergencies, and operations should endeavor to conform to those policies and procedures contained herein.
- B. It shall be the policy of this department to begin responses (turnout time) within two (2) minute of receiving an alarm ninety (90) percent of time.<sup>1</sup>
- C. It shall be the policy of this department to respond to all emergency alarms within the city limits within four (4) minutes of beginning response ninety (90) percent of the time.
- D. In non-emergency situations the department shall endeavor to handle these situations as quickly as time, equipment, and resources allow.

## CLASSIFICATION OF ALARMS

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- A. Recall Response
  - 1. Any fire reported within a structure including chimney fires.
  - 2. Any fire reported adjacent to a structure.
  - 3. Any alarm device sounding for a structure.
  - 4. Building collapse.
  - 5. Any odor of smoke inside a structure.
  - 6. Flooded basement where there is a hazard to life.
  - 7. Lockout with food on the stove.
  - 8. Vehicle extrications.
  - 9. Flammable fuel leaks of sizeable quantities.
  - 10. Automatic/Mutual aid fire calls

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<sup>1</sup> Includes NFPA 1221 7.4.2 Emergency call processing and dispatching of 60 seconds and NFPA 1710 4.1.2.1 60 seconds for turnout time.

11. Anytime the Officer in Charge feels the alarm should be a full response.

B. On Duty Response

1. Vehicle fires with no exposures.
2. Automobile accident clean-up.
3. Investigations
4. Wash downs.
5. Brush or grass fires with no exposures.
6. Tree fire.
7. Electrical emergencies, unless structure fire.
8. Lockouts.
9. Person trapped on an elevator.
10. Natural gas emergencies.
11. Carbon monoxide inside structure.
12. Service calls (broken water pipes, flooded basements) with no hazards.
13. Animal trapped or stuck in a tree.

C. Squad Response (Paramedic unit and one squad)

1. Medical emergencies

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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A. Emergency: Those incidents that pose a significant risk to life or property. Emergency response requires the use of audio (siren and air horns) and visual (lights) warning devices. These devices should be in use during the entire duration of the response unless the response is downgraded to a non-emergency response by a competent authority. The initial response to the following types of incidents shall be considered emergencies.

1. A reported fire in a structure.
2. A reported fire outside of a structure that involves the potential destruction of property or poses a risk to human or animal life.
3. Automatic fire alarms.
  - a. ***Dispatches to automatic fire alarms within the jurisdiction shall be an emergency response by the primary unit(s), while all other assigned companies respond non-emergency. The primary responding unit can upgrade the response of additional units, upon confirmation or suspicion of an actual fire, or emergency.***
  - b. ***Dispatches to automatic fire alarms into other jurisdictions shall be non-emergency, unless upgraded or designated as the primary unit.***
4. All emergency medical incidents unless advised otherwise.
5. Responses to a man-made or natural disaster involving the destruction of property and the potential for injury or death. This would include requests for assistance from other jurisdictions.

## NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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- A. Non-emergency: Those incidents that do not pose a significant risk to life or property. Audio and visual warning devices should not be used during non-emergency responses unless ordered by a competent authority to upgrade the response to emergency status. The initial response to the following types of incidents should not be considered to be emergencies:
1. Public service calls to assist the public when there is no immediate threat to life or property.
  2. Medical incidents where the patient does not have a life threatening condition, i.e. Assistance off the floor.
  3. Odor investigations not identified as hazardous.
  4. Automobile fuel leaks.
  5. Elevator emergencies unless medical problems are present.
  6. Hydrant struck
  7. Police assist.

## PROCEDURE

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- A. Alarm Responses
1. It shall be the policy of this department that sounded fire alarms within the city should be answered with a single alarm response.
  2. All responses within the city that are On Duty alarms shall be answered with one (1) engine company and/or one (1) ALS unit as appropriate. The officer in charge should use his discretion as to what apparatus responds where lives and property are not in danger.
  3. EMS squad response within the city should be answered with one (1) ALS unit and/or one (1) engine and one (1) squad. Additional units can be requested as necessary.
  4. EMS responses to identified industrial occupancies shall be answered with a minimum of one (1) ALS unit, one (1) engine, and one (1) squad.
  5. Mutual aid requests for fire responses shall be answered with a *minimum* of 3 personnel.
- B. Safety
1. Apparatus and vehicles engaged in a non-emergency response shall obey all applicable traffic safety rules and regulations and shall not exceed the posted speed limit.
  2. Apparatus and vehicles engaged in an emergency response shall at all times govern their response by the traffic, weather, and road conditions present at the time of the response.
  3. All apparatus shall proceed to emergency alarms with appropriate emergency warning devices operating (sirens, lights, horns).
  4. All personnel shall wear seat belts while apparatus is in motion.

5. The maximum speed of travel shall **not** exceed posted limits by more than 10 mph or maximum of 65 mph.
6. During an emergency response, drivers shall bring their vehicles to a complete stop for any of the following:
  - a. When directed by a law enforcement officer.
  - b. Stop signs.
  - c. Red traffic signals.
  - d. Negative right-of-way intersections.
  - e. Blind intersections.
  - f. When the driver cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection.
  - g. When other intersection hazards are present.
  - h. When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights.
7. Drivers shall proceed through an intersection only when the driver can account for all lanes of traffic in the intersection.
8. Drivers shall bring their vehicles to a complete stop at all unguarded railroad crossings and shall not cross the tracks until determining that it is safe to do so.
9. All apparatus shall take a staging position, approximately two (2) blocks short of any scene involving any reported/suspected violence, until the scene is deemed secure by law enforcement.
10. The railroad crossing located on East Voorhees St. shall not be used by any fire department vehicle due to the elevation of the railroad crossing grade.
11. Multiple responding apparatus should communicate when approaching common intersections.
12. Emergency responses on Reading Rd. south of Benson St. should be made via the intersection of Reading and Vine St.
  - a. Response across Benson St., to Jenny Linn, to Maple St. to Reading Rd should be avoided also.

## RESPONSIBILITY

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- A. Drivers shall be directly responsible for the safe and prudent operation of their vehicles in all situations.
- B. When a driver is under direct supervision of an officer, the officer shall assume responsibility for the actions of the driver and shall be responsible for immediately correcting any unsafe condition.