

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMUNICATIONS
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PURPOSE

To provide a standardized format for the operation of Fire Department Communications in the City of Reading, Ohio.

POLICY

The Reading Fire Department will respond to any situation which threatens LIFE, SAFETY or PROPERTY. The Hamilton County Dispatcher will dispatch the appropriate unit(s) with the assigned capability to control the situation. The judgment of both the Hamilton County Dispatcher and the responding personnel is an integral part of the decision making process, taking into consideration both the information received, and the potential that exists.

Timely response and effective management of EMS, rescue and fire control situations represent the most immediate priorities of the fire department. Upon receipt of adequate information (location and nature of the situation) the Hamilton County Dispatcher will send the appropriate assignment. The Dispatcher will upgrade the response, as required, until command is established upon arrival of the first unit.

PROCEDURE

- A) Fire and EMS units should be dispatched to the scene of an incident by the Hamilton County Dispatcher, based on information gathered from the call originator. This dispatch will occur by generating the appropriate alerting tone(s) on the Valley Fire dispatch frequency (158.760 Mhz.) and the Hamilton County Low Band dispatcher frequency (33.900), and announcing the unit(s) assigned location and nature of the incident and the time of dispatch. This information will then be repeated by the dispatcher.
- B) **CLEAR VOICE TRANSMISSIONS** (no codes and/or signals) will be utilized by department personnel in their normal radio communications process.

C) **ENROUTE COMMUNICATIONS** for Fire and EMS incidents are those communications to acknowledge to the dispatcher that you have received the alarm and all information is correct. All enroute, on-scene, progress reports and requests for dispatcher support will be made on the “FD East” talkgroup by all units.

- 1) All responding units will announce fully their unit identification, declare “**enroute**”, and repeat the address or location of the incident. (e.g. – Engine 83 enroute to 1000 Market Street). Units responding to Fire Incidents will also state their apparatus manning during this broadcast. (e.g. – Tower 84 enroute to 1000 Market Street with a full crew.
- 2) If the response is not from the station or immediate vicinity, the location of the unit will also be announced. (e.g. – Engine 83 enroute to 9000 Reading Road from the Hilltop Station)
- 3) During response, the unit will inform the dispatcher of any information affecting their response. (e.g. Medic 83 delayed by a train at the Benson Street Crossing)
- 4) All response communications with the dispatcher will take place on the “FD East Talkgroup”, unless directed otherwise by the officer-in-charge. Communications between responding units will occur on the Fireground Talkgroup assigned by the dispatcher or on the “Reading Fire” talkgroup if no fireground talkgroup has been assigned.

D) **FIRE INCIDENT ARRIVAL COMMUNICATIONS** are those radio communications to the dispatcher to notify that the unit has arrived on the scene, and inform the dispatcher of the conditions observed. These conditions may include “smoke showing, fire, hazardous conditions, multiple casualty reports” or other pertinent information.

- 1) The fire unit first arriving on the scene of a fire or rescue incident will announce fully their unit I.D. number, declare “**on the scene**”, report conditions that he/she observes, the type of structure or area, and establish “Command” (e.g. – “Engine 83 on the scene, reporting a working structure fire in a two-story frame dwelling. Engine 83 is establishing Reading Road Command”).
- 2) The officer of the first arriving fire unit may request an alternate fireground talkgroup if one has not been assigned to the incident. Upon this request, the dispatcher will notify all responding units of the talkgroup to be utilized for the incident.
- 3) All additional responding units will announce fully their unit I.D. number declare “**on the scene**” or “**staged**” and be ready to accept an assignment from the Incident Commander.

- 4) The Hamilton County Dispatcher shall monitor the primary dispatch talkgroup at all times. The dispatcher also maintains the capability to monitor all fireground talkgroups during an incident.
- E) **EMS INCIDENT ARRIVAL COMMUNICATIONS** are those radio communications to the dispatcher to notify that the unit has arrived “**on the scene**”. Any hazardous conditions can be announced with this broadcast. (e.g. – “ALS 83 on the scene. Notify Squad 83 to use caution in the area due to heavy traffic”.)
- F) “**ELAPSED TIME**” announcements will be made to the Incident Commander at working incidents. This benchmark shall be announced at twenty (20) minute intervals from the time of dispatch, until the incident is under control or the benchmark is requested to be discontinued by the Incident Commander. This “Elapsed Time” announcement will be made for but not limited to the following incidents:
- 1) Working structure fire
 - 2) Auto or industrial accidents with entrapment
 - 3) Cardiac arrests
 - 4) Multiple casualty incidents
 - 5) Hazardous materials incidents with on-going release
- G) **PROGRESS REPORTS** are those communications by the Incident Commander to the dispatcher to update the effectiveness of the on-scene units, and to identify the approximate time units will be working on the scene. A progress report should be given to the dispatcher at every twenty (20) minute “benchmark”, as well as at any interval that the Incident Commander deems appropriate.
- H) **AVAILABLE** reports are communications to the dispatcher to inform him/her that a unit is available to respond to another incident.
- 1) When multiple units have been operating at an incident scene, only the company leaving the scene last should report all units “**available**”, and shall terminate “Command”
 - 2) Individual units operating at an incident should report their respective unit “**available**” when leaving a scene.
 - 3) E.M.S. transport units will report “**available**,” when they are returning from a hospital and are within appropriate distance of the city to make an additional response. These locations are established as follows:
 - a) Northbound I-75 at the Towne St. exit.
 - b) Northbound Reading Rd. at Seymour Ave.
 - c) Northbound Vine St. at Paddock Rd.
 - d) Eastbound Galbraith Rd. at Winton Rd.

- e) Eastbound I-275 at I75.
 - f) Eastbound Ronald Reagan Highway at Winton Rd.
 - g) Westbound Ronald Reagan Highway at I-71.
 - h) Westbound Galbraith Rd. at Blue Ash Rd.
 - i) Westbound Pfeifer Rd. at Kenwood Rd.
- I) **AUTOMATIC AID TO OTHER AREAS** – When a dispatch is received from Hamilton County for a fire response into another community, Engine 83 will notify the Hamilton County Dispatcher of their enroute status. Engine 83 will then switch to the specific fireground talkgroup assigned to the incident for the response and announce they are responding. Engine 83 will report on-scene in these areas on the “FD East” Talkgroup”. All updates to the Hamilton County Dispatcher will be made on the “FD East Talkgroup”. If the response is into an area covered by a department dispatched on the ‘FD West’ talkgroup, Reading units will switch to “FD West” for all radio traffic with the dispatcher for the duration of the incident.
- J) **AUTOMATIC REPONSE FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS** - Automatic aid will be received from surrounding fire departments based on incident type and per CAD recommendation. When responding into Reading, these units will switch to the assigned fireground talkgroup during response, and announce this response to the Reading units.
- K) **MUTUAL AID RESPONSE** – When Reading fire or E.M.S. units are responding into another community on a mutual aid response, the Reading units shall utilize the “FD East Talkgroup” for enroute, on-scene, and progress reports to the dispatcher. While responding and while working on the scene, Reading units shall utilize the talkgroups assigned for the incident. If the response is into an area covered by a department dispatched on the ‘FD West’ talkgroup, Reading units will switch to “FD West” for all radio traffic with the dispatcher for the duration of the incident.
- L) **RESPONSE AND ON-SCENE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS** shall be regulated by the following guidelines:
- 1) The sender will give his/her unit I.D. and call the receiver by his/her unit I.D. (e.g. – “Engine 83 to Tower 84”)
 - 2) The receiver will give his/her unit I.D. to indicate they are ready to receive. (e.g. – “Tower 84 go ahead”)
 - 3) The sender will communicate the message, orders, etc. (e.g. – “Tower 84, ladder the front of the building and ventilate the roof”)
 - 4) The receiver will give his/her unit I.D. and acknowledge receipt of the message by repeating the message or orders. (e.g. – “Tower 84 clear on laddering the front of the building and ventilating the roof”.)

M) **“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC”** is a term that will be utilized by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive the highest communication priority from the dispatcher, command and all operating companies. Upon hearing this term, the talkgroup shall be cleared for Command to communicate with the unit identifying the emergency.

(e.g. – “Engine 83 to Command, Emergency Traffic” “Engine 83 reports structural collapse of the exterior wall on the “C” side of the building”)

RESPONSIBILITY

All personnel shall be responsible for abiding by these guidelines and the procedures contained herein when communicating over the department radio systems.