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	<p style="text-align: center;">Cumberland County Fire Chief's Association</p>	REFERENCES: NFPA 1221 – 2016 Edition FORMS: None
Communications - Call Processing and Dispatch		
<i>APPROVED BY: CCFCA Board of Directors – Freddy L. Johnson Sr., 07/01/09</i> <i>Director Kenny Currie 09/01/12 /Director Randy Beeman 07/01/2014</i> <i>Director Gene Booth – 12/01/21 /</i> RE-APPROVED BY: CCFCA Board of Directors – Freddy L. Johnson Sr., President 6/28/2021		<i>Effective: 07/01/09</i> <i>Revised: 09/01/12</i> <i>Updated: 07/01/14</i> <i>Updated: 12/21/20</i> <i>Updated: 05/24/21</i> <div style="background-color: yellow; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> Effective 07/01/2021 </div>

PURPOSE:

The Cumberland County Fire Department’s Service Delivery is based on the dispatch and response of the **closest available unit(s)** required to control the situation. All personnel involved in the dispatch and response process must base initial judgments on both received information and the potential escalation during the cascading of events. The timely response and effective management of rescue and fire control situations represents the most immediate priority of each department. Upon receipt of adequate information (location and nature), Communications will dispatch the appropriate assignment and will continually upgrade the response as requested until the situation is effectively stabilized.

DEFINITIONS

General – The definitions contained in this Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) shall apply to the terms used in this Standard Operating Guideline.

Approved – Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) – An organization (**CCFCA**) responsible for adopting or approving and enforcing the requirements and procedures of a standard.

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Alarm – A signal or message from a person or device indicating the existence of an emergency or other situation that requires action by an emergency response agency.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) – A combination of hardware and software that provides data entry, makes resource recommendations, and notifies and tracks those resources before, during and after alarms, preserving records of those alarms and status changes for later analysis.

Communication Center – A building or portion of a building that is specifically configured for the primary purpose of providing emergency communication services or public safety answering point (PSAP) services to one or more public safety agencies.

Emergency – A condition that is endangering or is believed to be endangering life or property; an event that requires the urgent response of an emergency response agency.

Emergency Alarm Processing/Dispatching – A process by which an alarm answered at the communication center creates a call for service and is transmitted to emergency response facilities (ERF’s) or to emergency response units (ERU’s) in the field.

Emergency Response Agency (ERA) – Agencies providing emergency **fire, medical, rescue**, law enforcement, communications, and related support services.

Emergency Response Facility (ERF) – A structure or facility that houses emergency response agencies, equipment, or personnel for response alarms.

Emergency Response Unit (ERU) – Personnel who respond to fire, medical, rescue and other emergency situations for the preservation of life and property.

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) – A facility in which 9-1-1 calls are answered.

Shall - Indicates a mandatory requirement.

Should – Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) – Written documents that help establish or prescribe specific operational or administrative methods that are to be followed routinely or how CCFCA member agencies are expected to carry out specific duties outlined in general terms.

Tele-Communicators – An individual whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, or disseminate information of a public safety nature via telecommunication devices. Also known or referred to in this standard as Dispatchers.

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Working Fire – is a fire in a structure requiring the use of at least one hose line and holding all personnel at the initial alarm assignment. All personnel from the first alarm will be assigned and working.

PROCEDURE:

All Fire Dispatch communications shall utilize clear text. **(No ten codes)**

Dispatchers assigned to work Fire and EMS shall utilize consoles that are side by side, to maintain both voice and visual contact with each other at all times.

Dispatchers assigned to Fire or EMS shall only monitor the Fire and EMS Groups in CAD. Information needed to reference the status of Law Enforcement should be obtained from the Dispatcher assigned to the corresponding Law Enforcement Channel.

Dispatch will be in the following sequence:

Call receipt

The call receipt can be defined as the initial request for assistance. The call may be received in multiple ways to include, but not be limited to, public 911, radio request from fire or police unit, or an inter-facility transfer from another communications center.

Call Processing

Call processing can be defined as the efforts taken by the Call Taker from call receipt until call dispatch. The primary responsibility of the Call Taker is to determine, without delay, the location, telephone call back number and nature of the emergency, and to verify entry of the information into CAD. During Call Processing, the Call Taker shall use the *Priority Dispatch (Pro QA)* protocol for Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) or Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), to determine and assign a Nature Code based on the information gathered from the caller. (Pro QA Card Sets shall be used in the event of CAD or *Priority Dispatch Program* or Software failure). This protocol has been designed to protect against liability while increasing call processing effectiveness and assuring measurable standards of equalized care to the public. Call processing shall follow NFPA 1221, Standard for Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems.

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Pre-Alert

Upon verifying the address and determining the general nature of the Incident, the Dispatcher will initiate a pre-alert over the Cumberland County Fire Departments (CCFD) Dispatch Chanel 2-A **and VHF Fire Channel 1**. The pre-alert will consist of the single alert tone followed by announcing recommended station, nature code, and address of incident. This transmission shall be broadcasted one (1) time, and will precede the actual dispatch of the call.

Pre-Alert Examples:

ALERT TONE --- *“Station 22 – 69 Structure Fire, 607 Main St”*

Immediate Dispatch (Fast Track)

All Fire Department calls for service, with the exception of calls that fall within the 26 and 53 categories, will be fast tracked and dispatched while EMD or EFD is ongoing. At the completion of EMD or EFD, the fast-tracked incident will be upgraded with the Nature Code determined by Pro QA, and the dispatcher will determine if additional units are required. Pressing the recommend button after changing the code will show if and what additional units are to be added to the First Alarm Assignment. Any change shall be announced over the radio, and the recommended units dispatched.

Calls Spawned from Law Enforcement Incidents

Law Enforcement Request for CCFD

When a call is initiated or spawned because of a Law Enforcement Agency request, the ability to implement the Pro QA EFD or EMD protocol to obtain a Nature Code may not be an option. In such cases, the ***Secondary Emergency Notification of Dispatch Protocol (SEND)*** shall be utilized to determine the nature of the request. The following information shall be obtained from an Officer /Deputy requesting a response from CCFD.

SEND Protocol
Secondary Emergency Notification of Dispatch™

The EMS/Ambulance service relies on you to provide the following information:

1. **Chief Complaint and incident type?**
 - a. Is there **more than one** person injured?
2. **Approximate age?**
3. **Conscious: Yes / No...or alert?**
4. **Breathing: Yes / No...or difficulty?**
5. *(Illness case - age 35 or over):*
Is there chest pain?
6. *(Accident or injury case):*
Is there severe bleeding (spurting)?
7. *(Response mode):*
Do you need a lights-and-siren response?

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The National Academy EMD Protocol System™

- **Chief Complaint and Incident Type?**
- **Approximate age?**
- **Conscious: Yes/No? Alert: Yes/No**
- **Breathing: Yes/No Difficulty: Yes/No • Is there Chest Pain?**
- **Is there Severe Bleeding (spurting)?**
- **Do you need Lights-and-Siren Response?**

Unit Selection

CAD automatically recommends the correct unit(s) based on availability, response plans, response categories, unit types, nature codes, run order, and AVL once incident location is geo-verified.

The “owning department” shall be dispatched to all fires and fire alarms within the owning stations jurisdiction.

The owning department is the department whose jurisdiction includes the call location.

Fire Departments depending on available manpower will list units / apparatuses **available in CAD** for immediate dispatch and identify all remaining units / apparatuses as **STAND-BY unless the unit / apparatus is out of service**. Stand-By units can immediately be upgraded to available by checking the unit en-route to a call, thus immediately changing the status code in CAD from Stand-By to available or by simply call dispatch and asking them to show the unit / apparatus available.

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Dispatch Sequence

- Pre-Alert
- Activate Station Pagers
- Announce Unit(s)
- Announce Nature Code – response determinant code followed by the descriptive nature code (i.e., 69 Delta 1 Structure Fire, 29 Delta 4 – Vehicle accident with Pin In.)
- Give Address (**repeated twice**)
- Advise Cross street(s) and or Housing Area / Development Name
- Assign Tactical Channel (assigned by dispatcher)
- **Once all units are en-route, the dispatcher shall repeat the operational (OPS) channel and give any additional information related to the incident on CCFD Channel 3-A Fire Ground.**

Dispatch Acknowledgement

Upon receipt of dispatch information all CCFD units will acknowledge by **solely** depressing the appropriate key on the apparatus Mobile Computer Terminal (MCT) or **Tablet**.

Only the primary responding unit shall provide verbal acknowledgement via radio, indicating unit number and repeating dispatched address.

In a multi-unit response, all unit responding other than the primary unit will check en-route by only depressing the en-route button on the apparatus MCT or Tablet. Communication shall be by radio if MCT's are down or not present in the apparatus. It is recommended that Company Officers use a portable radio to monitor the assigned operations (Ops) channel. Mobile radios should remain on Channel 3-A / Fire Ground. The OPS channel assigned should be utilized by all responding units for unit-to-unit radio traffic.

Upon arrival on scene the first arriving unit will report their arrival on scene by depressing the Arrive button on the MCT or Tablet and verbally announcing their arrival on CFD Channel 3-A / Fire Ground and relaying all pertinent information consistent with the ICS system. The Communications Center will no longer repeat the first arriving

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unit's scene size-up. After providing the arrival information the unit will then move to the assigned OPS channel. Upon arrival of a multi-unit response all other units other than the first arriving unit, shall check on scene by MCT, and inform the Incident Commander of their arrival on the assigned OPS channel. While on scene, the Incident Commander shall communicate with the Communications Center on CFD 3-A / Fire Ground. CFD 3-A / Fire Ground has been designated as an information channel and shall be continuously monitored by the Communications Center. All benchmarks' notifications and requests for assistance shall be communicated on this channel.

Anytime other responding units are canceled while on scene or still en-route, it shall be the Incident Commander responsibility to cancel units on the OPS channel. The Communications Center will no longer repeat this information. Units canceled shall enter the appropriate incident disposition code in the MCT or Tablet (108).

No Response to Dispatch

Once a department has been dispatched, if there is no response from the department after 2 minutes from the original dispatch time, the fire dispatcher will use CAD recommendations to send the next available department. The fire dispatcher will simultaneously dispatch the call again to the second department and first dispatched department, as a second dispatch.

Working Fire

The working fire alarm ensures incident commanders have additional resources sent to the scene of a working fire that requires *less* than a second alarm. This alarm only applies to residential and commercial structure fires.

The intent is easing the burden on the incident commander and ensuring adequate manpower is on scene to effectively conduct fire ground operations.

The working fire alarm fills the gap between the first and second alarm assignments and provides the incident commander two additional engines from uninvolved and unassigned stations on the first alarm, and the utility company providing electricity and gas if this information is on record at the communications center.

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Procedure for Requesting/Receiving a Working Fire Alarm

The incident commander triggers the working fire alarm by declaring his/her incident as a “working fire”. Incident’s commanders must state the term “working fire” to receive the additional resources. Once transmitted, communications will dispatch the additional resources.

Terms such as “smoke showing” or “heavy fire showing” **do not** constitute a working fire alarm.

The term “working fire” on any other incident type (e.g., brush or woods fires) will not receive the additional resources. Should incident commanders not require additional resources, simply do not refer to the incident as a “working fire”.

Because not every working fire requires the on-call air support unit, the response of an on-call Air Support unit when a working fire is declared will not be automatic. **Instead, the Incident Commander must specifically request the on-call air support unit if needed.**

Upgrading Response in CAD

On occasion it may be necessary to upgrade a dispatched call to a higher-level response based on additional caller information or a request from a unit in the field. CAD has been built with this in mind and can upgrade responses by utilizing the RECOM button.

Example: A 52C03 Commercial Fire Alarm is dispatched. The first arriving unit confirms a fire and advises to upgrade the call to a Structure Fire. To upgrade the call, follow the steps listed below:

- Change to the appropriate Nature Code
- Press the RECOM button on the CAD Call Window
- Dispatch the Units Recommended on Channel 2-A/VHF

Example: A 69D06 House Fire is dispatched. While the units are responding, a Fire Officer advises to upgrade to a Commercial response. To upgrade the call, follow the steps listed below:

- Change to the appropriate Nature Code
- Press the RECOM button on the CAD Call Window
- Dispatch the Units Recommended on Channel 2-A/VHF

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Example: A 69D03 Commercial Structure Fire is dispatched. Units are on scene and a 2nd Alarm is requested. To upgrade to a 2nd Alarm, follow the steps listed below:

- Change to the appropriate Nature Code
- Press the RECOM button on the CAD Call Window
- Dispatch the Units Recommended on Channel 2-A/VHF

Receipt of Dispatch

A CCFD unit shall acknowledged dispatch within **two (2)** minutes of dispatch. If a unit has not acknowledged the dispatch within **two (2)** minutes, the dispatcher should attempt to contact a unit by radio and monitor the response of personnel in *IamResponding*. If there is no contact by radio, no visible response in *IamRespondin*, or response of a fire unit the dispatcher shall dispatch a second time along with the next closest available unit/apparatus recommended by the CAD.

Unit/Apparatus Re-Direct/Divert or Diverting after Dispatch

Under certain circumstances, it may become necessary for a unit to divert or redirect from an automatic/mutual aid response to answer a call within their fire district. This would apply when man-power levels of the responding automatic/mutual aid station are depleted and/or service delivery would be affected by a delay in response. Any time a unit must divert or redirect from their response, the unit shall immediately notify the communications center, and advise them of their diversion and request the next available/closest unit to be dispatched.

Unit Arrival on Scene of Incident

The primary units should strive to arrive on scene within 14 minutes of dispatch. If a unit has not acknowledged that they are on scene within nine (9) minutes after leaving the Station, the dispatcher shall contact the unit by radio and verify status.

Status Checks

CAD is programmed with a timer in place that is set to activate if specific time limits are exceeded. To support efficient and safe operations, this timer (watchdog timer) is set to prompt the dispatcher to check unit/situation status during the following situations:

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)

Most emergency incidents are mitigated within twenty (20) minutes of dispatch. If a unit's status in the CAD does not change within twenty (20) minutes, the dispatcher **shall** contact the Incident Commander and ask for a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). The Incident Commander shall report the PAR to the dispatcher to include the total number of personnel operating on the scene. This shall continue every twenty (20) minutes until the scene is stabilized and personnel are no longer exposed to Immediate Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres.

Example: "All personnel operating on the scene are accounted for, total of 15".

Clearing a Call

At the completion of an incident, the primary unit will **enter the appropriate Disposition Code** in the **MCT or Tablet and terminate command via radio**. To close the call in CAD, the code must be transmitted to Communications by radio or entered by MCT. These codes are actual NFIRS Codes, and will populate directly to the Incident Report generated in *Firehouse RMS*. All other units will clear with the code 108, **via MCT or Tablet**. This applies to non-primary units cancelled en-route as well.

Radio Talk Group Designations

CFD Emergency	Zones A – E	Channels 1 and 16	
CFD Dispatch	Zones A – E	Channel 2	
CFD Ground	Zones A – E	Channel 3	
OPS and TAC Channels	Zones A – E	*	
MDVR	Zone D	Channel 14	
LZ East	Zone D	Channel 15	
MDVR	Zone E	Channel 12	
LZ East	Zone E	Channel 13	
LZ Central	Zone E	Channel 14	

* Each county department will have its own designated primary operations talk-group (OPS) along with a simplex channel Talk Around Channel (TAC or line of sight Channel). Zone 1 Channels 4 and 5 will be Station exclusive, thereafter, OPS and TAC channels will be listed in sequential order. This will eliminate the need request for OPS channel assignment. Request for an OPS channel would only be needed if the primary

OPS channel is already in use by the department and a subsequent emergency call is received. Sufficient OPS and TAC channels starting with OPS and TAC 30 through OPS and TAC 33 have been built in to compensate for multiple and overlapping calls and will be available for immediate assignment by dispatch.

Examples Operational / Tactical Channels Radio Templet –

The radio templet for Station 5 – Zone A Channel 4 is designated as OPS 5, Zone A Channel 5 is designated as TAC 5.

The radio templet for Station 23 – Zone A Channel 4 is designated as OPS 23, Zone A Channel 5 is designated as TAC 23.

Other Radio Talk Group Designations

Zone 6	Cumberland County EMS
Zone 7	Fayetteville Fire
Zone 8	Fayetteville Fire
Zone 9 **	Hoke County Fire
Zone 10 **	Robeson County Fire
Zone 11 **	Bladen County Fire
Zone 12 **	Sampson County Fire
Zone 13 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 14 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 15 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 16 **	Moore County Fire
Zone 17 **	Moore County Fire
Zone 18	Law Enforcement
Zone 19	NC Highway Patrol
Zones 20 - 25	Emergency Management
Zones 26 – 28	Domestic Preparedness Zone 1-3
Zone 29	Air Operations
Zone 30 - 34	Cumberland County Fire Durham System
Zones 35	National Public Safety
Zones 36	Current Cumberland County Fire (lower case)

** Zones 9 – 17 may be arranged/program station exclusive.

Severe Weather / Hot Weather Mode

Severe Weather Announcements

The fire dispatcher is responsible for announcing weather related warnings and severe conditions over VHF (1), CCFDDISP (2A) and CCFGRN (3A).

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Example: TONE “Cumberland to all units in the field, a tornado warning has been issued for northern Cumberland County until 16:45. All units in the field, a tornado warning has been issued for northern Cumberland County until 16:45”.

Hot Weather Mode

If the predicted high temperature for the day is greater than or equal to 85 degrees, 2Hot Weather Mode will be announced during daily Radio Checks and will be in effect from that time until 2200 hours. In Hot Weather Mode, the initial alarm for any structure fire shall be given two additional engines and a QRV automatically dispatched to assist for

rehab. Any additional alarm shall, for any structure also be given two additional Engines. Any working woods fire shall receive a dispatch of two additional Engines (in addition to any additional initial equipment from elevated Fire Readiness Plans as described in Cumberland County Emergency Services General Operating Guideline and SOP Fire Dispatch policy 6.6.3.

Severe Weather Mode

During periods of severe weather, it is not uncommon for call volumes to quickly exceed the availability of fire units to respond to reported emergencies. To reduce the demand for service, the Severe Weather Mode will be initiated thus modifying our normal dispatch and response procedures in accordance with the following:

The Severe Weather Mode may be activated by the President of the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs Association or his/her designee and/or by the Cumberland County Communications Manager during any severe weather event. The Severe Weather Mode activation shall be announced by the Fire Dispatcher over the radio on Fire Channel 1 and CCFD Dispatch Channel A-2. The response to Fire Alarms will be limited to a single unit unless there is additional information that would indicate an actual fire.

As call volumes return to that which is consider routinely anticipated, the President of the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs Association or his/her designee and/or the Cumberland County Communications Manager will contact the Communication Center and request to resume normal dispatch. The Fire Dispatcher shall announce over the radio on Fire Channel 1 and CCFD Dispatch Channel A-2, that communications are resuming normal dispatch and response procedures.

Refer to CCFCA SOG 2018-002 Severe Weather Operations effective April 1, 2018.

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CAD System Failure

Upon notification/discovery of a CAD system failure the following actions will be taken to minimize the impact of the system failure and provide for continuity of dispatch operations.

- The dispatcher will make a single broadcast on CCFD Channel 2A pre-empted by a single alert tone, advising that the CAD system is down.
- Communications personnel shall implement the utilization of Manual Dispatch Cards the *Priority Dispatch Pro QA* card sets during call processing.
- Cumberland County Emergency Services staff will report to the County Communications center and act in an advisory capacity in support of communications personnel until the CAD system is fully operational.