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I.   COMMUNICATIONS

    A.   <u>Dispatch Philosophy</u>

        1.   It is the policy of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department to dispatch an adequate and timely response to the closest available units to control an emergency situation in a safe and efficient manner.

        2.   The response level will be based on information received and level of potential. This initial dispatch will be continually monitored and upgraded or downgraded as the situation demands.

        3.   Individual company officers may add themselves to incidents if, in the opinion of that officer, the unit's presence on the incident will significantly enhance public and firefighter safety. Each officer will be responsible to justify their response.

    B.   <u>Calls</u>

        1.   The Fire Communications Center (FCC) receives calls from the public, Police Departments, Utilities, as well as other Fire Departments.

        2.   The information received is screened to ascertain the nature of the emergency, address, callback number, and other information that may aid in determining an accurate and timely response.

        3.   All available applicable information will be relayed to responding units as it is received by the FCC.

    C.   <u>Dispatch</u>

        1.   The proper units for the selected location and level of response are researched on the computer. When units are determined, "quick-call" tones for these companies are sounded on the dispatch channel. The dispatcher will then use the following format to give information to the companies:

            a.   Engine Company Area and Incident Type:

                "Engine 14, Structure"

            b.   Assigned Radio Channels:

                "Command 8G, Tac 8H"

      c.   Companies Dispatched:

           "Engine14, Engine18, Engine17, Truck10 and Battalion 4"

      d.   Address:

           "4260 El Cajon Blvd."

      e.   Cross Street:

           "Copeland Avenue"

2.   All units will acknowledge that they are responding by pressing the responding button on the Mobile Data Computer (MDC).

3.   Responding personnel will then change both portable and mobile radios to the channels assigned for that incident.

D.   <u>While Responding</u>

1.   Mobile radios shall be left in the scan mode to allow maximum information to be gathered.

2.   Units should communicate with each other pertinent response and arrival information to assure the greatest coordination of effort. These communications will be on the assigned channel(s). Responding companies shall switch to the tactical channel once incident command (IC) has been established.

3.   Units should notify FCC immediately if the response time would be extensive or if the unit encounters conditions which will delay its response, i.e., delayed to heavy traffic or trolley.

E.   <u>Arrival</u>

1.   Company officers must maintain awareness of arriving units and follow proper staging and communication procedures.

      a.   The first-in unit will advise FCC they are "at scene", designate an incident specific name for their command, and establish IC on the command channel. For example:

           "San Diego, Engine 14 at scene, assuming 'Cajon IC'"

        b.   Other arriving units will advise their "at scene" status to the IC on the tactical channel.

        c.   Ambulances and units without an MDC will advise "at scene" on the command channel and then the tactical channel.

        d.   NOTE: Incident Command will be established and announced upon arrival at any incident where two or more companies are dispatched.

2.   That unit will remain as the IC until properly relieved by an officer or passing command to another arriving unit.

3.   Command designation shall be a single word when possible. (Example: If the incident is on Rancho Bernardo Road, "Bernardo IC" would be more appropriate than "Rancho Bernardo IC.")

4.   Incidents will be re-named by FCC if the command designation chosen by the IC conflicts with another command designation actively in use. In all communications between the IC and FCC, the IC will use the incident's command designation and not their unit number.

5.   All units will check their MDC "At Scene" status upon arrival. If the automatic "At Scene" is not indicated, the "At Scene" button on their MDC shall be pushed.

6.   The first arriving unit will give a complete report on conditions as soon as possible to FCC. Fire Communications Center personnel will repeat all pertinent information for other responding units.

F.   Returning to Service

1.   The Incident Commander will advise all units at the incident when they are no longer needed. The released units will notify FCC that they are "available" by transmitting "AOR" on the MDC. A verbal statement is not required.

2.   All units in the field will monitor the dispatch channel when they are out-of-quarters and available for responses. If a unit hears another unit dispatched to an incident, and the officer feels their response time will significantly enhance public and firefighter safety, it should proceed toward the incident and notify FCC.

G.   Clear Text

     1.   The National Incident Management System (NIMS) identifies plain language (clear text) as the accepted standard for radio communications. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department has adopted this standard format of radio communications except for the following situations:

         a.   "11-44"   Deceased

         b.   "5150"   Mental Disorder

         c.   "Code 7"   Meals

         d.   "Code 9"   Physical Fitness

         e.   "Code N"   Newsworthy

         f.   "Code T"   Terrorism

H.   Emergency Traffic & Emergency Traffic-Firefighter Down

     1.   The term "Emergency Traffic" will be utilized by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation. The individual or unit transmitting "Emergency Traffic" will receive the highest priority from FCC, IC, and all operating field units.

     2.   When a unit has a critical message, they will establish contact with Fire Communications. For example:

         "San Diego Truck 35 Emergency Traffic"

     3.   AIR TRAFFIC ABSOLUTELY BELONGS TO ANY UNIT GIVING THE "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" CALL

     4.   When a crew or individual is lost or missing, "Emergency Traffic-Firefighter (provide name and unit ID) Down" shall be transmitted over the radio.

     5.   The IC shall then initiate a rapid recall and accountability of all crews on the fire ground to determine who is missing.

II.   STAND BACK POLICY

This policy shall be used by FCC and Emergency Services personnel regarding incidents involving dangerous and/or suspicious responses. It is imperative that a clear line of communication is established among all units responding and FCC to avoid jeopardizing the safety of personnel during this type of incident. If responding personnel perceive a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation, emergency operations should be delayed until the police department can secure the scene.

The guidelines identified below will be applied to medical and non-medical related incidents (i.e. civil disturbance with associated fire) if, in the opinion of the dispatcher and/or operations personnel, a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation exists.

A.   <u>"Stand Back" Situations</u>

     1.   "Stand Back" situations shall be divided into two categories:

          a.   **"Stand Back"** shall be designated for responses with a violent patient and/or bystanders, and responses for victims of aggression when the suspect is known or suspected to be at scene. The Police Department shall be notified to respond by FCC. Responding units shall stage a safe distance away from the scene until cleared by the Police Department. Conditions that would indicate this level of caution would include:

               1)   Gunshot/stabbing (including suicide attempts/except accidental shooting situations)

               2)   Assault/altercation in progress or the assailant(s) still at scene

               3)   Domestic dispute

               4)   Any incident in which FCC believes that dangerous circumstances may exist at scene

               5)   Drug overdose with violent and/or irrational behavior

          b.   **"Discretionary Stand Back"** shall be designated on incidents when the dispatcher has reason for concern. Examples of possible discretionary stand back situations include:

               1)   Assault/altercation with credible information that the assailant(s) has left the scene

    2) Gunshots/stabbing with viable information indicating the assailant has left the scene and accidental shootings

    3) Attempted suicide (with no indications of violent behavior or no weapons involved)

 B. <u>Non-Stand Back Situations</u>

   Conditions that would not normally indicate a stand back situation include:

   1. Drug overdose with no indication of violent/irrational behavior (Patient reported unconscious, not alert, and/or patient seeking help

   2. Injuries from an assault that occurred at a different time/location

 C. <u>Stand Back Location</u>

   The responding units shall be staged a safe distance from the incident location.

   1. Approximately two blocks or within one minute response to the scene

   2. Out of view from the incident location

    a. When considering a staging location, avoid placement of the units in sight of the incident location and the public at the scene.

    b. The public may construe standing back as withholding service

   3. Accessible to all responding units and large enough so it does not impact traffic, yet ensures personnel safety

   4. All units should coordinate the staging location with each other on the assigned tactical channel.

    a. The first arriving unit shall notify FCC of their staged location and that they are standing back for P.D. on the assigned command channel, for example:

     "San Diego Engine 1 is staged at 7th and A Street, standing back for PD"

    b. Other units should respond to the staging location.

5. Units will proceed to the incident location when FCC advises it is "Clear to Enter."

D. Special Situations

If a unit is staged in a location where the incident scene can be safely observed and evaluated, and the scene appears safe for entry, the unit may cautiously enter the scene. If any doubt exists as to the safety of the scene, do not approach the scene until P.D. declares it safe.

E. Situation Monitoring

Fire Communications will closely monitor the progress of the incident. The FCC dispatcher will contact police dispatch to determine additional suspect and/or scene information. The FCC dispatcher will also obtain updated information regarding estimate period of time until it is "clear to enter".

F. Emergency Button

The emergency (EMER) button on the mobile and portable radios is for life threatening emergencies involving Fire-Rescue personnel. The emergency signal currently defaults and locks the radio to **7P EMG, 8P EMG**, or **9P EMG** depending on what zone or channel the radio is selected to.

1. Personnel activating the "EMER" button because of an actual emergency are encouraged to key the transmit button to assist FCC in determining the type of situation they are in.

  a. Upon receipt of the signal, FCC will transmit:

    "Unit with administration traffic please acknowledge"

  b. If the activating unit is able to talk they should advise FCC of their status.

  c. If the initiating unit does not answer, FCC will advise the IC of the "EMER" signal and request investigation or send a police unit to the last AVL location to investigate.

  d. Personnel are reminded that the "EMER" button is for immediate life threatening emergencies to personnel only. Once activated, units should advise FCC of the emergency situation as soon as possible.

2. Personnel activating the "EMER" button accidentally should notify FCC to coordinate a reset.

     a. To reset the "EMER" system, the user must depress and hold the "EMER" button for one to two seconds until a single beep is heard

     b. As a safety precaution, FCC cannot reset the "EMER" system remotely; the user must reset the button.

G. <u>Limit Radio Transmission</u>

All personnel are reminded to limit radio transmission to pertinent information.

H. <u>Tactical Radio Communications</u>

Tactical radio communications should be made on the tac channels. Personnel should avoid making extensive unit-to-unit traffic on the command channel and/or admin channel.

I. <u>MDC Roster</u>

1. All on-duty personnel shall be logged onto the MDC of their primary apparatus.

2. The MDC roster shall be current for personnel assigned to the on-duty apparatus.

3. Captains shall be responsible to log on assigned personnel as soon as practical at the beginning of each shift and after every personnel change.

III. RADIO IDENTIFICATION

A. <u>CAD Identification</u>

1. Radio Identifiers must be logged into CAD for identification purposes.

2. If a radio is not logged onto CAD, FCC terminals will only receive the six digit radio identification and not the unit identification.

3. All apparatus and radio change-outs require FCC to log on the new radio identifier.

B.   Apparatus Portable Radio Identification System

1.   In order to maintain accountability of individual portable radios assigned to apparatus, a color coding system will be implemented.

2.   Colored tape will be attached to the base of the antenna of each portable radio.

3.   The color will indicate which position the radio is assigned to: CPT, ENG, F/F1, and F/F2.

4.   When a radio is replaced due to maintenance or newer equipment, the antenna will be taken off the old radio and attached to the replacement.

5.   The color-coded format will be in accordance with the current "tagging" system used by the Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC):

   a.   RED   Captain

   b.   GREEN   Engineer

   c.   YELLOW   Firefighter 1

   d.   BLUE   Firefighter 2

6.   Spare rolls of colored tape will be delivered to each Battalion Chief's station.

7.   Whenever a radio is switched out, the captain shall notify FCC.

   a.   Once this information is reported, CAD will be updated with the new radio ID and position assignment