

6. INCOMING EMERGENCY CALLS, ALARMS AND INCIDENT DISPATCH

6.1 TELEPHONE ALARMS

- 6.1A On incoming calls, Communications Center personnel are responsible for obtaining the correct address, specific location, nature of the emergency (type of fire or injury) and the name and telephone number of the person reporting the emergency.
- 6.1B Incoming telephone calls are answered with the following greeting message:
9-1-1 Lines - *"9-1-1, what's the address of the emergency?"*
Non Emer. Lines- "Cumberland County Communications"
- 6.1C Under normal conditions all calls are to be dispatched within 90 seconds of disconnecting from a caller.
- 6.1D 9-1-1 telephone lines are for **emergencies** only. Non-emergency telephone lines should be used for normal operational contact. Should a fire or EMS station receive an emergency call at their quarters, incident information may be relayed to the Communications Center by using the 9-1-1-telephone number.
- 6.1E Follow-up incident information requests needed from the Communications Center shall be obtained by telephone, not by radio.
- 6.1F At no time will emergency personnel telephone the Communications Center for incident location.
- 6.1G Should a station receive a report of an incident from sources other than the Communications Center, the following procedures should be followed:
1. If you are due on the incident, advise the Communications Center by radio that you are responding. When responding, advise the Communications Center an exact address or intersection whenever possible.
 2. If you are not due on the incident, telephone the Communications Center via 9-1-1 with the following information:
 - a. Location of Incident / Municipality
 - b. Call back information
 - c. Conditions

6.1H Adjacent County Dispatch Procedures

The following procedures will be used by the Communications Center for incident needs in adjacent counties and for adjacent county response to Cumberland County.

1. Incidents received by the Communications Center which are determined to be located in an adjacent county will be relayed to that county by the most expeditious means available. This relay will be in accordance with current Communications Center internal operational procedures.
2. Cumberland County apparatus will be dispatched to needs outside the county only upon specific request and authority of the affected county. No automatic dispatch of Cumberland County services will occur without this specific request authority.

Exceptions:

- a. Borough of Shippensburg - incidents in the Franklin County portion of this borough will be automatically dispatched by the Communications Center.
 - b. Susquehanna River - incident request for river related assistance for portion of the Susquehanna River that borders Cumberland County will be dispatched according to the local municipal response systems that border the river. These response systems have been devised to provide faster or more accessible means for incident mitigation needs. The Communications Center will inform the appropriate adjacent county or city agencies of the incident occurrence and any dispatch actions initiated.
3. Incidents occurring in Cumberland County that require out-of-county assistance shall be directed to the appropriate county or city communications center for dispatch action.

Exceptions:

- a. Company 34 - Shermans Dale Fire Company (Perry County Company 12) shall be dispatched automatically to calls in which this company is listed as part of alarm response in Middlesex Township or any other area in Cumberland County. Perry County shall be informed of any dispatch action of this company to incidents in Cumberland County.
- b. Company 54 - West End Fire & Rescue Company (Franklin County Company 15) shall be dispatched automatically to calls in which this company is listed as part of alarm response in Shippensburg Borough, or any other area in Cumberland County. Franklin County shall be informed of any dispatch action of this company to incidents in Cumberland County.

6.11 Incident Priority System - EMS Incidents

1. Cumberland County uses the Licensed Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) Program (License #90 - 10173) for medical emergency requests to the Center. This program was adopted by the Emergency Health Services Federation (EHSF), the Regional Medical Council, for use in the eight county region. Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) provides the following capabilities:
 - a. Formal system of interrogating caller for EMS needs.
 - b. Medical pre-arrival instructions prior to the arrival of trained EMS personnel at the incident location.
 - c. EMS dispatch determinants - BLS or BLS and ALS.
 - d. EMS response determinants - emergency or non-emergency EMS response recommendations.

2. An "*Emergency EMD Conditions*" declaration by the Communications Center Supervisor/Shift Leader will temporarily suspend formal EMD intervention by the Center's staff. This declaration will be enacted during periods of extremely high radio/telephone traffic to ensure timely receipt, processing and dispatching of public safety needs. This action, when enacted, will be clearly documented by the Communications Center Supervisor/Shift Leader in their daily shift report record. Documentation shall include conditions, which prompted this action, actual time duration of declaration, and a record of those incidents that were affected by the declaration.

6.1J *Incident Priority System - Fire Incidents*

1. The Cumberland County Communications Center uses a three-tiered incident evaluation process to determine dispatch priority. This system ensures that multiple incidents will be dispatched in an efficient manner depending upon the predetermining priority ranking of possible situations.

The priorities are defined as follows:

- a. *Priority I* - active incidents involving an immediate or potential threat to life and/or property. This would also include situations in which incident conditions cannot be confirmed but potentials may exist.

Priority I Examples: Fires involving structures, vehicles, wildlands, unattended trash or "controlled" burns or any other fire situation not specifically mentioned; hazardous materials spills or releases; fires reported extinguished by the general public; smoke odors; lockouts with food on the stove; utility services with potential danger; motor vehicle accidents (confirmed, suspected or potential for injury); industrial accidents, rescues; emergency service requests; apparatus transfers; and any other call deemed necessary by the Communications Center Supervisor.

Priority I incidents are dispatched in accordance to procedures defined in Section 8 of this Communications Procedural Manual.

- b. *Priority II* - non-active Incidents - not involving an immediate threat to life.

Priority II Examples: Animal rescues; water problems (could be upgraded to *Priority I*); fallen tree removals; non-hazardous storm damage assistance.

- c. *Priority III* - Routine or administrative needs.

- 2. Dispatch procedures for prioritized incidents are as follows:

- a. *Priority I* - Active Incidents - relayed by radio dispatch.

- b. *Priority II* - Non-active Incidents - telephone call to appropriate service contact; or radio dispatch, whichever is deemed appropriate based on current internal Communications Center operational policies.

- c. *Priority III* - Administrative Needs - relayed by telephone to appropriate service contact.

- 3. Incidents will be dispatched by priority, with *Priority I* being the highest priority.

6.1K Investigations

Incident reports received by the Communications Center which, based on the judgement of the Supervisor/Shift Leader, do not warrant the dispatch of Fire and/or EMS equipment (odor, smoke scares, apparent malicious false reports, reported accidental activation's of automatic detection devices) may be referred to the appropriate Fire and/or EMS Chief for action. Even though police or other services may be asked to check the situation, the event responsibility remains with the appropriate Fire or EMS Chief. In the event the Communications Center receives additional information which upgrades the seriousness of the event, an immediate dispatch of services will occur based on local or regional procedures.

6.2

UPGRADE/DOWNGRADE AUTHORITY

At the discretion of the Communications Supervisor/Shift Leader, upgrading or downgrading of incident response can occur.

6.2A

Upgrade - If incident reports from the public to the Communications Center indicate the potential for needs beyond the initial alarm response, the Supervisor/Shift Leader may upgrade alarm response as deemed appropriate. This may include multiple injury motor vehicle accidents, large multi-occupancy or multi-property incidents with potential mass casualty reports.

6.2B

Downgrade - during thunderstorms, adverse weather conditions or localized power outages, the Communications Center Supervisor/Shift Leader may consider downgrading first alarm responses for automatic detection devices. Downgrades may occur in localized areas of the county where obvious conditions exist and multiple automatic alarms are received. This downgrade would preferably be a single engine company dispatch for investigation purposes. This would help prevent the depletion of resources for actual emergency situations. Upgrade to full alarm response will occur if the conditions or situation warrants. Downgrade conditions will cease upon the conclusion of the adverse weather conditions.

6.3

INCIDENT DISPATCH

6.3A

Announcement Procedure

The following format will be utilized in announcement of incidents:

1. If a company due is at another incident, but has apparatus on station which is due, they must be notified of the second incident.

2. Activate encoder "pager" tone(s) of company(ies) due and/or, if applicable, municipal "pager" encoder tone(s) per municipal pre-planned fire and/or EMS response system.

Should apparatus of the first due engine company be out-of-service or otherwise committed, their encoder "pager" tones shall also be activated for informational purposes.

3. Appropriate number of "alert" tones sounded:
 - One for EMS call
 - Two for non-structure fires, motor vehicle injury accidents, rescues and transfer assignments.
 - Three for any call involving a structure
4. Announce municipality (borough, township, city).
5. Announce location (street address, landmark, other pertinent information).
6. Incident conditions (house fire, car fire, auto accident, fire in wall, heart attack). The general terms of "structure fire, vehicle fire and wildfire" will not be used if possible.
7. Announce Box Number.
8. Announce Patient Response Class (EMS/QRS Dispatches only).
9. Announce Companies/Units Due:
 - Fire/Rescue/QRS Apparatus on Fire 1
 - EMS Units (BLS/ALS/QRS) on EMS_DSP

EMS Dispatch will be a single announcement for the EMS Dispatcher. Fire Dispatcher will continue with the below procedures.

10. Activate house siren tones for companies due (if appropriate).
11. Resound alert tone(s).
12. Re-announce location.

13. Re-announce incident conditions.
14. Re-announce box number.
15. Re-announce Patient Response Class, if appropriate.
16. Re-announce companies (units due as in item #9).
17. Announce time of incident.

6.3B Transfer Dispatch Format

1. The following format will be utilized for transfers of apparatus (Fire or EMS):
Example: Pager tone, beep-beep, transfer to Company 65's quarters, Engine Co. 66 . . . siren tone . . . beep-beep, transfer to Company 65's quarters, Engine Company 66 is due, 1516 hours.

6.4 DISPATCH CHANNELS

6.4A Fire Incidents

All Fire and Rescue companies will be dispatched on Conventional Fire 1 and 800 Fire 1.

All BLS/ALS EMS units will be dispatched on the UHF Paging Frequency and on 800 EMS_DSP.

6.4B EMS Incidents

All BLS/ALS EMS units will be dispatched on the UHF Paging Frequency and on 800 EMS_DSP. QRS will also be announced on the UHF Paging Frequency and 800 EMS_DSP if response is required under regional response criteria.

Medical Assist/QRS units will be dispatched on Conventional Fire 1 and on 800 Fire 1.

6.4C Auto Accident/Rescue

All BLS/ALS EMS units will be dispatched on the UHF Paging Frequency and on 800 EMS_DSP.

All Fire and Rescue companies will be dispatched on Conventional Fire 1 and on 800 Fire 1.

6.5 **SCENE SAFETY ISSUES**

1. During dispatch, the inclusion of the statement “staging away from the scene” will be added prior to the announcement of due equipment when the Communications Center *senses an issue* from the callers information.
2. The Communications Center will continue to provide more pertinent information to the units as they go responding to allow them to evaluate their actions upon arriving on the scene.
3. It should not be assumed by responders that the scene is safe if we DO NOT advise to stage away from the scene. Responders should still maintain their normal cautions and assume a potential risk at every call.
4. Those responders who arrive first on the scene and were unable to monitor us providing other responders with scene information should use caution if they choose to access the scene. It is suggested that they contact the Communications Center prior to accessing the area.
5. It will remain the responder’s decision upon receiving the incident information as to whether to proceed in or not. If the Police have requested you to stage, the Com Center will provide that information.

6.6 **Electronic Messaging of Incident Information**

1. The Cumberland County Computer Aided Dispatch System provides messages to Departments who utilize a third-party company for delivery of incident information to their responders.
2. Departments must provide the Department of Public Safety with account information (e-mail address) of their third-party company they choose to utilize. Departments

requiring an additional account due to utilizing two third party companies will be honored.

3. It will be the responsibility of each Department to manage their local users within their chosen system. The Department of Public Safety will not manage or connect individual responders directly to the CAD system. All responders must arrange connections through their local organizations.
4. The Department of Public Safety will make arrangements for individual responders affiliated with the County Special Teams 200 through 900.
5. The use of this system is strictly for alerting of agencies who have apparatus with primary first due area within Cumberland County.
6. Municipal Fire Chiefs who have an individual department pager tone assigned in lieu of single pagers for all affiliated stations will be permitted individual alerting. They must provide the Department of Public Safety with account information so they can be connected.
7. This system is not to be considered as the primary alerting system for Cumberland County. It will be considered a redundant system. Performance of this system can only be as reliable as the carrier service.
8. The information in these messages may be privileged and confidential and protected from disclosure. The recipient agency of this information is responsible for delivering this message to the appropriate intended recipients for appropriate dissemination, distribution, and authorized use.