S.O.P. #:   300-11

SUBJECT: MUTUAL AID COMMUNICATIONS

DIVISION: COMMUNICATIONS

OBJECTIVE: To outline procedures for Mutual Aid response into adjoining jurisdictions and units of adjoining jurisdictions responding into Baltimore County.

Section 1.   Baltimore County units responding to other jurisdictions.

A.   Dispatch Procedure

1.   Units requested by the adjoining jurisdiction may be dispatched upon request. If the units requested are not available, Dispatch may notify the requesting jurisdiction of other available equipment. Responding units are to advise of the incident status by using the Baltimore County I. M. S. terminology.

2.   Dispatch will notify the respective DC/BC of the mutual aid incident, when the request goes beyond a single unit response.

3.   Using procedures identified in SOP 300-09, the ADO will fill-in those companies as required.

4.   Units requested for a 2nd alarm will be dispatched.

5.   At no time will equipment, equal to a Baltimore County's 1st alarm, be dispatched out of Baltimore County to incidents less than a 2nd alarm, without the on-duty Division Chief's approval.

6.   When honoring requests for additional units for incidents beyond a 2nd alarm, staggered dispatch may be used. This constitutes dispatching additional equipment from stations other than the ones on the initial response.

7.   Division Chiefs/Battalion Chiefs may respond when units from two (2) or more fire companies are requested, or upon request of the Baltimore County Companies responding.

B.   Radio Procedures for Jurisdictions Other Than York County, PA and Harford County, MD

1.   Dispatch will advise all units responding to assist adjoining jurisdictions to switch to a Mutual Aid TG (F96, F97 or F98). Baltimore County units will preface their unit number with "Baltimore County";

i.e.,   "Baltimore County Engine 4 to Baltimore City, etc."

2.   Dispatch will patch and Multi-select the Mutual Aid TG with FMARS-1 (154.280 MHz), FMARS-2 (154.295), or the other jurisdiction radio system on an assignable or dedicated CCM depending on the outside jurisdiction's communications capabilities. Dispatch should arrange to utilize FMARS-2 first, if at all possible. NOTE: FMARS-1 should not be used for tactical fire ground communications.

3.   The patch allows assigned units to speak directly to the adjoining jurisdiction field units or their Communications Center. Units will advise the assigned jurisdiction their status by voice. Communications will be maintained directly, not relayed by Dispatch, between the responding units and the Mutual Aid Communications Center. Dispatch will monitor the mutual aid patch to keep updated about the incident.

4.   When units become available, they will make their status known on their divisional talkgroup.

C.   Radio Procedures for York County, PA and Harford County, MD

YORK COUNTY, PA

Baltimore County Units Responding Into York County

1.   Units will call enroute on their divisional talkgroup and after acknowledgement be directed to switch to either TG 96, 97 or 98.

2.   Fire Dispatch will enable the patch between the York County channel on the console and the assigned Baltimore County TG. Enabling the Multiselect function is optional.

3.   After the patch is established, York County will patch Baltimore County units to their operational channel. Units shall identify themselves as "Baltimore County (Unit I.D.) to York County." Example: Baltimore County Engine 451 to York County.

4.   Units will make all status changes to York County, who will in turn notify Fire Dispatch via Mutual Aid.

5.   After clearing the incident, units shall return to their divisional TG and advise the dispatcher of their status.

6.   At the conclusion of the incident, Fire Dispatch will disable the patch.

York County Units Responding Into Baltimore County

1.   All York County units alerted for an incident located in Baltimore County will be informed to respond on the operational channel designated by York County Dispatch. York County will restrict communication on the York County channel used to establish the patch.

   Note: When the patch is enabled, Baltimore County will hear all communications conducted on the selected York County channel.

2.   Baltimore County Fire Dispatch will patch York County units to the appropriate operational TG. Units will identify themselves as "York County (Unit I.D.) to Baltimore County."

3.   Units will make all status changes to Baltimore County Fire Dispatch, who will in turn advise York County via Mutual Aid.

4.   After clearing the incident, York County units will return to their dispatch channel and advise the dispatcher of their status.

5.   At the conclusion of the incident, Fire Dispatch will disable the patch.

HARFORD COUNTY

Baltimore County Units Responding Into Harford County

1.   Units will call enroute on their divisional talkgroup and after their acknowledgement, units will be directed to switch to TG 96, 97 or 98.

2.   Fire Dispatch will enable the patch between the HARF CO talkgroup on the console and the assigned Baltimore County TG. It will be an option for the dispatcher whether they also enable the Multi-Select function.

3.   After the patch is established, Harford County will patch our units to their operational channel. Units will then identify themselves as "Baltimore County Unit I.D." to Harford County.

4.   Units will make all status notifications to Harford County. Harford County will advise Baltimore County of the units' statuses.

5.   Upon clearing of the incident, units will return to their divisional TG and advise the dispatcher of their status.

6.   Dispatch will then disable the patch.

Harford County Units Responding Into Baltimore County

1.   Harford County will alert units for the incident located in Baltimore County. All Harford County units will be informed to respond on the operational channel as designated by their dispatch. Harford Fire Dispatch should restrict communications on the Harford Fire channel that will be patched.

        Note: Once the patch is enabled, Baltimore County will hear all communication traffic on the active fire ground talkgroup.

2.   Harford Fire Dispatch will enable the patch between the HARF CO TG on their console and their assigned Harford County channel.

3.   After the patch is established, Baltimore County Dispatch will patch Harford County units to our operational TG. Units will then identify themselves as "Harford County Unit I.D." to Baltimore County.

4.   Units will make all status notifications to Baltimore County Fire Dispatch. Baltimore County will advise Harford County of the units' statuses.

5.   Upon clearing the incident, responding units from Harford County will return to their dispatch channel and advise their dispatcher of their status.

6.   Dispatch will then disable the patch.

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SUBJECT: MUTUAL AID COMMUNICATIONS

Section 2:   Out-of-County Companies Responding into Baltimore County.

A.   Dispatch Procedures

1.   Out-of-County units responding into Baltimore County must meet the Baltimore County Fire Department's apparatus and staffing standards.

2.   If unable to meet the Baltimore County Fire Department's staffing requirements, responding units must advise their Communications Center to notify Baltimore County Dispatch of their staffing status.

3.   When mutual aid units respond into Baltimore County, a Baltimore County unit will also be dispatched on the incident. Division/Battalion Commanders may vary this procedure, if the situation warrants. Whenever a mutual aid engine(s) is dispatched on a running assignment, the mutual aid engine(s) will be dispatched in addition to the four (4) Baltimore County engines.

B.   Radio Procedures

Upon predetermined running assignments, or request from our units, for assistance from an adjoining jurisdiction, Dispatch will implement the necessary patch. Dispatch will notify COMMAND of the Communications patch. It may be necessary to implement a patch to a separate TG to be monitored by COMMAND. Dispatch will patch and Multi-select the assigned fireground talkgroup with FMARS-1 (154.280 MHz), FMARS-2 (154.295), or the other jurisdiction radio system on an assignable or dedicated CCM depending on the outside jurisdiction's communications capabilities. Additionally, dispatch shall update the CAD incident Fire Box with the three letter county prefix; i.e., HAR, HOW, CAR, ANN, BAL & YOR; followed by the two digit Baltimore County ID. For example, Station 48 is alerted to assist Harford County, the correct fire box on the incident should be HAR-48. Medic 11 is dispatched into Baltimore City, BAL-11.

Section 3:   Baltimore County EMS units responding into other jurisdictions

A.   When two (2) EMS units are assigned to mutual aid assignments, and an additional EMS unit is requested by a surrounding jurisdiction, the request will be honored only if one of the following has occurred:

1.   The jurisdiction requesting mutual aid advises the incident is an ALS or life threatening situation.

2.   The request is approved by the on duty Division Chief.

Section 4:   Fire Mutual Aid Radio System (FMARS). (154.28 & 154.295 MHz.)

A.   FMARS 1 will be monitored by Dispatch so that specified aid or directions, received from a participating net member, may be acted upon in a timely fashion.

B.   Priorities of Use

1.   Priority 1, Disaster Operations - A disaster is a serious disruption to life, public order, security or safety that arises with little or no warning. It causes or threatens death or injury to a number of people in excess of those who could be dealt with by public safety services, operating under normal conditions, and, thus, requires special mobilization of additional services, or organizations from outside the boundary of Baltimore County.

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a. If the determination is made that the FMARS frequency is needed for disaster operations, control shall be obtained through the following procedures:

An alert tone will be transmitted over FMARS, followed by the specific wording:

"Attention all jurisdictions, Baltimore County has a disaster and wishes control of the FMARS channel."

b. This will alert all other jurisdictions to undertake the following activities:

1) Monitor radio traffic on FMARS for possible participation in the incident.

2) Refrain from using FMARS until the jurisdiction with Disaster Control has released the channel, except in the case of direct involvement in the incident, or for inter-jurisdictional Emergency Traffic. Alternate methods can be used for non-disaster or routine inter-jurisdictional traffic, such as other radio channels or telephone lines.

3) If alternate methods, as suggested above, are unworkable, the jurisdiction needing the use of FMARS shall contact the controlling jurisdiction for approval of use.

c. The controlling disaster agency shall make every effort to release control of FMARS as soon as possible, utilizing the following procedure:

An alert tone will be transmitted over FMARS followed by the specific wording:

"Attention all jurisdictions, Baltimore County is releasing control of FMARS. All stations resume normal use of the channel."

2. Priority 2, Daily Operations - involving inter-jurisdictional incidents requiring communications on FMARS shall be on a first come, first-served basis. Jurisdictions with Priority 2 traffic shall make every effort to remove their operation from this channel if a request is received from any jurisdiction requiring FMARS for Priority 1 disaster operations.

3. Priority 3, Testing - There will be a daily radio test of the Baltimore Regional FMARS at 0815 hours. The test shall be conducted by each agency on a rotational basis. If the agency due to conduct the test cannot, for some reason, the next station (jurisdiction) in rotation shall conduct the test.

ROLL CALL ORDER	CONDUCTS TEST DURING
Baltimore City	January; July
Anne Arundel County	February; August
Baltimore County	March; September
Carroll County	April; October
Harford County	May; November
Howard County	June; December
B.W.I.	

The agency conducting the test will call each jurisdiction, starting in roll call order, until all jurisdictions have acknowledged. If no contact is made, the appropriate agency shall be notified by another means.

Example of Test:

"Baltimore Regional Fire Mutual Aid Radio System Test.
Baltimore County testing to Baltimore City."

C.   Jurisdictional Prefix

To avoid confusion, units and communication centers must use their jurisdictional name and mobile/portable unit identification when operating on FMARS.

Example:

"Baltimore County to Anne Arundel Engine 31."

"Howard Engine 51 to Baltimore County."

D.   Agencies currently operating on FMARS;

Baltimore Region

Anne Arundel County Fire/Rescue Service
Baltimore City Fire Department
Baltimore County Fire/Rescue Service
Baltimore Washington International Airport
Carroll County Fire/Rescue Service
Harford County Fire/Rescue Service
Howard County Fire/Rescue Service

Maryland (Outside Baltimore Region)

Calvert County Fire/Rescue Service
Cecil County Fire/Rescue Service
Frederick County Fire/Rescue Service
Queen Anne's County Fire/Rescue Service
Washington County Fire/Rescue Service
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems Inc. (EMRC/SYSCOM)
Maryland State Forestry (Longhill)
Maryland State Hazardous Materials Unit

Washington Metropolitan Area

Alexandria Fire Department
Arlington County Fire Department
District of Columbia Fire Department
Fairfax County Fire/Rescue Service
Loudon County Fire/Rescue Service
Montgomery County Fire/Rescue Service
Prince George's County Fire/Rescue Service
Prince William County Fire/Rescue Service
Washington National Airport (FAA)
Dulles International Airport (FAA)
Fort Belvoir

Other Agencies

United States Park Police: Department of the Interior Helicopter
Maryland State Police (Helicopter)
Gaithersburg (Department of Commerce)
Whiteoak (Department of Navy)
MFRI (University of Maryland, College Park)

<u>Virginia (Outside WMA)</u>

Fauquier County Fire/Rescue Service

<u>West Virginia</u>

Jefferson County Fire/Rescue Service

<u>Pennsylvania</u>

York County Fire/Rescue Service
Adams County Fire/Rescue Service
Cumberland County Fire/Rescue Service
Franklin County Fire/Rescue Service