



Burlington Fire Department



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Section: 06 - Communications/Dispatch	
SOG Number: 06.05	Effective Date: Oct. 11, 2020
Subject: Mutual Aid Requests	
By Order of Fire Chief Steven A. Locke	

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to set guidelines for dispatching requests for a mutual aid response to surrounding communities.

II. Scope:

This document is intended for all Burlington Fire Department members and the Dispatchers that work with the Burlington Fire Department. The Burlington Fire Department is committed to providing timely mutual aid to partner agencies and the communities they protect in a time of need. Requests for mutual aid within Chittenden County shall follow the guidelines within this document. Any requests for mutual aid outside of Chittenden County must be approved by the Chief Engineer, or his/her designee.

III. Definitions:

Medical Assist: A suppression company (not an ambulance), which provides additional EMS personnel on an incident, in an effort to assist the assigned ambulance.

Mutual Aid: An agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries.

IV. Guidelines:

A). BACKFILL STAFFING

Other than mutual aid medical requests, when members of the Burlington Fire Department respond outside of the City on a mutual aid response, the department will hire back personnel using a person for person ratio for recall coverage in the City.

1. The decision to recall will be based upon the recommendation of the BFD Officer to arrive first at the mutual aid incident. This officer will evaluate conditions and determine probable commitment of resources at the mutual aid incident.

B). COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH (CAD)

1. The Burlington Fire Department CAD build team has programed the system to provide resource recommendations based on the incident type and location. Incident types that have specific predetermined resource recommendations are as follows: Hazardous Material Incident, Medical, Station Cover Assignment, and Structure Fire. In general, the responses are based upon sending the closest appropriate resources. The exception will be that within Mallets Bay, the response plan looks specifically for Ladder 4.
2. CAD has been programmed, for the majority of likely call types, to recommend the closest suppression unit, Tower 1, and Battalion 1. The intent is to dispatch what are likely to be the appropriate units and, when necessary, allow the shift commander on Battalion 1 to make adjustments to the response. A minimum of (2) units are assigned in an effort to meet 2-in/2-out requirements, when applicable. Tower 1 is specifically on this response for the technical capabilities the company possesses and the frequency of mutual aid agencies requesting this specific unit. The Battalion is included for the obvious supervisory component, but also to coordinate and ensure the proper resources (apparatus, equipment, and people) are being sent, dependent on the call type and situation.
3. For those times when there is an unfulfilled resource request, the emergency communication specialist must notify the shift commander of the specific unfulfilled resource request.
4. "Mutual Aid" exists as a call type, but has no associated recommendation for units. It exists solely as a call type for the dispatcher to use for atypical responses to a mutual aid jurisdiction.

C). MEDICAL

1. Medical incidents outside of the City of Burlington will recommend the closest suppression unit and an ambulance in the CAD. It will be up to the emergency communication specialist in dispatch to determine whether or not both units are needed.

(For example, Medical incidents in the City of Winooski will most likely require a medical assist, whereas Medical incidents in South Burlington or Colchester will most likely not require a medical assist. In these cases, the emergency communication specialist will disregard the suppression unit recommendation and dispatch only the ambulance. Likewise, a mutual aid agency could be requesting a suppression unit to

assist a mutual ambulance on a medical call, and in this case, the ambulance recommendation would be disregarded.)

D). STRUCTURE FIRE

1. For structure fire incidents, the Burlington Fire Department will dispatch the closest Engine Company, Tower 1, and Battalion 1 to the jurisdiction requesting assistance. This is done to ensure rapid response of the closest engine, and to provide pumping capability for the Tower 1. Battalion 1 is included to provide supervision and ensure proper coordination of resources.
2. The closest Engine Company will respond with its current staffing level.
3. When in quarters and feasible, the back-end firefighter from Engine 1, will be detailed as a third firefighter on Tower 1 to respond to the mutual aid incident.
4. In the event that Tower 1 is staffed with three people, no cross staffing will occur.
5. The exception to this response plan is that in Mallets Bay, Ladder 4 will be the recommended unit to respond with its current staffing. Battalion 1 will also be included on the recommendation. If Ladder 4 is staffed with two, the officer of Battalion 1 may elect to augment Ladder 4 staffing with the back end firefighter from another three-person apparatus. If Ladder 4 is unavailable, Ladder 2 will be recommended.

E). HAZ MAT INCIDENT

1. The response plan built into the CAD is Utility 1 and the Hazardous Materials Decon Trailer. In general, Ladder 2 or the suppression unit assigned to Station 2 will cross staff Utility 1 and tow the Haz Mat Decon trailer to the incident with their current staffing.

F). STATION COVER ASSIGNMENT

1. The Burlington Fire Department shall provide station coverage for fire departments in which we share an immediate border. Providing station coverage beyond these communities will be at the discretion of the Chief Engineer or his/her designee
2. Station Coverage for an outside agency will default to the engine assigned to Station 1 in the CAD.
3. Exception – Ladder 4 will be the default for Station Coverage in Mallets Bay. This is programmed into the CAD. If Ladder 4 is unavailable for station coverage, the system will recommend the engine assigned to Station 1.

G). SUMMARY OF MUTUAL AID RESPONSE PLANS

1. Medical – Recommends closest suppression unit and ambulance.

2. Structure Fire – Recommends closest engine, Tower 1, and Battalion 1. Exception is Malletts Bay, where the recommendation will be Ladder 4 (Ladder 2 if unavailable).
3. Station Cover Assignment – Recommends the engine assigned to Station 1, except in Malletts Bay, where the recommendation will be Ladder 4.
4. Haz Mat Incident – Recommends Utility 1 and the Haz Mat Decon Trailer. (Staffing provided by crew of Ladder 2).
5. The majority of mutual aid calls default to the closest suppression unit, Tower 1, and Battalion 1. There are certain call types, such as “Jewelry Removal”, “Elevator – No Verbal Contact”, or “Elevator – Occupied”, where the response will reflect our typical response though.

V. Responsibility

The on-duty Shift Commander, or their designee, shall be responsible for the recall of personnel in order to bring the on-duty staffing back to the level prior to the mutual aid request.

Recall of personnel will occur person per person for those members operating in the mutual aid capacity.

The Company officer of the unit or units who respond in the mutual aid capacity will be responsible for completing the incident report, in accordance with SOG 00.08, Incident Reports.

Revision History			
Revision Date	Section	Summary	Principal Author
12.19.2018			DC Collette
08.20.2020		Updated with CAD Incident Types	DC Collette
09.09.2020		Clarity added to recommended resources.	Chief Locke
10.11.2020		Clarity of recommended resources	Chief Locke