

**PHOENIX REGIONAL
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

MUTUAL AID RESPONSE AND OPERATIONS

M.P. 205.17

11/24-R

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a standard and acceptable practice for all Phoenix Regional Automatic Aid Partners with Mutual Aid assistance to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, and other types of emergency incidents that are within the scope of services provided by the partner fire departments with written formal agreements.

DEFINITIONS

Mutual Aid is defined as, any Fire Department emergency response and/or incident mitigation assistance provided by one jurisdiction to other jurisdictions when no formal Automatic Aid agreement has been instituted. Any Mutual Aid assistance provided will be the result of a formal request for assistance from one jurisdiction to the other jurisdiction. Requests for mutual aid can be refused by any requested agency.

AUTHORITY

When Mutual Aid assistance is provided, the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) remains ultimately responsible for the incident and must provide incident support. An AHJ is recognized as municipal, county, or state division of government (Fire Departments) or taxing authority (Fire Districts) granted the responsibility to respond to emergency incidents involving fire, emergency medical, hazardous materials, and technical rescue within their geographical boundaries. For emergency transportation, an AHJ is the public or private entity that has been granted the responsibility to respond for emergency transportation (ambulance) to their assigned geographical area and meet the standards defined by their Arizona State Department of Health Services Certificate of Necessity (CON).

PROCEDURE

It is understood that a jurisdiction or area outside of the Regional Metropolitan Phoenix Automatic Aid Response System may exceed its response capabilities. When the Fire Chief or their designee determines that assistance is needed to mitigate an emergency incident within their jurisdiction, a request for assistance can be made.

Currently the Phoenix and Mesa Regional Dispatch Centers provide dispatching services for some departments that are not members of the Automatic Aid

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System. In these cases, the respective dispatch center acts as those agencies' designee when requesting mutual aid assistance.

For assistance from agencies outside of the Phoenix and Mesa Regional Dispatch Centers, the requesting agency will make the necessary request to the respective dispatch center for approval and potential dispatch.

The mutual aid system is designed for fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, and technical rescue response in hazard mitigation and/or life safety responses with respective departmental/district resources that have approval to respond.

The mutual aid system should incorporate emergency transportation (ambulance) in the case of crisis or severe shortage with a special consideration that this is governed differently. Ambulance coverage is based upon State of Arizona Department of Health Services CON for geographical areas. Not all fire departments/districts are CON holders and do not have the authority to share ambulance resources. In the cases of mutual aid requests for ambulances, the CON holder shall be contacted by the respective dispatch center for the necessary approval to respond.

When a request for assistance is made, the following process must be followed:

1. The requesting jurisdiction or designee dispatch center will contact the requested Dispatch to request assistance. The request must include the type of incident, the type and number of resources being requested, the current number of resources assigned to the emergency incident, and the current location of the incident commander (if currently on scene).
2. Upon receipt of the information, the respective dispatch center will determine the closest appropriate supporting jurisdiction and/or ambulance CON holder to fulfill the request. Upon that determination, the respective dispatch center(s) will contact the on duty, official contact of the proposed supporting jurisdiction to obtain approval to dispatch requested resources.
3. The following critical criteria will be utilized by the Fire Chief or their designee to determine if a response is possible:
 - What is the incident type and nature?
 - What is the immediate or foreseeable Life Hazard?

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- Has the responsible agency dispatched resources to the incident? If so, what is their estimated time of arrival to the incident?
 - Is a different jurisdiction closer that can provide the requested support? If so, refer the request to that jurisdiction.
 - What capacity remains to protect their response area?
4. After thoroughly assessing the above criteria, the on-duty contact will make a determination to fully support, partially support, or deny the Mutual Aid request. Upon this determination, the supporting jurisdiction's Shift Commander or Battalion Chief will advise Dispatch and Deployment of the level of response that will be provided. A 3&1 assignment will be the minimum deployment for a Structure fire or any fire with a report of people trapped.
5. If assistance is provided, the respective dispatch center will immediately dispatch the determined resources and notify the requesting jurisdiction of the status of their request for assistance.
- This procedure does not govern Statewide Mutual Aid requests or the deployment of the Rapid Response Task Force.
 - If an Automatic Aid partnering agency elects to respond to a mutual aid request, that is the sole responsibility of the accepting jurisdiction. Additional requests from the responding jurisdiction should come from within the responding jurisdiction first. Any requests for additional aid made by a responding automatic aid participant that would include a response from additional AA partners must be coordinated through the regional dispatch center and the shift commander of the requested agency.
 - Automatic Aid Participants will not be held liable in any way for the determination to supply or not to supply, or to limit the level of response supplied.
 - **Automatic Aid** is defined as the reciprocal extension of participating fire departments, through an Intergovernmental Agreement, where resources are merged into an integrated system with standardized training and standard operating procedures (SOP). Automatic aid includes a "total boundary drop" where participating jurisdictions operate as though they were a single fire department.

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- **Enhanced Mutual Aid** is defined as those areas where neighboring fire departments agree to deploy resources automatically in a specific area without prior approval.
- **Unincorporated Emergency Service Area** is defined as a region of land that does not have provisions for emergency service delivery, except for law enforcement services.
- **Requests for assistance by Private Fire & Emergency Service provider (RMFD)**

ENHANCED MUTUAL AID

Enhanced mutual aid has been defined as an agreement between two agencies (typically 1 auto aid agency and 1 mutual aid agency) that does not require approval to send resources to assist in an incident. The recipient is typically a mutual aid jurisdiction requiring specific or general assistance with fire, emergency medical, technical rescue, and/or hazardous materials response.

An enhanced mutual aid agreement between two agencies does not bind the remaining automatic aid agencies to this agreement. Any other assistance required outside of enhanced mutual should go through the standard mutual aid request process.

UNINCORPORATED EMERGENCY SERVICE AREA

It is often unreasonable to determine if a call for emergency services is inside an unincorporated area. As a result, any call for emergency services within a county island, will be dispatched without approval and the closest most appropriate unit(s) deployed to a type of call where an imminent threat to life is presumed as follows:

1. Structure fire or any fire with a report of people trapped.
2. Critical EMS incidents (Codes, Childbirth, Choking person, child or infant, Drowning, ALS Seizure).

No area is absent of law enforcement jurisdiction, and all area/bordering law enforcement agencies provide mutual support for the Phoenix Regional Automatic Aid System. Therefore, units will be deployed to rescue/provide emergency

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medical services to law enforcement officers automatically in unincorporated areas regardless of distance. Alarm Room personnel should coordinate with non-auto aid dispatch centers with the intent of providing the timeliest response.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE BY PRIVATE FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER (RMFD)

Rural Metro Fire Department (RMFD) is a private corporation that contracts and sells individual fire service subscriptions in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of Maricopa County. It is important to note that RMFD is not a governmental agency and is NOT an Authority Having Jurisdiction. In addition, it is impossible for the automatic aid system to know who is serviced by RMFD. As a result, a request to assist RMFD, will be dispatched without approval and the closest most appropriate unit(s) deployed to a type of call where an imminent threat to life is presumed as follows:

1. Structure fire or any fire with a report of people trapped.
2. Critical EMS incidents (Codes, Childbirth, Choking person, child or infant, Drowning, ALS Seizure).

Any request made that does not involve an imminent threat to public life safety (defensive structure or vegetation fire for example) will be deferred to the shift commander of the requested agency for approval as outlined in the Mutual Aid Procedure section above.

PARAMETERS FOR ON-SITE OPERATIONS BY ASSISTING JURISDICTIONS

1. Mutual Aid units will use every effort to support the on-site Incident Commander in a positive manner.
2. Assisting resources will always operate under the incident command standards as documented by Volume II, including the functions of command and strategic decision making.
3. Interoperable communications must be available. Crews will not operate in the hot zone without uninterrupted communications and connection to a dispatch center.

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4. The first arriving Company/Command Officer from the assisting resources will establish communications with the Incident Commander. If there is no command structure established, the first arriving Company/Command Officer will facilitate the implementation of an ICS utilizing a Unified Command with the AHJ. Implementation will include the appropriate incident organization as needed. If the AHJ is unable to support a Unified Command Structure the initial arriving company or command officer will establish command and become the incident commander.
5. Company/Command Officers will use the Strategic Decision-Making Model to determine the following:
 - On arrival, what is the current situation and what are the factors present and forecasted?
 - Is life safety a critical factor, that would require working in the hot zone?
 - Does the current incident strategy match the current and forecasted conditions and critical factors?
 - Are there enough resources on scene and/or responding to complete the tactical objectives (all clear, under control, loss stopped) based on the incident conditions?
 - Do all mutual aid resources have the ability to communicate on the fireground with each other and with the Phoenix or Mesa Dispatch Center on the hazard zone radio channel?
 - Are their treatment and transportation resources available and present for firefighter injuries?
6. Ladder companies are a limited resource. Therefore, Command Officers should consider whether a Ladder Company response is necessary and/or appropriate.
7. Special Operations are a limited resource. Therefore, Command Officers will review the availability status before making an approval to any request.
8. Direct tactical radio communication with the Phoenix or Mesa Dispatch Center is required if mutual aid resources are going to be working in the hazard zone. This is necessary to ensure a dispatch center tactical radio operator (TRO) is monitoring hazard zone radio traffic and can implement Mayday procedures and resources should the need arise.

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9. For incidents that do not have direct tactical radio communication with the Phoenix or Mesa Dispatch Center, mutual aid resources shall not work in the hot zone and work to support the AHJ resources with work from outside of the hazard zone.
10. Breathing apparatus will be refilled by Utility Trucks from Automatic Aid cities only.
11. Injured or ill Firefighters will be transported by fire department operated Ambulances whenever possible.
12. The Command Officer will update the respective dispatch center with progress reports at appropriate points throughout the incident.
13. Assisting resources will be released from the incident as soon as conditions warrant, or the local jurisdiction has arrived and is ready to act. All overhaul operations will be completed by the requesting jurisdiction.

OPERATIONAL PERIODS GREATER THAN 12 HOURS

Any requests for assistance greater than 12 hours will be governed by the Arizona Statewide Mutual Aid Plan.