



Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

Standard Operating Procedure

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Standard Operating Procedure: 4.1.8	Effective Date: 9/22/2025
Subject: Minimal Staffing	Section: Fire / Rescue Operations
Authorized: Deputy Chief Paul Supko	Revision Date: N/A

Applicability: ☒ Volunteer ☒ Career

I. PURPOSE

To identify the minimum staffing levels for specific dispatched assignments within Carroll County, Maryland based upon the needs of each incident type. The result of these staffing levels shall be a limitation of excessive unit responses for specific incident types.

II. DEFINITIONS

Box Alarm: Incident deployment requiring multiple resources in either hydrant or non-hydrant areas. This is typically for a structure fire and allows sufficient staffing to accomplish the primary strategies of the incident for: (RECEO-VS) as well as incident support.

Structure Alarm: An incident of lesser complexity than a box alarm where multiple resources are in an investigative or mitigation mode that results in a quick resolution to an incident without further escalation of resources.

Rescue Alarm: An incident involving patient care, removal, and/or extrication. This can require a Rescue Squad, EMS, and engine company response.

Special Rescue Alarm: An incident involving patient care, removal, and/or extrication in extraordinary circumstances requiring the response of Advanced Technical Rescue resources.

HazMat Alarm: An incident involving the mitigation of a hazardous materials release, requiring the response of HazMat Team resources.

Medical Alarm: an incident requiring utilization of EMS and/or fire resources to provide expedient and comprehensive patient care at an ALS or BLS level.

Local Alarm: An incident requiring a single unit response which is deemed adequate to mitigate a specific situation.

Operational Personnel: Personnel who are fully cleared and equipped to function in an operational capacity in IDLH (Green tag Personnel) by DFEMS or their volunteer company. This requirement is specific to the type of apparatus they are staffing.

Routine Service Alarm: A non-emergent incident that provides assistance to citizens, coverage for Fire/EMS stations or evaluates and resolves a specific hazard.

III. POLICY

A minimum number of operational personnel are required to respond to incidents in Carroll County, as indicated by incident type, to ensure adequate staffing to mitigate those emergencies.

- A. Responding units will indicate their staffing of operational personnel in accordance with the Communications SOP.
 - 1. Trainees, Preceptees, Observers, or non-interior fire suppression personnel will not be counted toward unit staffing.
 - 2. Unit officers are responsible to ensuring an accurate staffing count for their unit.
- B. The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) will track staffing numbers per incident, ensuring the minimum number of units and the minimum staffing level as indicated by the incident type is met.
 - 1. Prior to arrival of the first unit officer on scene, ECC will back-up short-staffed units to meet minimum staffing requirements.
 - 2. After the arrival of the first unit officer on scene, ECC will consult with the officer on the necessity of backing-up short staffing.

IV. PROCEDURES

The following incident types will require the associated minimum staffing to satisfy a full response.

A. Box Alarms

28 Personnel (Hydranted)	
House Fire	Trailer Fire
Barn Fire	
31 Personnel (Non-Hydranted Area)	
House Fire	Trailer Fire
Barn Fire	

34 Personnel (Hydranted)

Building Fire	Building Fire w/ Rescue	Building Fire w/ High Life Hazard
House Fire w/ Rescue	Building Fire w/ High Life Hazard and HazMat	
Building Fire w/ HazMat		

37 Personnel (Non-Hydranted)

Building Fire	Building Fire w/ Rescue	Building Fire w/ High Life Hazard
Building Fire w/ HazMat	Building Fire w/ High Life Hazard and Hazmat	
House Fire w/ Rescue		

B. Structure Alarms**12 Personnel**

Gas Leak in a Residential or Commercial Structure		Odor of Smoke
Structure Alarm	Chimney Fire	Appliance Fire
Electrical Fire	Fire Involving Exposures	Small Building Fire
Odor of Electrical Burning	Lightning Strike	Fire Reported Out

C. Rescue Alarms**6 Personnel**

Vehicle Collision	Rescue Alarm	Vehicle Collision Serious
Vehicle Collision with Bike, Motorcycle, Pedestrian, or ATV		

12 Personnel

VC with Rescue	VC with Bus
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D. Special Rescue Alarms**# of Personnel**

12	Vehicle Collision with HazMat
18	Advance Technical Rescue (ATR)
23	ATR with HazMat

E. HazMat Alarms

21 Personnel

HazMat Alarm

F. Local Alarms

Typical Assignment at least one Engine - (4 Personnel)

Fire Alarms	Brush/Woods Fire	Outside Odor Investigation
Outside Gas Leak	Emergency Lock Out	Vehicle Fire
Large Vehicle Fire	Outside Fire	CO Detector Activation
Farm Machinery Fire	Field Fire	Trash Fire

G. Medical Alarms

5 Personnel

Cardiac Arrest

H. Routine Service Alarms

At Least One (1) Unit from a Station as Dispatched

Patient Assist	Smoke Investigation	Small Fuel Spill
Transfer	Wires Down	Elevator Rescue w/ No Injuries
Flooding Condition	Illegal Open Burning	Odor of Fuel

I. Ensuring Minimum Staffing (backing-up units)

- a. All dispatched apparatus must respond to the incident.
- b. If the personnel number is below the required number, but all apparatus has responded; ECC will alert the next closest engine(s) to make up staffing.
- c. If apparatus responds short and the minimum number of personnel is not met, ECC will notify the responding officer in this order:
 - i. First Due Company Chief Officer
 - ii. DFEMS Command Officer
 - iii. 1st Due Engine Officer

F. Units alerted to replace understaffed or failed units will be canceled if they have not responded at the time the initial response is filled.

1. If they are already responding, ECC will not cancel units on fire calls until advised by command.
2. ECC will advise the Incident Commander or first unit officer of what has been alerted and what is responding above the initial assignment.

Cancellations, if any, are determined by those field personnel. If no unit is on scene ECC will notify the responding officers in this order:

- a. First Due Company Chief Officer
- b. DFEMS Command Officer
- c. 1st Due Engine Officer

Example: Box Alarm 12-3, E123, HE31, HE131, E134, and Tower 12 have 4. E141 responds with 3, Medic 128, EMS103 and B/C101 are also responding. This is a total of 28 personnel. Chief 12 is responding to the incident. ECC will announce on the operating talk group “Carroll to Chief 12, your assignment is complete with 28 personnel with Engine 141 responding with 3.”

3. This does not apply to units assigned as part of a pre-emptive supplement on the initial assignment. Example: If an engine is assigned to supplement an understaffed out of county unit on the initial dispatch, that unit will be canceled if the understaffed unit responds with proper staffing.

V. RECISION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Minimal Staffing or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

VI. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS

SOP 4.1.1 Incident Management System

SOP 4.1.2 Communications

NFPA 1710 & 1720

VII. ATTACHMENTS

None.