

## Fire Emergency Dispatcher / 911 Operator

# 2016 STUDY GUIDE

### PLEASE NOTE

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the type of work you would be expected to perform as a Fire Emergency Dispatcher; to acquaint you with the various operating functions and positions of the Alarm room; and to prepare you to pass your examination for Fire Emergency Dispatcher.

Answers to the test questions that are derived from this study guide **must** be based on the information contained in this guide. Answers based on knowledge of fire prevention and suppression, medical treatment, related course work, previous study guides, or any other source, even though technically correct, **will not be accepted as correct** if they differ from this study guide.

## PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT REGIONAL DISPATCH CENTER

The Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center (PFDRDC or “Alarm Room”) handles all requests for assistance in Fire, Medical and other non-police emergencies for the cities of Avondale, Buckeye, Buckeye Valley, Chandler, Daisy Mountain, El Mirage, Gila Bend, Glendale, Goodyear, Guadalupe, Laveen, Maricopa, Paradise Valley, Peoria, Scottsdale, Sun City, Sun City West, Sun Lakes, Surprise, Tempe, Tolleson, Youngtown, as well as Phoenix. These cities contract with Phoenix Fire Department to provide emergency communications and handle emergency calls from citizens of their community. The mission of PFDRDC is to provide high-quality, compassionate, emergency dispatch services to the communities and public safety agencies we serve through a cooperative effort and sharing of resources.

The jurisdictions that are part of the Regional Dispatch Operation are dispatched “automatically”, as if they were part of a single Fire Department. This Automatic Aid System does not recognize or require any jurisdictional lines. The closest most appropriate unit to any emergency situation is dispatched without regard to city boundaries. Often, several departments work together on the same incident. In the 2,000-plus square miles of the Phoenix Metropolitan area, Automatic Aid greatly enhances emergency response delivery for the over 300,000 emergencies annually.

A Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is an answering location for 911 calls originating in a given area. A PSAP may be designated as primary or secondary, referring to the order in which calls are directed for answering. Primary PSAPs respond first. Secondary PSAPs receive calls on a transfer basis only. PSAPs are public service agencies such as police, fire or emergency medical or a common bureau servicing a group of agencies.

The Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center (PFDRDC) serves as a secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the jurisdictions served by the Regional Dispatch Center. In Maricopa County all primary PSAPs are law enforcement agencies. If the caller indicates they have a fire or medical emergency in any of the cities covered by the Regional Dispatch Center the caller is then transferred to the Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center.

When a citizen calls 911 from a landline, the Automatic Number Identification (ANI) and Automatic Location Identification (ALI) appears on the Calltaker’s computer screen. When 9-1-1 calls are made from wireless (cell) phones, the Calltaker may receive the callback phone number but does not receive the exact address or billing address of the caller. “Mapped ALI” is a computer mapping program used in the dispatch center that assists the Calltaker with verifying the location for wireless 911 calls. Mapped ALI will automatically center and display

a map that gives the general location of the caller, including GPS coordinates.

Not all emergency calls are received through 9-1-1. When customers call the 10-digit emergency phone number to the Fire Department the dispatcher does not receive any information regarding the address or phone number where the individual is calling from. Some requests for assistance are received from other agencies, such as the police agencies, or a private ambulance company or the power companies.

## **DEPLOYMENT PERSONNEL**

The Deployment Management Team consists of the Deployment Chiefs, Shift Supervisors and the Training Supervisor. There are a minimum of two members of the Management Team on duty at any given time.

### Deployment Chiefs

Four (4) sworn Fire Department members hold the Deployment Chief positions. The Deputy Chief is a staff position and is responsible for the overall functioning and operation of the Dispatch Center. The Deputy Chief is responsible for all fire communication activities including the work of the management team.

Three Deployment Battalion Chiefs oversee all operational functions in the dispatch center. As a member of the management team, he/she assists the Deputy Chief in supervising the overall administration and operation of the Regional Dispatch Center. His/her main area of responsibility is direct supervisory responsibility of the Fire Communications Supervisors under his/her direction. The Deployment Battalion Chief is available to answer any question from our members or the public we serve. He/She also is available to assist in determining the most appropriate dispatch response as necessary.

### Fire Communications Supervisor

Fire Communications Supervisor is a civilian promotional position and is a member of the Dispatch Center's management team. While on-duty in the dispatch center, he/she is responsible for the overall administration of the room and coordinating the work of all Fire Emergency Dispatchers. He/She reports to a Deployment Battalion Chief, yet works under the direction of the on-duty Deployment Battalion Chief. Fire Communications Supervisors monitor emergency calls and radio traffic to determine compliance with operational standards and perform personnel related and administrative functions.

Deployment has one Fire Communications Supervisor on special assignment to oversee the training program on a full-time basis. The Training Supervisor is responsible for recruiting, hiring and training new Fire Emergency Dispatchers.

## Fire Emergency Dispatcher - Lead

This position is an assignment from the position of Fire Emergency Dispatcher. The FED-Lead works with the Supervisor and Deployment Battalion Chief as part of the Management Team by monitoring emergency calls and radio traffic and assisting the Fire Emergency Dispatchers. This position handles many of the tactical, daily operations of the room, freeing up the Supervisor and Battalion Chief for administrative functions. Lead Dispatchers take an active role in on the job training by assisting with the coordination of trainers and training schedules, providing feedback and evaluating Fire Emergency Dispatcher trainees.

## Fire Emergency Dispatcher

This is the entry-level position for which prospective dispatchers are testing. Characteristics of a highly effective dispatcher are:

- Extreme level headedness
- Possess common sense and be self-disciplined
- Able to process incomplete information, assess the needs, and deploy emergency equipment within specific guidelines
- Exercise sound judgment making priority decisions in emergency and routine situations
- Ability to read maps and learn the geography, freeway systems, grid and addressing system of PFDRDC jurisdictions
- Work skillfully and accurately under stress
- Able to handle multiple situations of varying priorities on a simultaneous basis
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative relationships with others
- Maintain awareness at all times of ongoing emergency situations
- Perform duties effectively with a minimum of supervision
- Calm, even-tempered and considerate
- Able to take constructive criticism and learn from mistakes
- Able to remain emotionally uninvolved with situations
- Able to operate at peak proficiency at all times.

Fire Emergency Dispatchers are cross-trained in all Calltaker and Radio Operator positions. There are no dispatchers that work solely as a Calltaker or Radio Operator, they rotate through and work in all of the following positions:

- 1) Calltaker - includes ACD operator, Incoming Service and Outgoing Service Representatives
- 2) Channel One Operator
- 3) Tactical Radio Operator (TRO)

## CALLTAKER POSITION

Calltakers all receive incoming telephone calls but are divided into three separate functions with distinct phone answering priorities and tasks. The three Calltaker roles are Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) Operator, Incoming Service Rep (ISR), and Outgoing Service Rep (OSR).

### **ACD OPERATOR**

ACD Operators are primarily responsible for answering and processing incoming emergency calls on the 911 and 10-digit emergency lines. They also answer and process calls that are received on the many non-emergency phone lines that come into the dispatch center. There are multiple ACD Operators required on a shift to handle the high call volume experienced in the Regional Dispatcher Center.

ACD Operator functions:

- Interviews and extracts necessary information from a wide variety of callers in emergency situations and enters the information into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system
- Makes determination of the type and level of initial response units based on the information obtained from a caller
- Answers routine questions or refers non-emergency callers to appropriate agencies in cases of non-fire/EMS inquiries
- Provides self-help instructions according to EMD protocol to callers with emergency medical situations while Fire Department units are enroute
- Documents pertinent patient and incident information in the Patient Information mask (PTI)

The PTI mask is entered in the CAD system, which is then transmitted to the TRO and Mobile Computer Terminals (MCTs) of the units responding on the incident and entered in the Incident History. The PTI mask includes the age and sex of the patient, if they have any known communicable diseases and their chief complaint. The chief complaint is often the same as the nature of the emergency. For example, if a person was having difficulty in breathing, that would be their chief complaint as well as the Nature Code the dispatcher entered into the CAD system. The PTI mask is also used for non-medical calls to relay information about the incident.

### **OUTGOING SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**

One Calltaker acts as the OSR and performs additional functions that support field units on active incidents. The OSR has multiple responsibilities. When faced with several functions needing attention, they must be addressed in the

following order of priority:

1. Monitor radio channels for TRO support and medical patches
2. Coordinate helicopter and private ambulance response
3. Monitor EMS System for hospital status and availability
4. Mass Casualty Incident Alerts
5. Incident Taking
6. Assist Channel One Operator with Unit Status

### Monitoring Radio Channels for TRO Support and Medical Patches

The OSR monitors all tactical radio channels and is a radio support position responsible for initiating outbound requests for service from outside agencies. When directed, the OSR may function as the designated TRO for the staging channel on greater alarm incidents.

Field units may request a radio patch to hospitals in Maricopa County on Med Channel 9. The OSR will assign the unit a specific med Channel (3, 6, 7 or 8) for the patch and notify the requested hospital. When a radio patch is established for a unit in any jurisdiction dispatched by PFDRDC, the OSR is to document the patch in the Incident History of the call to which the unit is assigned.

The OSR answers the Medical Control line and establishes phone patches between Phoenix ALS units and the on-call Medical Control doctor. Phone patches between Phoenix units and Phoenix Medical Control are documented in the Incident History of the call to which the unit is assigned.

A paramedic may request that the TRO relay patient information on an unstable patient or provide the hospital with a "courtesy notification." In these situations the OSR is required to relay the following information to the receiving hospital:

- Unit ID (unit transporting the patient)
- Gender and approximate age of the patient
- Mechanism of injury or chief complaint (ex. GSW, MVA, DB, CP)
- Stable or unstable
- ETA (estimated time of arrival)

### Coordinate Helicopter and Private Ambulance Company Response

The valley utilizes the services of Air Evac, Native Air, HALO 151 and Ranger 41 for air transportation. The OSR is responsible for contacting the appropriate helicopter agency when requested for an incident.

Many jurisdictions served by PFDRDC utilize PMT and/or Southwest Ambulance for patient transport. The OSR will facilitate electronic and telephone requests for those units when appropriate.

The OSR answers direct lines between helicopter and ambulance companies and PFDRDC.

#### Monitor EMS System for hospital status and availability

A hospital diversion is the temporary closure of a trauma unit or a hospital emergency department. A diversion may occur when an emergency department becomes overwhelmed with patients (ED Saturation). It may also occur due to an overload situation in a trauma center (Trauma Saturation). A hospital may also temporarily close due to an equipment failure or to an internal disaster such as a fire or loss of power (ED or Trauma Closure).

The majority of the hospitals and all dispatch agencies in Maricopa County have a computer on-site that is connected to the EMS System via the Internet. The EMS System allows each hospital to close or open their Emergency Department or their Trauma Center as necessary. Each of the other hospitals has access to the system as well as the dispatch agencies, eliminating the need for phone calls to relay the information. The OSR monitors the EMS System and assists the coordination of hospital status and diversion rotations. The OSR is also responsible for answering direct lines between hospitals and PFDRDC

#### Mass Casualty Incident Alerts

The MCI Alert system was developed to provide participating hospitals and agencies with pre-notification of Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI) in Maricopa County. A Mass Casualty Incident could have a significant impact upon available resources and personnel. Prompt notice of an MCI is useful for planning and scheduling purposes.

In the event of a major medical emergency the OSR is responsible for coordinating all medical communications activities with area hospitals. The OSR is responsible for notifying hospitals of Mass Casualty Incidents throughout Maricopa County and when directed will initiate an MCI Alert notification via the EMS System.

#### Incident Taking

The Fire Emergency Dispatcher operating in the OSR position is the primary back up to the ISR and also backs up the ACD Operators during peak call activity periods.

#### Assisting Channel One Operator with Unit Status

The OSR assists the Channel One operator by maintaining the unit status of fire department resources. This is an extremely important, ongoing function that is performed by the OSR while accomplishing the other responsibilities assigned to

the position. During certain situations the OSR may delegate this responsibility to attend to tasks of a higher priority.

### **INCOMING SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE**

One Calltaker acts as the Incoming Service Representative (ISR) and performs functions that support outside agencies. The ISR also backs up the ACD Operators during peak call periods and the OSR when necessary.

The ISR is responsible for answering inbound calls that are not distributed through the ACD queue, including requests from outside agencies. Examples include and are not limited to:

- Airport Towers and Sky Harbor Communications
- Police Department communications centers
- Utility companies
- Administrative, public customer service and media lines
- service and media lines

## CHANNEL ONE OPERATOR

The primary function of the Channel One Operator is to accurately and comprehensively receive and transmit radio traffic and dispatch fire/EMS apparatus to emergency situations. The Channel One Operator coordinates all emergency and routine radio traffic on Fire Channel One and maintains constant awareness of the status of fire/EMS units for all cities served by PFDRDC.

As a call is entered into the CAD system this creates a DISPATCH WAITING in the CAD system. The CAD system uses the location of the incident and the Nature Code selected by the Calltaker to provide a unit suggestion. The Channel One Operator selects the Dispatch Waiting and reviews the CAD unit suggestion.

Most equipment dispatched by the Phoenix Fire Department Regional Dispatch Center is equipped with an Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL). The AVL system uses Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) to report the exact location of each unit to the CAD system. The CAD system reviews the location of the incident entered and the physical location of all the units on the CAD system to determine which unit is available and closest to that incident.

The CAD system uses the Nature Code entered to determine the types of resources or training needed for the call. Each piece of apparatus on the Fire Department has different capabilities. The CAD system is pre-programmed to know what type of equipment and training is needed for each nature code. The CAD system uses this information to match the equipment and training on each piece of apparatus to the nature of the emergency and location of the incident. The CAD system processes all of this information instantaneously to provide the unit suggestion.

After selecting the call for dispatch, the Channel One Operator quickly reviews the call and then dispatches the call. During pre-dispatch evaluation, the Channel One Operator can modify the computer suggestion as necessary.

Multiple actions occur simultaneously when the Channel One Operator presses just one button to dispatch a call. The CAD system sends a digital display of the incident information to the MCTs and alerts the station/s of unit/s assigned to the call. A printout of the call information is routed to the printer, and the overhead lights and speakers are turned on at the station/s of the unit/s selected for dispatch.

The Channel One Operator is also responsible for maintaining accurate Unit Status of all apparatus dispatched by PFDRDC. Maintaining an accurate unit status is a constant activity at Channel One. At a minimum, unit status should be checked at the beginning and end of an operator's assignment at Channel 1, and every 30 minutes in between. At the end of their assignment at Channel One,

the operator being relieved is required to brief the oncoming operator of Unit Status conditions. The Channel One Operator maintains an awareness of coverage in areas serviced by PFDRDC and is responsible for keeping the on duty Management Team informed of unusual unit status or depletion of any unit type or resources in any area.

## TACTICAL RADIO OPERATOR (TRO)

All units responding to an incident switch to the assigned channel immediately after dispatch. As the call is assigned to a tactical channel, it is assigned to the TRO working that channel.

The TRO handles all communications between units assigned to an incident and the Alarm Room on the assigned tactical channel and is responsible for:

- Confirming unit response on all fire/EMS incidents within a one-minute time frame
- Maintaining accurate unit status for all units assigned to their tactical channel
- Updating responding units with new information as it becomes available
- Prioritizing all routine and emergency communications between unit(s)/command on incidents assigned to their tactical channel position
- Handling requests from units to provide support or additional resources at the scene of an incident. (sending additional units, helicopters, rescue companies, engines, ladders, taxis, etc)
- Coordinating outside agency response to support a field operation (Police Department, utility company, state agencies, Animal Control, etc)
- Documenting pertinent information in the Incident History (on scene reports, milestones, Conditions, Actions and Need (CAN) reports
- Notifying the Incident Commander (IC) of the Elapsed Time on the incident to assist in maintaining a safe work environment for the crews

PFDRDC operates twelve (12) different tactical channels for incident communications. One is a mutual aid channel that allows multiple agencies working the same incident to communicate with each other.

There are a minimum of 4 TROs on duty at any given time. Each TRO routinely operates more than one tactical channel at a time. During periods of high radio traffic or a major incident, a TRO may work only one radio channel. Isolating a single channel to one TRO enhances the probability that all the field units will be heard by Alarm and assists in maintaining fireground safety.



## PHOENIX-MARICOPA ADDRESSING SYSTEM

Most communities in the metropolitan Phoenix area follow the Phoenix-County numbering system, with the point of origin at the intersection of Central Avenue and Washington Street in Phoenix. Point of Origin refers to the point where addresses change from West to East (0W / 0E) and North to South (0N/0S).

### HUNDRED BLOCKS

Every street has an assigned hundred block number associated with it. For example, Indian School Road is 4100 North, Camelback Road is 5000 North. Numbered streets also have hundred blocks that correspond to their east-west alignment. For example, 1st Street would be 100 East; 1st Avenue would be 100 West. 19th Avenue would be 1900 West; 24th Street would be 2400 East.

With a specific address, EVEN address numbers are located on the NORTH and WEST sides of streets. ODD address numbers are located on the SOUTH and EAST sides of the streets. For example, 9375 N. 7th Avenue is on 7th Avenue between Peoria and Dunlap, on the east side of the street.

### EAST-WEST ALIGNMENT OF NUMBERED STREETS

In the Phoenix-County system, numbered Avenues, Drives and Lanes run north-south and are located west of Central Avenue. Numbered Streets, Places and Ways run north-south and are located east of Central Avenue, according to diagram below:

|  |          |           |            |                       |   |           |         |            |
|--|----------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|---|-----------|---------|------------|
| 2nd Avenue                                 | 1st Lane | 1st Drive | 1st Avenue | <b>Central Avenue</b> | 1st Street                                | 1st Place | 1st Way | 2nd Street |
| West Addresses<br>Example: 121 West Thomas |          |           |            |                       | East Addresses<br>Example: 102 E McDowell |           |         |            |

### STREET TYPE ABBREVIATIONS

A two letter abbreviation is required for any street type to be entered in the CAD system.

|    |           |    |         |    |         |
|----|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|
| AC | ACCESS    | DR | DRIVE   | RD | ROAD    |
| AV | AVENUE    | HW | HIGHWAY | ST | STREET  |
| BL | BOULEVARD | LN | LANE    | TE | TERRACE |
| CI | CIRCLE    | PL | PLACE   | TL | TRAIL   |
| CT | COURT     | PW | PARKWAY | WY | WAY     |

## ADDRESS VERIFICATION

PFDRDC is the dispatching agency for over 20 cities in the metropolitan Phoenix area, covering over 2000 square miles. Fire Emergency Dispatchers must have a vast knowledge of the street addressing systems, hundred blocks, street names, and geography of the jurisdictions served.

Calltakers will routinely receive calls at facilities and places where large numbers of people gather, and the caller not know the exact address where they are at. This includes airports, stadiums, schools, shopping malls, large parks and mountain preserves to name just a few. Familiarity with these types of places and their general location helps verify the address of the emergency. The Calltaker can then also recognize if the information provided is not consistent with their knowledge and ask additional questions to clarify.

Calltakers routinely need to discern between similar street names and addresses in different cities so the fire unit is dispatched to the correct location. The address 1200 W SOUTHERN AV is a valid address in four different cities: Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe and Apache Junction. Entering the call for this address in the wrong city could cause a delay in emergency personnel arriving on the scene. It is essential that Fire Emergency Dispatchers follow established procedures, learn the geography of the PFDRDC system and use the CAD system as a resource to ensure the correct address is entered on every call.

The CAD system will only accept addresses entered in specific format. Every jurisdiction is assigned a three letter abbreviation for their city or Fire District. The format for all street addresses entered is:

Address numerals Direction Street Name Street type ,City Code

Examples: 1200 W SOUTHERN AV ,TMP  
1635 N SCOTTSDALE RD ,SCT  
175 N 145TH AV ,GDY

CAD also will accept valid intersections with two named streets:

Example: 7TH ST / JEFFERSON ,PHX  
GREENWAY CI / GREENWAY ST ,PHX

## CALLER INTERVIEW

A primary responsibility of the ACD Operator is to interview the caller to determine without delay the nature and location of the emergency, the source of the call (call back phone number), and verify entry of the incident into the CAD system. The questions asked during the caller interview to determine location and emergency are not random. Calltakers develop a flow of questioning to assure all necessary information is obtained by order of priority in a timely and concise manner.

### **ROUTINE QUESTIONING PATTERN**

The components of caller interviewing are:

1. Determine location of emergency, including address details
2. Determine source/callback information
3. Initial triage to determine nature of emergency
4. Secondary questioning and information gathering
5. Pre-Arrival instructions

Calltakers seek specific information regarding locations, nature of emergency and details on all calls. Calltakers must develop a routine interviewing pattern of asking standardized questions per call type to assure all required information is obtained in a logical pattern. The CAD system assists the Calltaker in organizing their interview, and questions should be asked in the order that information is entered. The CAD Incident Mask is arranged so that information may be entered line by line as the Calltaker follows the routine questioning pattern.

#### 1) Determining Location

ACD Operators direct their first question at determining what location to dispatch fire department units to. Emergency lines are answered with a phrase that identifies them as the Fire Department and asks where units need to respond to. There are recognized acceptable variations used by individual operators:

- “Fire Department, what is the location of your emergency”?
- “Fire Department, what is the address we need to go to”?

The physical address of the emergency is entered in valid CAD format on the LOC line of the Incident Mask. Once the physical address is determined, additional details are obtained to clarify the specific location where the emergency is occurring:

- What city?
- House, apartment or business?

- Name of the apartment complex/business?
- Apartment/suite number?
- Building number?
- Corner of the intersection (NE, NW, SE, SW)?
- Directional? (North of, South of, East of, West of)
- Area of the building/complex/warehouse?
- Major cross streets?

The Calltaker must obtain a second confirmation/verification of the emergency location on every call. On 911-wireline calls, the second verification is an ALI screen with an address that agrees with the caller's verbal report of the emergency location.

On any call that does not have an ALI or the ALI does not agree with the caller's verbal report, the caller must repeat the address as second verification of the emergency location. The Calltaker should not repeat the address back to the caller as second verification – the caller must be asked to state the address a second time.

## 2) Determining Source and Callback Information

The Calltaker obtains a callback (phone number) for the caller in case further information is needed after the phone call has ended. This is extremely important, as many times the Fire Department will arrive on scene and cannot immediately locate the emergency. In this situation a callback is always performed to gather further information and route crews to the scene.

In addition to determining the callback number, the Calltaker also needs to establish who the calling party is and where they are at in relation to the incident. If the caller is not actually at the scene, the information may not be as accurate as if they were witnessing the situation first hand. A callback may be necessary for further information once crews arrive in the area.

When a person calls 911 on a wireless phone, the ALI screen will display an address close to the cell tower that the call is received through, along with the actual GPS coordinates of the caller. When the GPS coordinates are entered in the incident mask, the CAD system will translate the coordinates to a physical address. This may not be the actual address of where the caller is located, but if the caller is at the location of the emergency, the address translated by the coordinates should be close to the address verified by caller.

## 3) Determining Nature of Emergency

The Calltaker will perform an initial triage to determine the general nature and severity of the incident.

- What is the emergency?

Once the general nature is determined, the Calltaker will focus their line of questioning in accordance with Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) or Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) protocols and proceed to ask questions to determine the severity or extent. The Calltaker will use the information gathered regarding severity and extent to select a Nature Code and enter the call into the CAD system. The Nature Code is a specific 2-6 character word or abbreviation that tells CAD what types of resources, training or capabilities need to be dispatched to control the emergency – or capabilities. For example the TREE Nature Code is used for a tree fire that can be handled by one Engine Company. The HOUSE Nature Code is used for a house fire that requires three engine companies, a ladder company and command officers. The Calltaker will send ALS or BLS depending on the severity of illness or injury and condition of patient. The UNC Nature Code will dispatch an ALS unit for an unconscious patient. The FALL Nature Code will dispatch a BLS unit for a person who fell and has no major life threatening injuries.

There are over two hundred Nature Codes programmed in the CAD system that a Fire Emergency Dispatcher must memorize for prompt recall and use daily. An incident can not be entered into the CAD system without a Nature Code and no units can be dispatched until one is selected – they are extremely important.

#### 4) Secondary Questioning and Information Gathering

Once an initial Nature Code is determined, the Calltaker will continue questioning to gather more information for responding units and ensure no additional resources are needed on the incident. How the caller answers the questions will determine if the Calltaker sends the call with the original Nature Code or changes it to one more appropriate. The Calltaker has a responsibility to upgrade the initial dispatch by balancing the call or special calling additional units based on information presented from the caller.

Once the call is sent, all information is documented in the PTI Mask. This includes pertinent information on the patient or emergency, including routing or access to the scene.

#### 5) Pre-Arrival Instructions

All information gathered in the Initial Triage and Secondary Questioning help the Calltaker determine what pre-arrival instructions are given while units are responding. Pre-Arrival instructions are used to direct the caller in taking action to help mitigate the emergency until the crews arrive on scene and take over. Pre-Arrival instructions can be as simple as telling the caller to get out of the burning structure or as complex as staying on the phone and talking the caller through performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

CAD Incident Mask

>>INCIDENT # \_\_\_\_\_ Action \_\_\_\_\_

Loc \_\_\_\_\_ Desc \_\_\_\_\_ Phn \_\_\_\_\_

Src \_\_\_\_\_ Desc \_\_\_\_\_ Phn \_\_\_\_\_

Nature \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) Rsp \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_ Amb \_\_\_\_\_ Pri \_\_\_\_\_

Assign Units \_\_\_\_\_

Loc Override \_\_\_\_\_ Time Recvd \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

|           |   |       |        |       |    |   |      |    |
|-----------|---|-------|--------|-------|----|---|------|----|
|           |   | ddd . | dddddd | ddd : | mm | : | ss . | ss |
| Latitude  | + | .     |        | or    | :  | : | .    | N  |
| Longitude | - | .     |        | or    | :  | : | .    | W  |

KEY QUESTIONS:

CALL INFORMATION

Confirm...

Address of emergency and CITY

House or apartment?

Callback number

What is the emergency?

PATIENT MEDICAL INFORMATION

Determine patient's CHIEF COMPLAINT

Are you with the patient?

Is the patient AWAKE & ABLE TO TALK to you?

Is the patient BREATHING normal?

Is the patient BLEEDING? If yes, from where?

Patients AGE and SEX?

Reassure caller, HELP IS ON THE WAY.<<

CAD Patient Information Mask (PTI)

>>PTI \* # \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_ INFEC: \_\_\_\_\_ CC: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD) PROGRAM

As a Fire Emergency Dispatcher (FED) your role is to dispatch competent medical help to the scene of medical and trauma emergencies. Some believe this could be accomplished by simply sending the highest level of medical help, lights and siren to every medical call. Relying on this method of dispatch may result in an inappropriate use of available resources. This maximum response policy unduly increases the risk of injury to the responding crew and the general public. A better alternative is to systematically prioritize or triage calls based upon information gathered from the caller. Triage means “to sort” or determine priority.

The PFDRDC EMD program is based on this concept. Life-threatening or potential for life threatening illness or injury requires an Advanced Life Support (ALS) response. Illnesses or injuries that are not immediately life threatening may only initially require a Basic Life Support (BLS) unit dispatched to assess and treat the patient, and call for additional resources if necessary.

Call processing begins by confirming the Call Information:

- 1) Location with address details
- 2) Callback number
- 3) Nature of the emergency (In general - fire, medical, other)

The next Patient or Medical Information questions are the primary questions asked for every medical call and are displayed under the Incident Mask on the CAD system. These general questions help identify immediate life-threatening problems and determine an initial Nature Code:

- 1) Determine patients CHIEF COMPLAINT
- 2) Are you with the patient?
- 3) Is the patient AWAKE & ABLE TO TALK to you?
- 4) Is the patient BREATHING normal?
- 5) Is the patient BLEEDING?
- 6) Patient’s AGE and SEX?
- 7) Reassure caller, HELP IS ON THE WAY

**The FED should always select the most specific and appropriate Nature Code for the given situation.** There are many Nature Codes that when used will dispatch an ALS response. However there are secondary Key Questions and Pre-Arrival instructions that are uniquely matched to every medical Nature Code. These secondary questions assist the FED to further triage medical and trauma calls and give Nature Code specific pre-arrival instructions. Secondary Key Questions for each medical Nature Code are programmed in the CAD system.

In medical cases, key questions are generally based on what the victim complains of, and his/her related medical history. In trauma cases, key questions revolve around not only symptoms but also signs - things visibly observed. Trauma complaints are usually more specific than medical complaints.

The FED may decide to change the initial Nature Code used based on the answers given to the secondary Key Questions. Some Nature Codes may start out with a BLS assignment, and then upon further questioning the FED will determine an ALS response is warranted. For example, the basic Nature Code for a motor vehicle accident with a report of injuries is **962** and dispatches a BLS assignment. If the caller reports the accident involves a pedestrian, the FED will use the Nature Code **962P** instead. If the caller reports someone is trapped, the Nature Code used is **962X**.

Pre-Arrival Instructions are first aid instructions in plain language. Pre-Arrival Instructions may be as basic as telling the caller that help is on the way and to call back if anything changes. CPR, choking and bleeding control techniques are the most critical Pre-Arrival instructions provided.

A factor that can affect the accuracy of the information provided is whether the person calling is a first, second or third party caller. A "first party" caller is the patient and is usually the most reliable source of information. A "second party" caller is someone that is with the patient and can usually provide reliable information if the EMD asks the right questions. A "third party" caller is someone that is not with the patient. Third party callers may be unable to provide accurate information because they are not witnessing the scene first hand, but relaying the information from someone at the emergency scene.

## ALTERED LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

### **NATURE CODE: ALOC**

The patient's level of consciousness is assessed by how well they respond to questions. The ALOC Nature Code is used for patients that are not responding in a manner that is normal for them.

The ALOC Nature Code is not used when patients are completely unresponsive. A patient that is completely unresponsive has a more critical need for airway management and breathing assessment. The UNC Nature Code will give specific questions to assess these patients for the need to perform rescue breathing or CPR.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of ALOC is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

#### Key Questions

1. Does the patient have a history of any medical problems?
2. How long has the patient been acting this way?
3. What was he/she doing prior to this?
4. Has the patient experienced any recent injuries/falls?
5. Was the patient complaining of any pain?
6. Has the patient taken any medication or drugs?
7. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Keep patient in comfortable position  
If patient fell, do not move him  
Protect from harm  
Consider airway management/c-spine stabilization  
Nothing to eat or drink  
Gather all medications the patient takes and have ready for the paramedics  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## CHEST PAIN

### **NATURE CODE: CP**

Chest pain is the most common specific medical complaint for which EMS services are routinely called. Chest pain as the chief complaint may indicate a heart attack, pulmonary embolism, and other serious conditions; or, may indicate a benign condition requiring little or no medical intervention. Since it is very difficult to determine the severity or nature of the pain over the phone, all chest pain calls are considered ALS.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of CP is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

#### Key Questions

1. Does the patient have a history of heart problems?
2. How long has the patient been having this pain?
3. What was the patient doing when the pain started?
4. Does the patient have any other symptoms besides the pain?
5. Has the patient taken anything to relieve the pain?
6. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way

Keep patient calm

Assume position of comfort, sitting up may be preferred

Loosen any tight or restricting clothing

Have patient take slow, deep breaths

Nothing to eat or drink, or medication

Gather all medications the patient takes and have ready for the paramedics

If anything changes before we get there call back

## FALL INJURY

### **NATURE CODES: FALL, FALLA**

Reporting of fall victims is common. The FED will dispatch a BLS response unless there are reports of ALS signs/symptoms or that the fall was from greater than ten feet. Falls of greater than ten feet are considered long falls and require an ALS response. With any long fall, a possible spinal injury exists. The length of the fall is the easiest determinant of severity. The FED must consider the possibility that external trauma as well as internal injuries may exist.

Pre-arrival instructions should be limited to controlling any gross bleeding and cautioning the caller not to move the victim so that further injury is not caused.

**FALL** is a BLS response. **FALLA** is an ALS response.

#### Key Questions

#### Nature Code

1. Did the patient ever lose consciousness or have ALOC?  
If Yes ..... **FALLA**
2. How far did the patient fall?  
If greater than 10 feet ..... **FALLA**
3. What caused the patient to fall?
4. Is the patient c/o of pain? What part of the body is injured?  
If paralysis ..... **FALLA**
5. If bleeding, are you able to control the bleeding?  
If no ..... **FALLA**
6. Anyone in the residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Do not move the patient  
Suspected fractures or dislocations – immobilize extremity  
Control bleeding  
Nothing to eat or drink  
Gather all medications the patient takes and have ready for the paramedics  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## GUNSHOT WOUND

### **NATURE CODE: GSW**

Each gunshot wound incident involves violence with police priorities. It is important to gather information regarding scene security and the assailant in addition to patient information.

Penetrating trauma to the extremities is not as serious as penetrating trauma to the torso, but both should be considered potentially life threatening.

Many callers reporting these incidents often have an emotional response to the situation. Proper calming techniques should be used. Pre-arrival instructions should address calming the victim and bleeding control.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of GSW is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

### Key Questions

1. What part of the body is injured?
2. What type of weapon?
3. Is the assailant still there?
4. Description of assailant or vehicle.
5. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Control bleeding, both entrance and exit wound  
Maintain airway  
Confirm police department is responding  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## ILL PERSON

### NATURE CODES: ILL, ILLA

Approximately 25% of all EMS calls originate as unknown medical problems. A sick person is a patient who has an indefinable chief complaint, unclear symptoms, or when the caller provides specific information on a previous diagnosis. A second party caller is often the reporting person.

Once it has been established that there are no life threatening problems, the FED will try to ascertain a chief complaint. If the chief complaint continues to be vague, this protocol should be utilized. When a major complaint is not readily distinguishable it is difficult to make triage decisions. Use common sense and ask questions if time permits.

Multiple patients complaining of headaches, nausea or being disorientated may be victims of carbon monoxide poisoning. Instruct this caller to evacuate the building or at least ventilate as best as possible.

**ILL** is a BLS response. **ILLA** is an ALS response.

#### Key Questions

#### Nature Code

1. What kinds of problems are they having?  
(consider other appropriate Nature Code if not determined)
2. Are they having any pain?  
If pain radiating to arm/jaw ..... **ILLA**
3. Passing or vomiting any blood? ..... **INTB**
4. Do they have any major medical problems that could be contributing?  
If diabetes, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure ..... **ILLA**
5. Severe weakness? ..... **ILLA**
6. Post Surgery? ..... **ILLA**
7. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Keep patient in comfortable position  
Nothing to eat or drink, or medication  
Gather all medications the patient takes and have ready for the paramedics  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## INTERNAL BLEEDING

### **NATURE CODE: INTB**

Internal bleeding is difficult to determine but can also be life threatening. The most significant signs and symptoms are vomiting or passing blood. Patients may also have medical conditions that they may be susceptible to bleeding internally.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of INTB is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

#### Key Questions

8. Where is the patient bleeding from?
9. Is the patient complaining of any pain?
10. Where is the pain located?
11. Has this ever happened before?
12. Is the patient on any medications?
13. Anyone in the residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Keep patient in a comfortable position  
Nothing to eat or drink, or medication  
Advise patient not to use the restroom  
If vomiting, instruct them to save it if possible  
Gather all medications the patient takes and have ready for the paramedics  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

### **NATURE CODES: 962, 962P, 962MC, 962BC, 962F, 962X, 962A**

About 14% of the EMS calls dispatched are for traffic injuries of some kind. This category includes auto-versus-auto, auto-versus-motorcycle, and auto-versus-pedestrian or bicycle. Many of these calls entering the 9-1-1 system are reported by second or third party callers with vague or incomplete information.

Attempt to gather as much information about the accident as possible. Number of patients, types of injuries, and extent of vehicle damage are all pieces of information that can help in making decisions on the resources needed.

**962** is a BLS response. **962P, 962MC, 962BC, 962F, 962X, 962A** are ALS response.

#### Key Questions

#### Nature Code

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Can you tell me what happened?                                     |              |
| 2. If NO additional details .....                                     | <b>962</b>   |
| 3. If YES - Find out what is involved                                 |              |
| a. If it involves a pedestrian .....                                  | <b>962P</b>  |
| b. If it involves a motorcycle .....                                  | <b>962MC</b> |
| c. If it involves a bicycle .....                                     | <b>962BC</b> |
| d. If the vehicle is on fire .....                                    | <b>962F</b>  |
| e. If it involves a person trapped .....                              | <b>962X</b>  |
| f. If ejection, t-bone, high speed, head-on .....                     | <b>962A</b>  |
| 4. How many people are injured?                                       |              |
| 5. Consider additional resources if numerous and/or seriously injured |              |
| 6. Is anyone seriously injured?                                       |              |

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Instruct caller not to move the patient/s  
Maintain c-spine if applicable  
Control bleeding if applicable  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## OVERDOSE

### **NATURE CODE: OD**

Overdoses are typically thought of as over consumption of a drug or medication. The product can be ingested, inhaled, absorbed or injected and have toxic effects on the body. The severity of the toxin depends on many things such as amount or length of time exposed, potency of substances, patient's age, and medical history.

Accidental ingestion of medication is common in children and the elderly. Intentional overdoses will probably include some element of psychiatric problem and patients may be a possible danger to themselves and others. Alert the responding crew of any potential for violent behavior. Pre-arrival instructions are aimed at maintaining an airway. If vomiting is present instruct the caller to turn the victim on his side.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of OD stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

### Key Questions

1. What did the patient take?
2. When did the patient take it?
3. Did they do it on purpose?  
If YES, are they a danger to anyone? (*consider police*)
4. Has the patient consumed any alcohol?  
If YES, what amount?
5. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Keep patient calm  
Give nothing by mouth  
Do not induce vomiting  
If lethargic or unconscious, lay on left side  
Have patient take slow, deep breaths  
Gather remaining product or bottle for identification for the paramedics  
If anything changes before we get there call back

## POISONING

### **NATURE CODE: POISN**

Poisonings are typically a person consuming a product that is not meant to be consumed such as a child ingesting bleach or an insecticide. The product can be ingested, inhaled or absorbed. How severe a toxic substance is on the body is dependent upon the amount or length of time exposed, potency of substance, patients age and medical history.

Pre-arrival instructions are aimed at maintaining an airway. If vomiting is present instruct the caller to turn the victim on his side. Do not instruct the caller to administer ipecac or make the victim vomit. Do not advise the caller to give antidotes of any kind.

Once all questioning has been completed, a three-way call may be initiated with Banner Poison Control for further assistance.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of POISN is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

#### Key Questions

1. What did the patient take?
2. Any there any burns in the mouth?
3. Are they having any other problems?
4. How much was ingested?
5. Anyone in residence have any contagious diseases?

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way

Keep patient calm

Give nothing by mouth

Do not induce vomiting

If lethargic or unconscious, lay on left side

Gather remaining product or bottle for identification for the paramedics

If anything changes before we get there call back

## UNCONSCIOUS PERSON

### **NATURE CODE: UNC**

This Nature Code is reserved for patients who are confirmed to be unconscious. The caller should be able to verify this by attempting to wake the patient.

When interrogating the caller ask if trauma is involved. Find out if the caller knows the victim's medical history or possible complaint before the unconscious episode. Instruct the caller how to maintain the victim's airway and turn him on his side if he vomits, all while maintaining spinal stabilization if trauma is involved.

An immediate ALS response will be dispatched as soon as the chief complaint of UNC is stated and the following questions would be asked after the initial call has been dispatched.

#### Key Questions

#### Nature Code

1. Confirm again the patient is breathing.  
If NO .....
2. Is the patient bleeding?
3. Does the patient have a history of medical problems?
4. What was the patient doing prior to this happening?
5. Was the patient drinking alcohol?
6. Has the patient taken any medications prior to this?
7. Anyone in the residence have any contagious diseases?

**CODE**

#### Pre-Arrival Instructions

Reassure help is on the way  
Lay patient on his back on a flat surface  
Continue to monitor patient's breathing and watch for vomiting  
If patient vomits turn head to side and clear out mouth  
May need to tilt head back to open airway  
Patient should breathe every 3-5 seconds. If not, start Rescue Breathing/CPR  
Control any bleeding that may be present: apply clean dry cloth with pressure  
If anything changes before we get there, call back

## EMERGENCY FIRE DISPATCH (EFD) PROGRAM

Fire Emergency Dispatchers (FEDs) receive calls for various types of situations. These range from non-emergency calls for closing a fire hydrant that was opened, to major incidents involving fire, hazardous materials (hazmat) or rescue of victims to name just a few. Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) protocols assist the FED in determining the appropriate level of response to dispatch on non-Medical incidents.

EFD protocols are guidelines that provide for a minimum level of response to a typical incident. Fire Emergency Dispatchers will dispatch at least the minimum response required per EFD protocols, but are expected to rely on their training and experience to evaluate reports of extraordinary factors that may warrant greater than the minimum response. Some of these factors include the type of occupancy, number of victims or potential victims, weather, proximity of responding crews to the incident location and potential for the situation to escalate.

The Calltaker will assign a nature code based on information gathered from the caller. Once the CAD system receives the input of the Nature Code, CAD then selects available units by capability and proximity to fulfill the response requirements of the assignment. A minimum of one unit with four (4) crewmembers, or manpower (MPW), will be dispatched on every incident.

### **SERVICE CALL**

Service Calls are non-emergency situations in which the response will vary dependant on the resources required. The FED will select the most appropriate Nature Code that best describes the situation. CAD is programmed to send the appropriate unit based on the capability or specific unit required on the assignment.

Capabilities are three-letter abbreviations for the functions that a fire department unit can provide. Service calls usually only require a unit with manpower (MPW) capability, but some specifically require a unit with engine (ENG) or ladder (LAD) capability. Specific units that may be needed are Fire Prevention Specialists(C99), Terrorism Liaison Officers (C958), or EMS Captains (C959).

The following list is a sample of Service Call Nature Codes, their description and response requirements:

|                 | <u>Description</u>  | <u>Response Requirements</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| • <b>ASSPD</b>  | Assist PD           | MPW                          |
| • <b>CKHAZ</b>  | Check Hazard        | MPW                          |
| • <b>EMSOPS</b> | EMS Operations      | C959                         |
| • <b>ENG</b>    | Service Call-Engine | ENG                          |
| • <b>LAD</b>    | Service Call-Ladder | LAD                          |

- **ODOR**            Check An Odor            MPW
- **OH**                Open Hydrant            MPW
- **POOL**            Check Unsafe Pool        C99
- **SERV**            Service Call            MPW
- **TLOOPS**        TLO Operation            C958
- **WIRES**           Check Lines Down        MPW

### **SINGLE ENGINE FIRE INCIDENT**

Single Engine Fire Incidents consist of a dispatch one Engine only. These are small fires that require or could potentially need water capabilities to extinguish a fire and do not involve structures or exposures.

The Nature Codes and criteria for incidents that receive a single engine response:

- |                | <u>Description</u>   |
|----------------|--|
| • <b>ALLEY</b> | Alley fires  |
| • <b>DUMP</b>  | Dumpsters more than ten feet from a structure  |
| • <b>FENCE</b> | Fences not attached to a structure   |
| • <b>FIELD</b> | Fields with minimal vegetation and accessible by an engine   |
| • <b>GRASS</b> | Grass fires  |
| • <b>POLE</b>  | Pole fires   |
| • <b>SHED</b>  | Sheds that do not contain known hazardous materials  |
| • <b>TRASH</b> | Uncontained trash  |
| • <b>TREE</b>  | Trees away from an structures  |
| • <b>VEH</b>   | Passenger or small commercial vehicles away from structures or exposures and not carrying hazardous materials. |

### **3-1 FIRE ASSIGNMENT**

3-1 Assignments consist of three Engines, One Ladder Company and two Command Officers.

Criteria for dispatching a 3-1 Assignment includes:

- Residential fire in a house, mobile home or apartment no more than two stories
- Small commercial occupancies (Circle K, fast food restaurant)
- Fire Alarm indication in building with four or more stories with no report of smoke or fire
- Exterior fire that is less than ten feet from a structure or exposure

3-1 Nature Codes: **APT GARAGE HOUSE MOBILE STR VEHEXP WF**

## **FIRST ALARM ASSIGNMENT**

A First Alarm Assignment consists of 5 Engines, 2 Ladder companies, 4 Command officers. Criteria for dispatching a First Alarm Assignment includes:

- Type of structure indicates this level of resource is needed based on reports of an actual or potential major situation (assisted living facilities, schools, movie theatres)
- Multi-story apartments
- Large residences or more than one residence involved
- Large commercial occupancies
- Buildings with four or more stories and report of smoke or fire

First Alarm Nature Codes: **APT1A HOUS1A HR1A STR1A WF1A**

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (HAZMAT) ASSIGNMENT**

There are different levels and types of Hazardous Materials assignments that vary depending on the situation, amount and type of material involved, and if there are victims. All Hazardous Materials Assignments require specialized equipment and training to mitigate a potential or actual hazard based on the materials involved. Examples include chemical fires, spills, transportation accidents, chemical reactions, explosions and similar events. Hazards may include toxicity, flammability, radiological hazards, chemical reactions and combinations of factors.

Hazmat Nature Codes: **GASL, GASM, GASS, HAZ, HAZ3-1, HAZ1A, HAZMED**

## **TECHNICAL RESCUE (TRT) ASSIGNMENT**

All Technical Rescue Incidents require specialized equipment and training to extricate the patient(s). These incidents include confined space rescue, trench rescue, high angle or rope rescue, water rescue, structural collapse, mountain and tree rescues.

TRT Nature Codes: **CSPACE HVYRES MTNRES RES RES3-1 RES1A  
TREERS TRENCH WATER**

## **BRUSH FIRE ASSIGNMENT**

A Brush Fire Assignment is dispatched for vegetation fires that do not provide convenient access by a fire engine. Large amounts of dry vegetation can be encountered at any time of the year. A Brush Fire exceeding 50 acres is considered a "Wildland Fire". The wind may also have a factor in determining the level of assignment to send. There are different levels of Brush Assignments based on the amount of vegetation on fire and access:

- Still Brush - Small vegetation fire that does not allow access by an engine. The response consists of one engine and one brush truck.  
Nature Code: **BRST**
- Brush - Medium size vegetation fire that does not allow access by engines. This may be a large field or near the base of a mountain. Due to the size this requires more equipment. The response consists of two engines, 2 brush trucks, one tanker and one command officer.  
Nature Code: **BR**
- First Alarm Brush - Large vegetation fire that does not allow convenient access by an engine. This would typically be used for a fire on the side or near the top of a mountain, or when structures are in imminent danger. The assignment consists of: five engines, four brush trucks, two tankers, and two Command Officers.  
Nature Code: **BR1A**

## FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

The three primary emergency service delivery vehicles are engines, ladders, and rescues. An engine, also known as a pumper, transports four or five firefighters, water, hose, medical equipment, firefighting tools, and a pump to the emergency scene. Ladders transport four or five firefighters, firefighting tools, medical equipment, and a ladder or aerial device that allows firefighters to reach the upper floors and roofs of buildings. Ladder tenders respond to emergency calls when the aerial ladder will not be needed but all the other resources may. They are smaller, more economical to respond in, and carry much of the same equipment as a ladder truck. A ladder and a ladder tender are assigned to one fire station and crew. The Company Officer selects which piece of apparatus would be most appropriate for that call. Rescues, also known as ambulances, transport two firefighters, medical equipment, and firefighting equipment.

### **STANDARD COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Standard company operations assign basic fireground functions and activities to companies based upon the capability and characteristics of each type of unit. Standard company operations assign major fireground functions to the particular company who can best accomplish the operation. Standard company operations integrate the efforts of engine, ladder and rescue companies to achieve effective rescue, fire control and loss control activities.

The following items represent the standard operations that will normally be performed by engine, ladder and rescue companies. These basic functions will provide the framework for field operations for these companies:

#### Engine Company Functions:

- Search, rescue and treatment
- Stretch hose lines
- Operate nozzles
- Pump hose lines
- Loss control

#### Ladder Company/Tender Functions:

- Search, rescue and treatment
- Ventilate
- Forcible entry
- Raise ladders
- Provide access/check fire extension
- Utility control
- Provide lighting
- Operate ladder pipes (aerials and platforms only)
- Perform overhaul

- Extrication
- Loss control

#### Rescue Company Functions

- Transportation of sick and injured to hospitals
- Search, rescue, and treatment
- General firefighting duties

### **TACTICAL PRIORITIES**

Tactical priorities identify the three separate tactical objectives that must be completed in order to stabilize any fire situation. These priorities also establish the order in which these basic fireground objectives must be performed. These objectives should be regarded as separate, yet interrelated, activities that must be dealt with in order. Command cannot proceed to the next priority until the current function objective has been completed or sufficient resources have been assigned.

Basic tactical priorities are: 1) Rescue, 2) Fire Control, and 3) Property Conservation.

Rescue – The activities required to protect occupants, remove those who are threatened and to treat the injured.

Fire Control – The activities required to stop the forward progress of the fire and to bring the fire under control.

Property Conservation – The activities required to stop or reduce primary or secondary damage to the property.

### **FIREGROUND STRATEGY**

Fireground operations will fall in one of two strategies, OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE. The two strategies are based on a standard Risk Management Plan that is to be employed at ALL structure fires:

We may risk our lives a lot within a structured plan to protect SAVABLE lives.

We may risk our lives a little within a structured plan to protect SAVABLE property.

We will not risk our lives at all to save property that is already lost.

The Incident Commander is responsible for determining the appropriate fireground strategy. Fireground strategy provides a starting point for fireground operations. Once the strategy is announced, all firefighters know whether to operate on the interior or exterior of the building.

## TACTICAL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

The TRO handles all communications between units assigned to an incident and Deployment on the assigned tactical channel. All units responding to incidents acknowledge dispatch by radio or by MCT on the assigned tactical channel. If Deployment does not receive an acknowledgment within one minute, the TRO will request acknowledgment over the radio. If there is no acknowledgement after three attempts, Deployment will dispatch another unit, or “cover a unit”, while continuing attempts to contact the original company on all other radio channels.

While responding, companies may communicate with one another if radio traffic permits. Effective communications during this period can set the stage for effective action and improve the overall rescue and fire attack effort. Factors such as occupancy hazards, access, traffic conditions and response routes may be communicated.

There are often multiple callers that report the same incident. This occurs frequently on auto accidents or fires. The TRO will relay any additional information gained from subsequent telephone calls as soon as possible. Additional information and updates will be transmitted to the MCTs of all responding units.

Companies needing specific additional information make the request to the TRO.

### **ON-SCENE REPORTS**

Units arriving at the scene of incidents will report their status as "ON SCENE" over the radio or by MCT. No voice message is necessary when only one unit is responding, unless conditions at the scene are obviously different from the reported nature of the incident. When more than one unit is responding, the first arriving unit will give their unit ID, report that they are on scene and give an initial report, called an “On Scene Report”. The On Scene report will include:

1. Unit designation of the unit arriving on the scene.
2. A brief description of the incident situation, (i.e. building size, occupancy, Hazmat release, multi-vehicle accident, etc.)
3. Obvious conditions (working fire, Hazmat spill, multiple patients, etc.).
4. Brief description of action taken.
5. Declaration of Strategy (for structural fires this would be declaring an offensive or defensive mode).
6. Any obvious safety concerns.
7. Assumption and identification of Command.
8. Assume & Announce accountability location.

## Examples of On Scene Reports:

"Engine 11 is on the scene of a large two story school with a working fire on the second floor. Engine 11 is laying a supply line and going in with a hand-line to the second floor for search and rescue. This is an offensive fire attack. Engine 11 will be 7th Street Command."

"Engine 11 is on the scene of a medium size warehouse fully involved with exposures to the east. Engine 11 is laying a supply line and attacking the fire with a stang gun and a hand-line to the exposure for search and rescue and fire attack. This is a defensive fire. Engine 11 will be Buckeye Command."

"Ladder 11 is on the scene with a multi-vehicle accident. Give me the balance of a 2 and 1 medical with three ambulances. Ladder 11 will be Parkway Command."

## **COMMAND**

The Phoenix Fire Department responds to a wide range of emergency incidents. In order to effectively manage personnel and resources and to provide for the safety and welfare of personnel, we will always operate within the Incident Command System at the incident scene.

The first fire department member or unit on the scene of a multiple unit response shall assume command of the incident. Once command has been established, all routing communication between Deployment and an incident will be directed through Command. The initial Incident Commander shall remain in Command until Command is transferred or the incident is stabilized and Command is terminated.

The radio designation "COMMAND" will be used along with the geographical location of the incident (i.e. "7th Street Command", "Metro Center Command"). This designation will not change throughout the duration of the incident. The designation of "Command" will remain with the officer currently in command of the incident throughout the event.

## **INCIDENT STATUS & MILESTONES**

There are also Milestones that will be reported during an incident that need to be documented by the TRO. The following are the definitions of the Incident Milestones:

All Clear - On fire calls an All Clear indicates the fire building and all exposures have been searched and all civilians evacuated. In the case of a building that is well involved in fire, the All Clear may be delayed and not come until the fire is out and units dig through the rubble to search for possible victims. (The status Primary All Clear and Secondary All Clear are more often used on incidents.)

Carbon Monoxide below 50 PPM - Indicates the carbon monoxide is below 50 parts per million at the incident site, units can safely work within the site without their SCBAs.

Command Terminated - There is no longer a single person in charge of the incident.

Defensive - Units operating in the defensive strategy

Emergency Traffic - A unit on the fireground has requested Emergency traffic.

Extrication Complete - All patients extricated.

Immediates Transported – All patients triaged as an “immediate” have been transported.

Loss Stopped - Salvage has been completed and there should be no more damage to the building involved.

Mayday - A Mayday has been declared on an incident.

Offensive - Units operating in the offensive strategy.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) - All personnel assigned to a particular work area or sector have been accounted for. It is used to confirm there are no missing fire personnel on the incident site.

Triage Complete - All patients have been triaged.

Under Control - This means that the fire has been contained, that it will not go any further. It may not mean the fire is out.

Utilities Secured - The power has been shut off to the occupancy

Ventilation Complete - The task of ventilation has been completed.

## **MAY DAY**

"May Day" is a term to be used only in the event of a lost or trapped firefighter. A well-defined communications structure is essential in any rescue operation. Deployment will play a crucial role in ensuring the effective rescue of firefighters.

## **EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**

The term "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" will be utilized by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive the highest communications priority from Deployment, Command and all operating units. Units may initiate emergency communications by depressing the red emergency button on their MCT, or by verbally contacting Deployment.

EXAMPLE: "L11 to Alarm with emergency traffic." Deployment will immediately activate

special tone. The unit will transmit their message. Deployment will repeat the message one time.

If Deployment does not acknowledge (special tone not activated), unit will then establish contact with Command and transmit the emergency message. Command will then re-initiate emergency traffic sequence with Deployment.

THE AIR ABSOLUTELY BELONGS TO ANY UNIT GIVING "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC"

#### UNIT DESIGNATION

For radio communications, the following designations will be recognized as standard:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Person/Crewmember       | Radio call sign (Example)                |
| Deployment (PFDRDC)     | Alarm                                    |
| Officer of any unit     | Unit ID (Engine 12, Ladder 11, Rescue 5) |
| Engineer of any pumper  | Pump (Pump 12)                           |
| Engineer of any ladder  | Truck (Truck 11)                         |
| Firefighter on any unit | Unit ID, name (E1, FF Smith)             |
| Battalion Chiefs        | Battalion (Battalion 6)                  |
| Shift Commander         | South Deputy, North Deputy               |

## FIRE SERVICE/EMS TERMINOLOGY

AHQ – Alarm Headquarters (Fire Communications, Alarm Room, Deployment). Also referred to as FAHQ (Fire Alarm Headquarters).

ACCOUNTABILITY - accounting for the location of all crewmembers assigned to a unit or incident.

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (ALS) - the use of basic life support (BLS) in addition to invasive techniques, cardiac monitoring, defibrillation, drug therapy and consultation with a base hospital physician by a Certified Emergency Paramedic.

APPARATUS - Vehicles that are used to transport fire department personnel, equipment, and appliances to fire or other emergency incidents.

ATTACK - the actual physical fire fighting operation utilizing available crewmembers and equipment. The implementation of tactical plans on the fire ground in an aggressive manner.

ATTACK LINE - a line of hose, usually from a pump, used to directly fight or attack a fire; in contrast to supply or feeder lines connecting the water supply with the pumping apparatus.

AVAILABLE - a status, a unit that can be selected for dispatch while available.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS) - maintenance of the ABC's (airway, breathing and circulation), recognizing and correcting respiratory or cardiovascular system failure.

BRUSH TRUCK - a brush truck is either a 2 or 4-wheel drive, 3/4-ton pick-up truck that carries 250 gallons of water, a small pump and a red line. Used for small grass, brush and desert fires. Brush trucks are normally not staffed, no one assigned to the rig.

CHARGED LINE - line of hose filled with water ready for use and under pressure.

CODE 2/3 RESPONSE - code 2 is without lights and siren, following all traffic regulations. Code 3 is driving with lights and siren, only exceeding the posted speed limit by 10 MPH, and making complete stops at all red lights.

COMPANY - basic fire fighting organizational unit headed by an officer - a captain. A company is usually referred to by the type of apparatus it mans; i.e. engine company, ladder company.

DRILL - practice fire fighting evolutions such as laying hose, raising ladders and operating pumps in order to develop teamwork and proficiency.

**EMS ASSIGNMENT** - Emergency Medical Service assignment. This type of assignment consists of a BLS and/or ALS company that responds to render medical care in an emergency setting.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT)** - a health care professional with special skills and knowledge in emergency medicine, and who has received first level, or basic, certification.

**EMSYSTEM** – Computer system used by the Medic Dispatcher to monitor hospital status (diversions) and Mass Casualty Incidents.

**EXPOSURE** - property that may be endangered by a fire in another structure or by an outside fire.

**EXTENSION** - spread of fire, usually during the course of fire fighting operations to areas not previously involved. A fire can extend through open partitions, into the attic, or through openings into another room or building.

**FIREGROUND** - operational area at a fire; the place where fire-fighting operations are being conducted.

**FULLY INVOLVED** - state of a fire building which is so involved with heat, smoke and flame that access to the interior is not possible until some measure of control has been obtained with hose streams.

**HANDLINE** - line of small hose that is handled manually by fire fighters rather than through fixed heavy stream devices.

**HOSE LAY** - method or sequence of laying hose from the apparatus. Also called "laying a line".

**INCH AND A HALF (INCH AND 3/4)** - a small 1 1/2 inch (OR 1 3/4 inch) diameter hose used for interior fire fighting.

**KNOCK DOWN** - reduce flame and heat so as to prevent danger of further extension of a fire. To bring fire under control, but not necessarily out.

**LINE** - usually refers to a line of fire hose. May mean a length of rope, such as a lifeline.

**MOVE-UP** - if one or more units are out of service for an extended period, a company or companies will move to another fire station to cover the depleted area. Move-ups are not restricted to the city boundaries but are done for the jurisdictions covered by PFDRDC.

MUTUAL/AUTOMATIC AID - agreements between municipalities or fire districts to assist each other in responding fire apparatus to incidents in the other's city.

ON DECK – a forward staging position located just outside the immediate hazard zone, safely distanced from the entrance of a tactical position/sector. On Deck crews are supervised either by a Sector Officer or Company Officer and they will remain On Deck until assigned by the Incident Commander or Sector Officer.

OPEN UP - to ventilate a building filled with smoke and heat, so that hose streams may be advanced to extinguish a fire. Also to achieve a forcible entry of a closed, burning building.

OVERHAUL - a late stage of the fire extinguishment process during which the area involved in the fire and the damaged contents are carefully scrutinized for any remaining traces of fire or embers.

PAR - Personnel Accountability Report. All members assigned to a crew are accounted for.

PATCH - radio-telephone communications relayed through Alarm by the paramedics in the field to their base hospital physicians.

PLUG - term for a fire hydrant.

PPM - Parts Per Million - will be reported after a fire, such as CO (carbon monoxide) below 50 ppm.

PPV - Positive Pressure Ventilation - to assist in smoke removal, uses fans placed opposite of an existing or created opening in the building, to blow smoke out of the building. It creates a safer environment for all personnel inside the building.

RECALL - to return companies to service that are not required to handle the emergency.

RESPONSE - the act of responding to an incident. The entire complement of crews and apparatus assigned to an incident.

SALVAGE - procedures to reduce the incidental losses from smoke, water, fire and weather during and following a fire.

SUPPLY LINE – large diameter hose line used to provide water from a hydrant or key pumper to a forward pumper.

SYMPTOM - subjective evidence of a change in body functions which is apparent only to the patient; e.g., "dizziness" or "nausea."

TANKER - pick-up type truck that carries 1000 gallons of water, and is used mainly for large grass/brush fires or in areas where there are no hydrants. Normally tankers are not staffed.

TRIAGE – categorize patients based on the severity of their injuries and prioritize their need for treatment and transportation. To sort out in order of priority. On a medical incident units will triage patients into Immediate, Delayed or Minor priorities. Command will report the number of Immediate, Delayed or Minor patients on an incident to Alarm.

UNAVAILABLE - status of apparatus that keeps them from being selected for dispatches.

**This is the end of the Fire Emergency Dispatcher Study Guide. If you do not receive an email by February 17 2016, contact the Human Resources Department at (602) 495-5703.**

PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE EMERGENCY DISPATCHER RECRUITMENT 2016

The Phoenix Fire Department anticipates hiring full-time and/or part-time Fire Emergency Dispatchers over the next year. We currently have full-time and part-time positions open. In an effort to assist you, we would like to provide information that details the three phases of the testing process.

**Phase I - Written Exam** - This recruitment requires all applicants to pass a written exam. Applicants who successfully pass the written exam will be placed on the hiring eligibility list.

**Phase II – Typing Skills Test, CritiCall and Vision Screening** - After the written exam, the selection process continues with candidates from the hiring eligibility list. Each candidate that is invited to Phase II will complete a typing test administered by the City of Phoenix, and must pass with a minimum of 40 wpm to continue through the Fire Emergency Dispatcher selection process. Phase II evaluations are tentatively scheduled for the middle of March.

Phase II in the process also includes CritiCall and Vision Screening.

CritiCall evaluates the following skills:

- Hearing and understanding vocal information
- Decision making skills
- Comparing number/letter sequences
- Summarizing and correctly passing along information vocally and in writing
- Advanced multi-tasking (simultaneous reading and keyboard note-taking on the computer while hearing information through a headset)
- Dispatcher related keyboard speed and accuracy
- Word and number recitation to access clarity and speed accuracy
- Ability to follow verbal and written instructions without assistance

Vision Screening evaluates your ability to identify colors on the computer monitor.

A well qualified candidate will possess the minimum qualifications plus Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) certification or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification. Candidates that are EMD or EMT certified, have been an EMD or EMT or have successfully completed an EMD or EMT course may bring proof to the Phase II portion of testing.

**Phase III – Oral Interview-** Candidates are invited to the oral interview process based on performance in Phase I and Phase II of the testing process. Candidates should bring the following documentation to the interview:

- Current resume
- List of current and previous supervisors for the past five years, including current, complete addresses and phone numbers
- Copies of last two performance evaluations

A second oral interview may be scheduled at a later date as needed to complete the hiring selection. Hiring selection will be made from those individuals that most successfully pass all three phases of the testing process.

Due to security reasons, the alarm room is unable to accommodate all applicants involved in the recruitment process who wish to visit the alarm room. Applicants who are invited to Phase III – Oral Interview will be allowed to schedule a tour. Details on how to schedule a time to tour the alarm room will be made available at the time of interview scheduling. All visitors are subject to a background check prior to any visits.

The first training class is tentatively scheduled for May 2016. Candidates not invited to the first round of Phase II and III testing will remain on the eligible list for the duration of eligibility as identified in the notice sent by the City Human Resources Department. Additional rounds of Phase II and Phase III testing may be held throughout the eligibility period for future training classes and hiring needs.

## **Training Program**

The Deployment section of the Phoenix Fire Department operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends and holidays. The typical hours are 0700-1500, 1500-2300 and 2300 – 0700. Full time dispatchers are typically assigned to a shift working five 8 hour days or four 10 hour days per 40 hour work week. Working other schedules and shifts could be possible in the future.

The initial training for full and part-time Fire Emergency Dispatchers will be 40 hours per week for the first six months.

The 6 month training program is a combination of classroom training in both phones and radios, on-the-job training one on one with a trainer, and working independently as a Call Taker and/or Radio Operator. Over the course of the training program, Fire Emergency Dispatchers will be assigned to work various shifts. Fire Emergency Dispatchers are trained and must pass evaluation in the call taker position prior to starting radio training.

Only the classroom portion of the training program will be Monday-Friday during day time hours. Hours and training days may vary within the classroom portion as well to accommodate observation time in the dispatch center. Time off will not be granted during Call Taker and Radio Training periods.

Once successfully completing all training, full time Fire Emergency Dispatchers will work rotating shift schedules until a permanent work schedule is available during a shift bid.

Shift are awarded by seniority. Part-time Fire Emergency Dispatchers will be placed in a work schedule consisting of three 6 hours shifts.

\*\*\*Please do not call the Phoenix Fire Department Alarm Room for typing certification or recruitment information. Questions may be emailed to [dispatcher.recruitment.pfd@phoenix.gov](mailto:dispatcher.recruitment.pfd@phoenix.gov) .