

**County Resource Coordinator  
CRC**

**Operational Guidelines for Multi-Departmental Incidents**

**July 2003**

## **Background**

The guidelines presented here result in work begun in 1993 on the heels of a major wildland fire problem in Travis County. Departments across the County found themselves pushed to the limit responding to grass and brush fires daily. Member departments of the capital area fire Chief's Association banded together in a common concern for safety and efficiency when one or more department had to respond to a wildfire.

The resulting operational plan was first published in June 1994. It was apparent the concepts would serve more than just wildfire situations. The framework for operation has been exercised for many different types of disasters since. Austin and Travis County Fire Departments can be proud of the fact that firefighters across the County have been able to work together without crippling concerns for political affiliation, paid versus volunteer status, or concerns for who was the boss.

Efforts to keep abreast of problems within the County brought together the Chief Officers of all departments, including the City of Austin. The Travis County Chief's Association began with this effort of allowing the decision makers from all departments to come together to work on common problems.

During the spring of 1996, the Texas Forest service asked our group if we could help with a major wildland fire problem in north Texas. Austin and Travis County were able to keep a task force of 20 – 25 firefighters and apparatus in the field for 6-weeks, when large portions of north Texas were burning. Never before had such an organized unit been assembled for such an extended period of time. Working within the organizational structure of the Texas Forest Service, our personnel and equipment allowed pre-deployment of firefighting forces that were key components to early intervention, and reduction of fire loss in Texas.

Our track record and intense desire to continue our cooperative work spirit have brought us to revisit our operational guidelines. From our experiences we wish to reinforce our efforts and refine our ability to better serve the citizens of Austin and Travis County.

We hope the ability to work toward a common goal using all resources at hand will serve as an example to our neighbors and the fire service in general. We have come to recognize that common effort is much more effective than singular purpose.

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## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this document is:

- Implement an orderly and rapid response to requests for mutual aid,
- Establish procedures for command and control of major incidents,
- Ensure adequate fire / rescue coverage for all areas in the County during major incidents,
- Define the role of the County Resource Coordinator, and,
- Identify minimum Incident commander Requirements to ensure safety of all emergency personnel.

The document does not:

- Supercede any existing automatic or mutual aid agreements,
- Undermine the authority of any officer within his / her department or jurisdiction, or,
- Change the way a department functions internally.

## **CAFCA County Resource Coordinator – Duty Officer**

CAFCA Chief Officers will serve as CRC on rotation. A sample of the current rotation is listed in Appendix A. Each rotation will last one week, however, is subject to change depending on conditions in the County.

Duties of the County Resource Coordinator (CRC) – Duty Officer, include, but are not limited to:

1. Monitor available resources across the County.
2. When requested, coordinate response to major incidents in such a manner as to not “strip” an area in the County of available resources.
3. Designate and /or assemble a Task Force(s) or other resources to comply with mutual aid requests, and to appoint a leader for each Task Force assembled.
4. Coordinate the formation of out-of-county resources and ensure effective deployment as may be needed.
5. Implement requests for special resources as requested. This includes requests for Starflight or other air support; Travis County CORE; heavy-duty equipment from County Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR); and, any other resources that may be needed by the Incident Commander.

## **CAFCA County Resource Coordinator – Field Officer**

Duties of the County Resource Coordinator (CRC) – Field Officer, include, but are not limited to:

1. Respond to incidents as request to assist the ICS Team and add logistical support, as needed.
2. Ensure the ICS and the CAFCA Personnel Accountability Systems are being used on any incident CRC Resources are deployed to.
3. Act as or designate and assign a Safety Officer for all incidents to which he / she is assigned, within the established ICS Team, as needed.
4. Act as or designate and assign an Air Operations Officer for all incidents to which he / she is assigned, within the established ICS Team, as needed.
5. Act as a Liaison Officer between the Incident Commander and the Duty CRC.
6. Assist the Incident Commander organizing on-scene CRC Resources.

## **Resource Tracking**

Normally there is no monitoring of CRC resources on a daily basis. Activation of CRC Resources and personnel are generally accomplished in a manner that allows each department to respond some resources without stripping any individual department.

There will be periods when centralized tracking and assignments become necessary. This occurs during periods of high fire potential and is associated with a high state of readiness in the entire county.

At some point, Austin / Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be activated. The CRC – Duty Officer, or his / her designee, may then be assigned to the EOC for the duration of the emergency or until a relief is requested.

CRC – Duty Officer, or his / her designee, will implement a system of tracking available resources during periods of increased readiness. This could simply be a poll of departments for available resources (apparatus, equipment, personnel, etc.). Additionally, information regarding fire occurrences and frequency will be monitored.

## **Incident Command Requirements for Multi-Department Incidents**

- No multi-department incident shall operate in Travis County without an Incident Command System in place.
- No CRC Resources shall operate outside Travis County without an Incident Command System in place.
- Every multi-department incident CRC Resources are deployed to shall have as a **minimum**: a single Incident Commander, Staging Officer, and a Safety Officer. This shall be conveyed to the CRC – Duty Officer whenever a request for aid is made. A request for assistance must include the location of the Staging Area and the Command Post.
- It is strongly recommended that the following command components of ICS be utilized in major events: Operations Chief, Logistics Chief and Plans Chief. Additional functions of ICS should be developed as the need dictates.
- Under no circumstances will two separate command posts or separate Incident Commanders be used at the same time.
- The Incident Commander is the ultimate authority of field emergency operations. Generally, the Incident commander and / or the Operations Chief will be from the “host” department due to the familiarity with the incident and related hazards.
- The Senior Officer or Task Force Leader from each responding Task Force will report to the Staging Officer. In the event that a single resource is requested and sent, the Senior or Officer in-charge will report to Staging with the CRC Accountability Passport Card as per the CAFCA Personnel Accountability System Policy.

## **Communications**

When two or more departments are working at an incident, a common radio channel will be identified and announced. This channel will be the state mutual aid channel (Texas Fire 1 - 154.280 VHF).

CRC Duty and Field Officers will normally communicate by cell phone, if possible.

Please make every effort to keep radio traffic to a minimum for obvious reasons. Refer to alpha paged information and / or write down instructions to Staging and Command Post locations. Updates on the incident will be alpha paged as soon as possible.

Air Operations will be conducted on Intercity (154.9500 VHF), if possible.

Austin / Travis County has invested a great deal of tax dollars in a new 800 MHz Regional Radio System. Some CAFCA Members may have plans to switch to the new system. It is understood the current VHF frequencies will continue to be used for CRC response until such a time that all members agree to change the CRC radio response channel designation.

Most Travis County CAFCA Member VHF Radio Frequencies are listed in Appendix A.

## Wildland / Structural Task Forces

Mutual aid response will normally be in the form of a Task Force. Multiple apparatus response can be managed best enroute and on the scene as a single unit. There may be times when single unit resources are utilized and would not fall under these guidelines.

**Every Task Force shall have a Task Force Leader, who is in command of the unit. In general, it will be the engine officers from each Task Force. Individual components of the Task Force report to the Task Force Leader, while the Task Force Leader speaks for the entire unit at the incident.** The Task Force Leader is responsible for all personnel and equipment assigned to that specific Task Force. Personnel safety and welfare are prime concerns for the Task Force Leader. He or she will not jeopardize any member of the Task Force.

Each Task Force will be kept intact and operating as a unit from the initial response until demobilization of the incident. Any changes made to a Task Force at the incident must be reported to the CRC – Field Officer and in turn to the sending department.

## Wildland / Structural Firefighting Definitions

Strike Team – Specified combination of the same type of resource with a common communication and a leader. Strike Teams of all Brush Trucks for example.

Task Force – A group of resources with common communications and a leader temporarily assigned to a specific mission.

Level A Task Force –        2 - Brush trucks,  
   1 - Engine w/ drafting capability  
   1 - 1,000 (minimum) gallon tanker.

Level B Task Force –        1 - Brush trucks,  
   1 - Engine w/ drafting capability  
   1 - 1,000 (minimum) gallon tanker.

Level C Task Force –        1 - Brush trucks,  
   1 - 1,000 (minimum) gallon tanker.

Structure Task Force –      3 – Class A Pumpers  
   2 - 1,000 (minimum) gallon tankers

HazMat Task Force –        1 – Science Trailer  
   1 – PPE Trailer

## **Wildland / Structural Area Response and Task Forces**

CAFCA Members have divided Travis County into three sections for Wildland / Structural fire response. The intention is to control the mutual aid response to prevent “stripping” any area or department. Each Area should have a Task Force Leader responsible for communicating with the CRC Duty Officer once on scene.

### **Area 1**

Fire Control	Engine
AFD	Tanker
Pflugerville	Brush Truck
Manor	Brush Truck
SETCO	Brush Truck

### **Area 2**

Cedar Park	Engine
Northshore / Sandy Creek Volente	Tanker
Leander	Brush Truck
Lago Vista	Brush Truck
Jollyville	Brush Truck

### **Area 3**

Manchaca	Engine
Perdarnales	Tanker
CeBar	Brush Truck
Hudson Bend	Brush Truck
Oak Hill	Brush Truck
Westlake	Brush Truck

## **Apparatus Identification**

### **CAFCA Common Nomenclature**

The CAFCA Common Nomenclature system was developed to ensure common terminology. Apparatus should be defined to ensure requested resources are correct for the response need.

Engine (E) – Pumper with 500 gal water and 750-gpm pump capacity.

Brush Truck (BT) – Off road vehicle with a minimum 125 gpm pump.

Squad (S) – A Fire apparatus w/ 125 gpm pump or greater. Generally, not more than 300-500 gals water on board.

Ladder (L) – Ladder apparatus have a powered aerial device.

Quint (Q) –a powered aerial device combined with a pump and water tank.

Haz-Mat (HM) – A unit designed for the mitigation of hazardous materials.

Rescue (R) – A unit designed for the provision of rescue, and equipped with rescue related hardware and supplies.

Command (C) – A vehicle intended for use by senior command officers and usually carries accountability and reference material.

Utility (U) – A vehicle that carries personnel, equipment or both.

Tanker (T) – Tanker apparatus are designed primarily for rural water supply, and should have a water tank in excess of 1000 gallons. Some tankers have pumping capacity of 750 gpm or better.

### **Numbering System**

The Numbering System was developed to alleviate confusion on incidents involving more than two CAFCA agencies. Using the numbering system cuts down on radio traffic and still identifies the apparatus.

The system is three numerals starting with the ESD's number followed by department company or station numbers.

Example: A Brush Truck from ESD #9 from Westlake Station 2 would be BT 902.

This numbering makes it redundant to say "Westlake" Brush Truck 902. All that is necessary is to say, "Brush Truck 902 responding".

The system works for other apparatus as well. Fire Control Engine 4 would be Engine 404 and a Tanker from CeBar would be Tanker 10-01.

## CAFCA Accountability System

Accountability on fire scenes is probably the single most important item in this manual. Responsibility for the safety of all personnel lies with the Incident Commander. In most incidents, the IC delegates accountability to a senior officer on the scene.

CAFCA requires the use of the Accountability System at all CRC response incidents.

The CAFCA Accountability System is based on a passport type system. Depending on the incident, units may need their "Passport" to gain access to the fire line, refill water tanks or to get rehab.

The CAFCA passport is a very simple hard plastic card with the CAFCA unit number of the apparatus etched on it. Company Officers or Crew leaders will write down the crew member names on the passport using grease pencil. The passport should be located on the door of each responding apparatus.

The passport is given to Incident Command or Staging Officer at the scene, depending on the makeup of the ICS. **It is the responsibility of the department receiving CRC response to set up and maintain personnel accountability for the incident.**

CRC Field Officers will carry blank passports, which may be issued to resources not carrying a passport.

Resources must clear with Incident Command before leaving the scene. The passport will be returned during this checkout.

During operations at the scene, it will be necessary to call for a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). This is a physical account of all personnel at the scene. Each Company Officer or crew leader will account for all personnel under his / her immediate supervision. This may be accomplished by contact or via radio. PAR is then relayed to the top of the ICS structure.

The CAFCA Accountability System Policy is in Appendix C.

## **Common Operational Guidelines**

Guidelines are necessary to provide a system that is operated uniformly and efficiently. Guidelines also allow for flexibility, as all emergency incidents may not be the same.

### **When to call CRC.**

The CRC System is not intended to replace mechanisms that currently provide mutual aid from one department to another. Generally, the system should be activated by calling the CRC – Duty Officer when an event requires more than just one additional mutual aid department.

Good size up of the incident is critical to determining needed resources. When a Incident commander sees that the event is complex and it will require more than the usual response, it is time to consider immediately available resources and how long it takes to bring in additional help.

### **How to contact the CRC Duty Officer.**

A request for CRC is made by using the alphanumeric pager – the number for CRC is **935-9999**. Direct access can be made by computer paging. CRC will also respond to digital page where a returned phone number is placed into the pager.

### **What the CRC Duty Officer will need to know.**

Basic information needed by the CRC – Duty Officer:

1. Location and description of the incident – SIZEUP
2. Location of the Command Post
3. Location of the Staging Area
4. What assistance is needed

### **Minimum PPE requirements for Wildland / Structural Fires for CRC response.**

All personnel responding to Wildland Fires must wear a minimum of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

1. Long sleeve Nomex shirt
2. Nomex trousers
3. Leather work boots
4. Leather work gloves
5. Helmet and eye protection (can be a structural helmet w/ face shield or wildland helmet w/ goggles)
6. NFPA approved Fire Shelter

All personnel responding to Structural Fires must wear a minimum of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

1. NFPA approved Bunker coat, pants, boots, Nomex hood, gloves, helmet and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).

### **What are the levels of the emergency?**

Level One – An incident that can be handled by existing resources of a single agency. Assistance is not required from more than one emergency service. Level One incidents are considered routine.

Level Two – An incident that requires multi-agency response or is multi-jurisdictional in nature. The incident may be complicated but not of such proportion to be considered significant on a county-wide basis. Included as Level Two Incidents are those that result in automatic or requested mutual aid and /or those incidents that require more than one emergency service.

Level Three – An advanced incident that requires and / or affects a number of emergency service agencies. Level Three incidents have a wide area impact. Unified command will be established at the Emergency Operations Center.

These definitions comply with the Austin / Travis County Multi-Agency IMS Plan. Utilization of this classification system assists all agencies in determination of incident magnitude.

### **Who can request help from CRC?**

Any Incident Commander can make a request for assistance to the CRC. The system has been designed to be responsive to departments who are part of the Travis County Mutual Aid Agreement. Requests from assistance outside of Travis County must be placed into appropriate channels of authority that include the Travis County Office of Emergency Management.

**Appendix A**  
**CAFCA Member Radio Frequencies**

<b>Channel Name</b>	<b>RX</b>	<b>TX</b>	<b>PL</b>
AFD Metro	153.9500	154.2350	123.0
CeBar FD	154.1300	158.9550	203.5
Cedar Park	155.3700	155.3700	151.4
Fire Control	154.4000	153.8300	151.4
Georgetown			
Hudson Bend	154.4450	154.1600	151.4
Intercity	154.9500	154.9500	CSQ
Jollyville	154.3550	154.355	151.4
Lago Vista	151.4600	154.0700	192.8
Leander	155.355	158.940	77.00
Manchaca	151.2350	156.1500	210.7
Manor	158.4850	157.1150	151.4
Texas Fire 1	154.2800	154.2800	CSQ
North Shore	151.1900	154.1900	151.4
Oak Hill	154.4150	154.0100	127.3
Perdarnales	154.2200	154.2200	151.4
Pflugerville	154.1450	159.0600	186.2
TC FR	154.2050	153.8900	156.7
South Alert		154.1750	110.9
TCEMS rep.	155.7150	153.9950	151.4
TC Fire Control	154.4000	153.8300	151.4
TFS - Bastrop	159.3600	151.1900	186.2
TFS - Compact	159.2850	159.2850	186.2
Volente	154.1900	154.1900	151.4
Weather	162.4000		SSQ
WFD rep.	153.9800	156.1200	110.9

**Appendix B**  
**CRC Rotation Schedule for 2003**

**Appendix C**  
**CAFCA Accountability Policy**