

From the [2017 MCFRS Accreditation Annual Compliance Report](#) to CFAI:

[MCFRS] acknowledges, in general, negative performance trending over the last several years pertaining to the alarm handling (phone to dispatch) component of the total response time continuum for numerous operational service delivery programs. This is documented and displayed as an exhibit within the performance tracking charts of this report.

MCFRS acknowledges the following reasons for these negative trends:

- a) During FY15 (7/1/14 to 6/30/15) the agency began a multiyear initiative to civilianize 33 uniformed fire call-taking and dispatch positions in the Emergency Communications Center (ECC).
- b) Effective April 20, 2015, MCFRS ECC call-takers (new civilian and seasoned uniformed) began using the Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS) to triage all 911 fire, hazmat, technical rescue, water and ice rescue, ARFF, and public service calls. Prior to this the agency used its own internal 911 triage system for handling these call types. [Click here to view MCFRS Information Bulletin 15-01](#) documenting this system upgrade.
- c) Effective 4/2/17 and documented in this ACR under [Exhibit 5A](#), MCFRS ECC cutover to a new CAD system.
- d) Since FY15 MCFRS has been mandated to and working on transitioning all ECC functions to the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) where this “major transition” will “become a consolidated function in the Department of Police”. [Click here to view the 2015-04-13 MCFRS and County Council Public Safety Committee Operating Budget Work Session document](#) and read the beginning of the bottom of page 4.
- e) MCFRS dispatched incident call load increasing by ~3-5%/year
- f) Montgomery County, Maryland is a “majority minority” county with many residents and visitors who are ineffective English speakers. As such, the ECC many times has to deploy the Language Line to help communicate and determine the needed services. This inherently causes a significant increase in phone-to-dispatch times when measuring at the 90th percentile fractile. It is also noted that a [2014- December M.C. Department of Transportation study titled Language Assistance Plan](#) indicates on page 3, approximately 15% (139,000) [residents] speak English less than “very well” and approximately 9% (83,500) speak English “not well” or “not at all”.
- g) Montgomery County has two major interstates and one major state highway within its boundaries. Interstate 495 the Capital Beltway and Interstate 270, are some of the most heavily travelled roads on the east coast. Many highway-related calls for service come in via cell phone and require telecommunicators to spend a lot of time trying to demine the location of the emergency. MCFRS will continue working with MCPD ECC leadership to deploy more accurate cell phone GPS mapping applications such as Next Generation 911 systems.

Acknowledging all of the aforementioned have contributed to an increase in alarm handling times at the 90th percentile fractile, it is noted that MCFRS first-arriving unit total response time during this period have not significantly increased. This is due in part because of improved turnout times and even slightly improved travel times. This is important to note as the agency has seen a 3 to 5 percent increase in calls for service per year during the last few years. In addition, when the new CAD system went online on 4/2/17, the agency began using automatic vehicle locator (AVL) select and recommend for the closest unit technologies. This feature should also help decrease response times.

Plan for improvement: MCFRS understands the criticality of not just reducing alarm handling times, but assuring the call-taker nationally-accepted triage software (EMS & Fire Priority Dispatch) is properly utilized so the proper MCFRS response plans for the risk(s) are deployed.

The plan includes:

- a) At least monthly meetings between the MCFRS Assistant Chief Communications Section with the MCPD Communications Director to discuss issues surrounding the consolidation.
- b) Delaying the full transfer of Fire/Rescue ECC responsibilities to MCPD until more training and mentoring can occur with civilian telecommunicators (this has already occurred).
- c) MCFRS will work with MCPD to determine the actual amounts of time per month the Language Line is deployed so a quantitative analysis can transpire to determine actual impacts.
- d) Continued focus and investigation on specific incidents where upper and lower call processing deviation limits have been exceeded. Determine the cause(s) and address through training, coaching & counselling, positive reinforcement, and if needed, progressive discipline. If there is a technological or business management issue, work to address.
- e) Continue to closely monitor performance as decreases in alarm handling times should be realized as new and seasoned telecommunicators become more familiar with the new technologies and develop more experience.
- f) Continue working toward achieving the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch Accredited Center of Excellence award and designation for the ECC.
- g) Establish and begin using an Emergency Communication Nurse Service (ECNS) at the Emergency Communications Center (ECC). ECNS is a nurse triage system comprised of over 200 protocols designed to be implemented within an EMS communications center and used in conjunction with International Academy of Emergency Dispatch's Medical Priority Dispatch System to provide alternative care for callers having low-acuity (Omega-level) determinant codes.

Finally, a few of the aforementioned components of the plan to address the deficiencies are not just included in this ACR but are memorialized within the approved MCFRS 2016 to 2022 Master Plan. The reader/reviewer is encouraged to review this exhibit and [hyperlink to this master plan and scroll to page 5-23](#) and review the Communications Efficiencies section.

MCFRS CFAI 2017 ACR EXHIBIT #5a

[Click here to view Fire Chief General Order outlining new CAD unit status codes](#)

From: Fire DOC Mailbox
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 1:21 PM
To: #FRS.ALL <#FRS.ALL@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: CAD Go-Live Sunday April 2, 2017.

Greetings,

I am pleased to announce that MCFRS ECC will be "Going Live" with the new P1 CAD system on **Sunday, April 2nd**.

Additionally, personnel currently working at the AECC while the renovation and change were taking place will be returning to the primary communications center. Over the next few days leading up to the actual cut over time and date, the FRS ECC Go-Live team will do it's best to communicate all "just in time training" with you so we are all prepared for the change. That stated, please know that while we've done our best to alleviate hiccups and glitches prior to going live, there may still be growing pains or unexpected changes. During the first several days of the cut-over should you have an unexpected experience with the new P1 CAD system I am asking in advance for your flexibility and patience.

Any questions pertaining to this email do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Dee

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