



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

25-08AMII

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Apparatus Staffing Policy

10/3/16

Issued by: Fire Chief Scott E. Goldstein
Policy Number: 25-08AMII
Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-3 (b)
Supersedes: Executive Regulation 25-08AM “*Apparatus Staffing Policy*”, FCGO 07-10, “*Staffing the 1+1 ALS Transport Unit*”, FCGO 09-07 “*EMS Response Plan*”, FCGO 10-09 “*ECC Dispatch Assignments*”, and FCGO 11-15 “*Paramedic Engine Companies*”
Effective Date: October 3, 2016

Section 1. Purpose:

To establish Standard and Minimum Staffing levels for fire and rescue apparatus.

Section 2. Applicability:

This policy applies to all Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) personnel.

Section 3. Background:

Adequate staffing levels of qualified personnel on fire and rescue apparatus are necessary to facilitate the efficient delivery of fire and rescue services and ensure the safety of personnel.

Because of the demands of all-hazard fire and rescue service, and the need to deliver Advanced Life Support efficiently, MCFRS has adopted four-person staffing as the standard for all Primary Units. Four-person staffing for engines and trucks is designated as the ***minimum*** level of staffing in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*. The Fire Chief intends that this initiative will continue until all Primary Units have completed the four-person staffing requirement.

Section 4. Definitions:

- a. **Advanced Life Support First Responder Apparatus (AFRA)**: A Primary Unit with a full complement of Advanced Life Support (ALS) equipment and at least one ALS Provider.
- b. **Advanced Life Support (ALS) Provider**: An individual who is Maryland licensed and credentialed by MCFRS to provide advanced life support.
- c. **Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider**: An individual who is Maryland licensed and credentialed by MCFRS to provide EMT or EMT-B level emergency medical service.



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- d. **Controlled:** A status that allows apparatus to be recommended for dispatch by ECC. This includes all of the units staffed on a daily basis by career and volunteer personnel. Additional units may be Controlled when sufficient staffing, apparatus, and equipment are available.
- e. **Extenuating Circumstance:** An unforeseen and unavoidable staffing situation which renders any of the Minimum Staffing unavailable. Examples include:
- When a unit officer is out of the station, staffing a specialty unit (MAB722, etc.)
 - When a unit officer has a sudden illness or injury.
- f. **Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS):** The operational chain of command and rank structure that integrates all fire and rescue service personnel, as required by Chapter 21.1. of the Montgomery County Code.
- g. **IECS-Certified:** The status indicating an individual's eligibility to serve at a specific rank level, as noted in the *IECS Executive Regulation* and the *Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements Executive Regulation*.
- h. **Minimum Staffing:** The minimum number of personnel with designated qualifications required to staff specific apparatus.
- i. **Paramedic Chase Unit (PCU):** A light-duty vehicle that has at least one ALS Provider and a full complement of ALS equipment.
- j. **Primary Unit:** An engine, truck/aerial, or rescue squad.
- k. **Primary Unit Officer:** An individual certified at the rank of Master Firefighter/Rescuer or higher.
- l. **Standard Staffing:** The number of qualified personnel to staff specific apparatus. For Primary Units, this number is based on an NFPA standard.
- m. **"With a Driver Only":** Apparatus that has a driver, but no other personnel qualified as Minimum Staffing for that apparatus type.
- n. **"With a Firefighter Three as the Unit Officer":** Apparatus with a Firefighter/Rescuer III as the unit officer because of Extenuating Circumstances. Another unit does not need to be dispatched to supplement.
- o. **"With Two Personnel":** Apparatus with a driver and a certified Primary Unit Officer but no other personnel that meet IECS Minimum Staffing requirements for a Primary Unit. This will communicate that only a single Firefighter/Rescuer II is needed to meet Minimum Staffing.
- p. **"Without a Unit Officer":** Apparatus without a certified Primary Unit Officer or a Firefighter/Rescuer III in the front seat. This will communicate that the unit will need to be supplemented by another Primary Unit.



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Section 5. Policy:

It is the policy of the Fire Chief to ensure the efficient delivery of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services on all emergency incidents by establishing Standard and Minimum Staffing levels of qualified personnel for all apparatus.

MCFRS Standard Staffing levels are based on national industry standards (including NFPA 1710). It is the intention of the Fire Chief and MCFRS to meet Standard Staffing levels at all times.

MCFRS Minimum Staffing levels are based on the minimum number of people required to perform limited basic operational tasks; these levels are below the standards of NFPA 1710 for Primary Units.

Because of expectations of the public, and an ethical “duty to act”, there are times when MCFRS apparatus must respond to incidents without Minimum Staffing levels. These situations should happen very rarely; the information in this policy provides direction and guidelines for decision making.

a. The Minimum Staffing levels required are:

| Minimum Staffing Levels | |
|--|---------------------|
| Apparatus Type | Number of Personnel |
| Engines, trucks/aerials, and rescue squads | 3 |
| ALS and BLS transport units | 2 |
| Paramedic Chase Units | 1 |
| Tankers | 1 |
| Brush trucks | 1 |
| Special units | 1 |

1. To determine whether Minimum or Standard Staffing levels have been achieved for a specific apparatus, the following standards apply:
 - A. Personnel must be at least 17 years of age and IECS-certified as Firefighter/Rescuer II to count towards Minimum Staffing levels for engines, trucks, and rescue squads.
 - B. Personnel must be at least 18 years of age and IECS-certified as a Maryland BLS Provider, to count towards Minimum Staffing on ALS or BLS units.
 - C. The Primary Unit Officer must be riding in the front right seat (the officer’s seat) to meet the Minimum Staffing level of a Primary Unit, except as allowed in Section 7.h.
 - D. At least one ALS Provider and one BLS Provider who is a certified driver must be included in the Minimum Staffing levels on all ALS transport units.



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- E. For EMS incidents which require a minimum number of personnel, ALS residents and students may be counted as part of the minimum number.
- F. Personnel who are IECS-certified at the Firefighter/Rescuer I level may be used as supplemental staffing on apparatus, but do not count toward Minimum Staffing levels.

b. The Standard Staffing levels are:

| Standard Staffing Levels | |
|--|---------------------|
| Apparatus Type | Number of Personnel |
| Engines, trucks/aerials, and rescue squads | 4 |
| ALS and BLS transport units | 3 |
| Paramedic Chase Units | 2 |
| Tankers | 2 |
| Brush trucks | 2 |
| Special units | 2 |

- 1. The Standard Staffing for a Paramedic Chase Unit with two sets of ALS equipment is two ALS Providers.
- 2. The Standard Staffing for a Paramedic Chase Unit with one set of ALS equipment is one ALS Provider and one BLS Provider.
- 3. The Standard Staffing level for a ALS transport unit is one ALS Provider and two BLS Providers.

c. For stations designated to have an AFRA, the engine must be staffed as a Paramedic Engine unless specifically authorized by the Rostered Battalion Chief.

Section 6. Responsibilities:

- a. The Fire Chief is responsible for allocating available resources so that appropriate staffing is available for all Controlled apparatus, in accordance with this policy.
- b. All MCFRS personnel must comply with this policy by notifying ECC by radio when any apparatus responds with less than Minimum Staffing.
- c. The Station Officer must make and adjust riding assignments that best support the delivery of service.
- d. The Station Officer must ensure that when an ALS Provider and a full complement of ALS equipment is available, the equipment is carried on the same unit as the provider. Unless the ALS Provider is the only qualified driver of a Primary Unit, it must be stasued as an AFRA.



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Section 7. Procedures:

Apparatus responding with less than the Minimum Staffing level must notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) that the unit is responding "With a Driver Only", "With a Firefighter Three as the unit officer", "Without a Unit Officer", or "With Two Personnel".

- a. ECC must dispatch additional unit to supplement a unit responding "With a Driver Only", "Without a Unit Officer", or "With Two Personnel".
- b. A Firefighter/Rescuer III may act as a Primary Unit Officer in Extenuating Circumstances.
- c. ECC must document each occurrence of a unit responding without Minimum Staffing.
- d. Whenever possible, tankers, brush trucks, and special units should respond with two personnel.
- e. When a Primary Unit is dispatched for an emergency incident but is staffed with two personnel or with no unit officer, it should respond if:
 - The unit dispatched is the first due type of its breed; or
 - It is the closest unit for any EMS incident
- f. Personnel on a unit with a Firefighter/Rescuer II as the officer must not engage in IDLH firefighting until an entry team of two personnel can be configured with a Firefighter/Rescuer III as the supervisor.
- g. When a Primary Unit or EMS transport unit is dispatched for an incident but has only a driver, it should respond if:
 - No light duty vehicle is available in the station with the appropriate equipment; and
 - The unit dispatched is the first due of its type (engine, truck, transport unit, etc); and
 - The driver has enough geographic knowledge to navigate safely and efficiently to the call; and:
 - The unit is likely to affect the outcome of a life threatening incident, such as:
 - First responder for an ALS incident
 - The closest unit to a full assignment
 - First due truck to a structure fire or adaptive
 - First due rescue squad to an entrapment or technical rescue
- h. For Primary Units, the unit officer must be riding in the front seat of the apparatus once assigned to an incident, e.g., if two Firefighter/Rescuer III's and a Captain are assigned to a TDA, the Captain must be in the front seat when responding an incident.

The only exception to this standard is for professional development. When a Firefighter/Rescuer III is in process for promotion, they can be assigned to the front seat of



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a Primary Unit as long as the unit has four personnel and the Primary Unit Officer is in the cab and has voice contact with the Firefighter/Rescuer III.

- i. If a Primary Unit responds with the assigned four-person staffing, but has staffing reduced because of the incident, the unit should remain in service as long as the remaining personnel meet the Minimum Staffing level.
- j. When the only ALS Provider on a four-person AFRA is the unit officer or driver, Scheduling shall hire or detail another Primary Unit Officer or driver so that the unit can remain in service if the ALS Provider must upgrade a transport unit.
 1. Station officers must use available staffing to ensure that units will remain available with Minimum Staffing if the ALS Provider is used to upgrade another unit. Any exceptions to this require approval of the Battalion Chief.
- k. When an AFRA is no longer staffed with an ALS Provider (or ALS equipment), or when the provider returns, the unit officer must notify ECC and change the unit's status in CAD.
- l. When a Primary Unit is stasued as an AFRA, its radio designation will be preceded by the word "Paramedic". (e.g., The AFRA engine from Station 10 will be "Paramedic Engine 710" and the AFRA tower from Station 8 will be "Paramedic Tower 708")

Section 8. Cancellation:

This policy rescinds and replaces:

- Executive Regulation 25-08AM, "Apparatus Staffing Policy"
- FCGO 07-10, "Staffing the 1+1 ALS Transport Unit"
- FCGO 09-07 "EMS Response Plan"
- FCGO 10-09 "ECC Dispatch Assignments"
- FCGO 11-15 "Paramedic Engine Companies"

Section 9. Attachments:

There are no attachments.

Approved:

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

September 29, 2016
Date