



Montgomery County
Response Staffing Number Standard

A Recommended Practice

By the Montgomery County Fire Service

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ABSTRACT

We, the representatives of the fire service of Montgomery County, recommend that a standard and consistent system for announcing staffing levels on responding apparatus be adopted county-wide.

Further, we recommend that only the number interior qualified firefighters aboard responding apparatus be announced.

In addition, we recommend that “interior qualified firefighters” be defined as firefighters who have trained to the IFSAC / ProBoard Firefighter 1 standard¹ or equivalent training, and that “equivalent training” be defined as successful completion of current or former interior firefighter courses, covering the subjects listed in Chapter 5 of NFPA 1001², whether attained in Pennsylvania or any other state.

¹ National Fire Protection Association. *Standard 1001 – Standard for Firefighter Professional Qualifications*. Quincy, MA: author

² Ibid.

PURPOSE

- The intent of paper is to recommend a common standard to be used by all fire service providers responding within Montgomery County by providing a consistent and accurate count of available Interior Qualified Firefighters responding to emergency incidents.
- The standard is intended to provide the incident commander with the number of available Interior Qualified Firefighters responding to his/her incident.

LIMITATIONS

- The intent of this paper **is not** to recommend apparatus staffing levels during emergency response. That is at the sole discretion of the responding entity and its political subdivision.³

THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Adequacies

- When used, the current system does provide a number of emergency responders on any given piece of fire apparatus responding to an incident.

Deficiencies

- The current system is not adopted county-wide.
- In some cases, companies count the driver and other cases, companies do not, leading to inconsistency.
- The issue of “who counts” is determined on an individual company basis, also leading to inconsistency.

SCOPE

- It is intended that this standard apply to all fire service providers responding to emergency incidents within Montgomery County.

³ Establishment of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Act, PA Statute 2008-07 enacted 17 March 2008.

DEFINITIONS

- **Interior Qualified** – firefighters who have trained to IFSAC / ProBoard Firefighter 1 standard⁴ or equivalent training.
- **Equivalent Training** – current or former interior firefighter courses, covering the subjects listed in Chapter 5 of NFPA 1001⁵, whether attained in Pennsylvania or any other state.

RECOMMENDED STANDARD

1. When a piece of fire apparatus responds, they shall identify the unit and the number of interior qualified firefighters aboard.
 - a. Example – When “Engine 1” responds with a driver / operator and 3 firefighters, all of whom are interior qualified, they would announce “Engine 1 responding with 4.”
2. Non-interior qualified firefighters shall not be included in the count.
 - a. Example – When “Engine 1” responds with a driver / operator and 3 firefighters, and all but one are interior qualified, they would announce “Engine 1 responding with 3.”
3. When a piece of fire apparatus responds with only a driver / operator, that unit should announce “Engine 1 responding driver only.”
4. When a piece of apparatus responds with only non-interior qualified firefighters, that unit should respond “driver only.”
 - a. Example – When “Engine 1” responds with a driver / operator and 3 firefighters, none of whom are interior qualified, they would announce “Engine 1 responding driver only.”
5. The terms “undermanned” or “understaffed” shall not be used.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

RESPONSIBILITY

- All officers and members of fire service providers, who are operating on Montgomery County's radio system, including out-of-county resources responding into Montgomery County, are expected to adhere to this standard.

END