

**1A.5 *The governing body has policies to preclude individual participation of governing board members and staff in actions involving possible conflict of interest.***

**Description:**

MCFRS has a *Code of Ethics and On-duty Personal Conduct* Executive Regulation governing the on-duty activities and behavior of all Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service operational and administrative personnel. Chapter 19-A of the County Code requires employees to notify the County of any intention for outside employment.

**Appraisal:**

MCFRS has adopted a code of ethics and personal conduct to require that its personnel present themselves in a professional manner that reflects favorably on the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service at all times. The County Ethics Commission works to ensure that the County's decision makers have no conflicts of interest with their primary employment. Since 1990, the Commission has issued opinions and provided guidance for employees, lobbyists, and members of County boards and commissions.

**Plan:**

MCFRS and the Ethics Commission periodically update their regulations and direction to reflect changes in technology and society.

**Reference:**

[MCFRS Executive Regulation 22-00 AM County Code Chapter 19A Montgomery County Ethics Commission](#)

**1A.8** *The governing body publishes a mission statement for the agency.*

**Description:**

The Mission of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to protect lives, property, and the environment with comprehensive risk reduction programs and safe, efficient, and effective emergency response provided by skilled, motivated, and compassionate career and volunteer service providers representing Montgomery County's diverse population.

**Appraisal:**

The Fire Chief has authority to approve or revise the vision and mission statement. Most recently, input was provided by career and volunteer members at the FY08 MCFRS Planning Forum.

**Plan:**

The Fire Chief will continue to take input from career and volunteer participants in future forums. The Fire Chief will consider recommendations and amend the vision and/or mission statement as necessary.

**Reference:**

[Update to Vision and Mission Statements](#)

## **1B.2 *Resource allocation reflects the agency's mission, goals and objectives.***

### **Description**

On a strategic level, MCFRS has several full-time staff working on planning, budgeting, and allocation of resources. The Fire Chief is required to ensure that the Master Plan and Strategic Plan are periodically updated. On a tactical level, if long term and/or temporary resource adjustments are needed, the Fire Chief, or his designee, has the authority to move equipment and personnel to various parts of the County.

### **Appraisal**

Bill 36-03 gave the Fire Chief operational authority over the delivery of service and all personnel, both professional and volunteer. This advance delegation of authority brought the efficiency of a central planning team to a Department whose budget is nearly \$2 million annually.

### **Plan**

To meet immediate and emergent needs, the Duty Operations Chief can transfer personnel and apparatus. Similarly, the Public Safety Communications Center can dispatch or transfer any piece of apparatus to balance coverage needs around the County or the region.

### **Reference**

[FY10 Strategic Plan 2009](#)

[Master Plan Update Bill 36-](#)

[03](#)

## **Category II – Assessment and Planning**

### **Criterion 2B: Fire Risk Assessment and Response Strategies**

MCFRS analyzes the County's fire risk at three levels: countywide, station first-due area, and fire box area or "risk management zone" (i.e., our established "planning zone") as part of the overall risk assessment process. Fire risks are identified based on frequency/probability and consequences of various fire hazards present in each risk management zone (RMZ). Fire risks are categorized as Low, Moderate, High or Special.

Critical task analyses are performed by the Operations Division to determine the effective response force (ERF) that is needed to effectively and safely respond to each category/level of fire risk. In addition to deploying adequate resources, the other key element of effectiveness is response time. MCFRS has a two-tiered set of response time goals – baselines and benchmarks. Baseline goals have been set at a readily achievable level and should be met routinely; whereas benchmark goals are deliberately set much higher to serve as a level of performance to strive for over time.

In addition to the County's fire risks, other factors, characteristics, and indicators such as demographics, economic conditions, fire suppression water supply, existence of automatic fire protection systems, and fire loss history are taken into consideration when establishing MCFRS' standards of coverage. A periodic process is used to assess the balance between fire risks and MCFRS fire suppression capabilities to ensure the standards of coverage remain appropriate and adequate for the County.

**2B.1 Each planning zone and population area is analyzed and risk factors are evaluated in order to establish a standards of response coverage.**

**Description:**

Fire risk present within each MCFRS risk management zone (i.e., fire box area) and within the context of the County's four population density zones is evaluated as part of the ongoing risk assessment process for the purpose of establishing and updating the department's Standards of Cover (see reference below). Fire risk factors that are analyzed include:

- Building characteristics, including size, height, and use (occupancy type), obtained through County zoning data
- History of fire incidents – frequency/probability

**Appraisal:**

MCFRS has successfully used the risk factors listed above to assess levels of fire risk by risk management zones (RMZs). With the hundreds of thousands of buildings present in Montgomery County, it has not been feasible for MCFRS staff to perform an individual risk assessment of every building, so we have developed a useful methodology for analyzing fire risk using zoning data combined with incident frequency data. Furthermore, fire risk has been, and continues to be, addressed within the eight phases of the department's on-going Station Location and Resource Allocation Study (see Phase 5 Study below - as a sample) where fire risk and non-fire risks are examined in terms of planning areas established specifically for the multi-phase study.

**Plan:**

MCFRS will continue using the fire risk factors listed above when periodically re-evaluating the County's Standards of Cover (SOC). From these re-evaluations, the County's SOC will be modified as needed. The list of fire risk factors itself will be modified if additional or more appropriate risk factors were to be identified during these re-evaluations and were found to be readily usable and applicable for a county of this size.

**References:**

MCFRS Standards of Cover, Section D - Community Risk Assessment and Risk Levels  
Station Location and Resource Allocation Study – Phase 5 Report

**3B.1 Some form of organizational management process is identified and used to implement and track the agency's goals and objectives.**

**Description**

A uniform department-wide process for implementing and tracking goals and objectives does not yet exist. An automated action tracking system developed in FY08, the closest process/application MCFRS has had to date relating to the tracking of goals and objectives, did not receive widespread acceptance/usage and was subsequently abandoned. Since that time, each Division and Section identifies and uses their own management process utilizing some type of spreadsheet or other electronic application. Examples of the approach used by the Operations Division involves the use of status dashboards updated on a monthly basis (see references below).

**Appraisal**

Management processes employed by MCFRS managers have been satisfactory in implementing and tracking departmental goals and objectives; however, a uniform, department-wide process is needed. The dashboard approach used by several programs within the Operations Division has been the most effective management process used within the department.

**Plan**

MCFRS will, to the greatest extent practicable, develop and employ a uniform management process for implementing and tracking goals and objectives. The approach having the most promise is the dashboard; however, it may not be applicable to all program areas throughout MCFRS. The department will work on this endeavor during FY14-15.

**References**

EMS Dashboard - sample

Fleet Management Dashboard - sample

Safety Section Dashboard - sample

**4A.3 The budget process involves input from appropriate persons or groups, including staff officers and other members of the agency.**

**Description:**

Any person or group who wishes to provide input on the budget may do so when the council holds public hearings on the budget and when the county executive meets with various communities throughout the county. Within the department, at beginning of each new budget process, the budget director solicits input from section leaders and division chiefs provide regarding their respective budgets. Specifically, line-by-line current-year budget data is provided and respondents are asked to provide an updated budget based on plans for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Appraisal:**

Like most other jurisdictions, Montgomery County has not had the resources in recent years to provide for increases to the budget. As a result, many sections do not have the resources to meet all their needs. However, all elements in the department have the ability to prioritize their needs within the limits of available resources.

**Plan:**

MCFRS will continue to seek input and ideas regarding the budget from all levels of the organization. This will continue to be the first step of the department's internal budget process.

**References:**

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/omb/FY13/ciprec/pdf/cip-process.pdf>

(capital budget process)

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/omb/FY13/psprec/pdf/psp-process.pdf>

(operating budget process)

**4C.4 Financial plans avoid the use of one-time funding sources to cover ongoing costs unless plans are provided to ensure a means of continuity for personnel resources and capital assets.**

**Description:**

The county's policy is to fund ongoing expenditures with ongoing revenues. Generally, onetime funding sources are not used to cover operating expenditures. To the extent that one-time funding sources are used, they cover one-time costs. For example, MCFRS might receive a grant to cover costs associated with some supplementary training. The funding would be used to fund the training, and the training would stop when the funds had been spent.

**Appraisal:**

The county and MCFRS have not used one-time funding to cover ongoing costs. One-time funding has only been used to cover one-time costs, and this usually occurs in the grant fund or the capital projects fund

**Plan:**

The county and MCFRS will continue to avoid using one-time funding sources to cover ongoing costs. Such funding will continue to be used to cover one-time costs only.

**References:**

1. Budget book, page 4-2, sections titled "Structurally Balanced Budget" and "Use of One-Time Revenues"

# MCFRS

2013 Completed FESSAM

(Was Written to the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Manual)

Category V – Programs

Criterion 5A-Fire Suppression

## **Category V – Programs**

### **Criterion 5A – Fire Suppression**

MCFRS is an all hazards agency that protects approximately 1 million people in 500 squares miles in 37 fire stations with 1100 career and 600 volunteer personnel in a combined system. MCFRS responds to approximately 150,000 incidents annually with a budget of \$187 million last year.

MCFRS accomplished its mission with state of the art equipment and training based on the latest nuances in technology and suppression delivery systems. Examples of this include Compressed Air foam on all first line suppression apparatus, inclusion of auto extrication equipment to tractor drawn apparatus, and risk assessment training required for all personnel.

MCFRS continues to implement four person staffing on all front line suppression apparatus. Presently, budget constraints have only allowed four person staffing for approximately 2/3 of the engine companies and only one truck company.

**5A.1 Given the agency's standards of cover and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, pumping capacity, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of fire suppression emergency incidents.**

**Description:**

Personnel assigned to the initial arriving engine company will have the capability to implement an initial Rapid Intervention Crew

Fire suppression resources will be deployed so that the initial full alarm assignment will be capable of providing the following:

- Establishment of incident command outside of the structure of the hazard area
- Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply of a minimum of 400 gpm for 30 minutes with supply lines maintained by an operator
- Establishment of an effective water flow application rate of 300 gpm from two hand-lines by a minimum of two individuals to effectively and safely maintain the line
- Provision of one support person for each attack and backup line deployed to provide hydrant hook-up and to assist in laying of hose-lines, utility control, and forcible entry
- Provision of at least one victim search and rescue team consisting of a minimum of two individuals
- Provision of at least one team, consisting of a minimum of two individuals, to raise ground ladders and perform ventilation
- One person to function as an aerial operator and maintain primary control of the aerial device at all times
- Establishment of a Rapid Intervention Group consisting of at least two properly equipped and trained individuals

## **DISTRIBUTION**

For 90% of Fire responses within Metropolitan and Urban densities for low, moderate, high and special hazards, the first arriving unit will arrive within 9 minutes total response time.

For 90% of Fire responses within Suburban densities for low, moderate, high and special hazards, the first arriving unit shall arrive within 10.5 minutes total response time.

For 90% of Fire responses within Rural densities for low, moderate, high, and special hazards, the first arriving unit shall arrive within 15 minutes total response time.

## **CONCENTRATION**

For 90% of Fire responses within Metropolitan and Urban densities for low, moderate, high and special hazards, the effective response force will arrive within 12 minutes total response time.

For 90% of Fire responses within Suburban densities for low, moderate, high and special hazards, the effective response force shall arrive within 14.5 minutes total response time.

For 90% of Fire responses within Rural densities for low, moderate, high, and special hazards, the effective response force shall arrive within 15 minutes total response time.

## **Appraisal:**

MCFRS has shown some marketable improvement in meeting its baseline goals over the past three years. Increased EMS service demands have had an impact upon call distribution. The department in these extreme financial times has set as a priority to maintain four person staffing on engine companies. The department opened two new stations, providing two additional engines, one additional BLS unit, one tanker; relocation

of an aerial tower, BLS unit, and a Battalion Chief to better serve and cover the northern area of the county. Additionally forced by budget cuts the department had to reduce one truck company from the southeastern area of the county. But by relocating another truck still was able to maintain adequate response times in the area. In the last quarter of FY13, W734 (tanker 734) was placed in service to provide additional water supply coverage in areas north along the Rt.355 corridor and east towards FS31. If the FY14 budget is approved, this unit will be reassigned to FS13 with a staffing compliment to guarantee its deployment. Additionally within the FY14 budget, one additional EMS Duty Officer, increased staffing [from three to four] for at least three more engines including FS9 and FS13, and the openings of new fire stations 32 and R2 are proposed.

**Plan:**

The department continues to meet more with less. The department continues evaluating individual unit response numbers to determine need to additional units or best strategic deployment. The goal of 2500 responses per unit per year is being met by the department. Utilization of ALS capable engines had helped in providing ALS service in a timely fashion when a dedicated ALS transport unit is unavailable. Training of personnel has always been a high priority within the department. Development of situational awareness course and Fire Chiefs mandate of all personnel attending had made the department safer in it operations. Additionally, self survival training and flashover refresher for all personnel will complete this training for protection of personnel. Command officers continue to have annual mandates for continuing education hours, written testing and practical competencies evaluated. A concept for Officer Candidacy School has been developed to support the progression of both career and volunteer personnel. This program has been introduced into the FY14 budget and is awaiting approval.

**References:**

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Policy and Procedures 24-07II Safe Structural Firefighting Water Supply Study Fire Chiefs Directive Command Competencies

#### **5A.4 Current standard operating procedures or guidelines are in place to direct fire suppression activities.**

##### **Description:**

MCFRS has in place a number of policies that outline strategic doctrine in the all hazard world. The Department has issued the Safe Structural Firefighting Policy that dictates how companies and personnel will operate at structure fires when the intent is offensive interior fire attack. The department also has a policy for Mayday operations, Metro mass transit operations, and Gas leak emergencies. The department based on the safe structural firefighting policy assembles a work force that is sufficient to effectively mitigate building fire emergencies. The work force is 28 to 36 personnel initially dispatched for a structure fire. Upon notification of a confirmed working incident, the communications center will dispatch the rapid intervention dispatch (RID) to build out the rapid intervention group (RIG). The RID consists of 8 additional personnel.

##### **Appraisal:**

The department dispatches five engines, two trucks, one heavy rescue squad, one BLS unit and two Chief Officers. Additionally on high rise building incidents a third truck is sent and assigned ventilation control. Bases on the policy all apparatus have assigned dues and responsibilities. The first due Engine Company has the responsibility to relay the initial incident situation report (IISR). In the IISR they must include the establishment of water supply, assigning a stand by team, ensuring establishment of command, mode of operation and visual situation.

On the RID, the department dispatches a truck, heavy rescue squad, and an ALS unit to build out the RIG with an engine from the original assignment. This allows 12 personnel for a Mayday event.

**Plan:**

Presently the Safe Structural Firefighting policy is under review based on the present threat assessment. Revisions may be forthcoming in this policy to ensure continued effectiveness.

**References:**

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Policy and Procedures – 24-07II Safe Structural Firefighting Mayday Policy Metro Policy

**5C.4 The public education program targets specific risks and risk audiences as identified through incident, demographic, and program data analysis.**

**Description:**

A combination of NFPA Statistical Analysis, Maryland State Fire Marshall Office statistics, GIS, US Census data, and our local statistical analysis are utilized in an attempt to target specific risks and specific risk audiences.

**Appraisal:**

An ongoing evaluation of specific needs and/or programs has been conducted utilizing fire incident data reports. Each fire death has been discussed amongst staff in an attempt to identify cause and any root behavioral issue that may have contributed to the victims demise. As far as fire deaths, those of the age of 65 have continued to lead the way though MCFRS has seen a significant drop from just three years ago. One continuing issue has been the lack of complete and un-collated data from several sources within the department. Information relay can sometimes be a year or more.

As stated previously, the statistical analysis of the fire deaths over the last two years clearly indicates that senior citizens have been the majority of fire deaths with the majority root cause being improperly discarded smoking materials. The good news is both actual number and per capita deaths have been on the decline the last two years.

**Plan:**

MCFRS will renew efforts to improve upon timely statistical gathering and processing. The hope is to utilize GIS technology to assist in the appraisal of targeted program need and effectiveness in areas with a high percentage of at risk population and fire incidents.

**References:**

Fire Fatalities 1968 – 2010

## **CRITERION 5D-Fire Investigation Program**

*There is an adequate, effective and efficient program directed toward identification of the causes and origins of fire, explosions, and other emergency situations that endanger life or property.*

### **Description**

Montgomery County *Code*, Chapter 22, Section 22-9, authorizes the Fire Chief of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS) to investigate every fire, explosion, or other related calls for assistance. This authority is delegated via Section 22 to other fire officials within the County. Every fire officer within the County, therefore, has the authority to investigate, and is required to report, the origin, cause and circumstances of any fire, and any factors contributing to its spread (Sec 22-8).

In Montgomery County, all fires are investigated, regardless of the size, circumstance, or monetary value of the damage. When a fire officer on the scene of a fire or explosion is unable to make a determination as to the cause, specifically trained personnel from the Montgomery County Fire and Explosive Investigation (F&EI) Section are requested to conduct the investigation. Two investigators from the Section are routinely dispatched to assist fire suppression personnel assigned to an incident. If additional manpower is required, the on-duty supervisor for the Section has the authority to allocate these resources.

When a fire officer is uncertain as to the need for an F&EI Investigator, they can reference the “Do I Need A Fire Investigator?” decision tree for assistance. However, FEI Section personnel are automatically dispatched to the scene for multiple alarm fires, a fire with a report of people trapped, burned, or dead, and any fire reported to be suspicious in nature and/or with identified suspects.

The Montgomery County Fire and Explosive Investigation Section is the law enforcement branch within MCFRS. Investigators assigned to the Section are certified as Police Officers through the Maryland Correctional and Police Training Commission, (MCPTC), and are deputized as Special Assistant State Fire Marshals with all the authority granted under Public Safety Article, § 6-304, §6-305, §6-309, §11-104, and the Criminal Procedure Article § 2-102, § 2-202, § 2-208 and § 2-208.1 of the Maryland State Code. FEI Section personnel also serve as members of the MCFRS Bomb Squad, which is certified as a Bomb Squad by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

The Section responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Providing 24-hour response capabilities for all calls for service.
- Conducting systematic and thorough origin and cause investigations.
- Collecting and processing evidence when appropriate.
- Rendering expert opinions as to the cause of fires and explosions.
- Developing probable cause for arrest, if a crime has been committed.
- Arresting the perpetrators of these crimes.
- Developing the criminal case for successful prosecution, and
- Providing Bomb Squad functions and render safe procedures.

The Section is currently staffed by twelve investigators, including a Battalion Chief, two Captains, nine Lieutenants and one FEI Technician. The eight Lieutenants work a two-day/two-night/four-day off schedule to provide 24-hour coverage. Eleven investigators are certified as Bomb Technicians, and twelve are certified as Hazardous Material Technicians.

**5G.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for EMS incidents and to be compliant with applicable local, state/provincial and national standards and mandates.**

**Description:**

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Emergency Medical Service Operational Program (EMSOP) is governed by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). Title 10, Subtitle 09, Chapter 13 of COMAR outlines the requirements for Ambulance and Wheelchair Van Services. COMAR Title 30 regulates the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), which oversees all EMS programs in the State of Maryland.

Laws that govern emergency vehicle usage in the State of Maryland include: Annotated Code of Maryland, Transportation §11-118, §21-106, and §22-218. MCFRS must comply with these laws regarding the use and operation of emergency response vehicles.

The EMS vehicles MCFRS uses as basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) transport units meet all national, State, local, and industry standards. The current fleet of transport units meets or exceeds the specifications established by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Ambulance Specifications, KKK-A-1822.

The MCFRS Apparatus Division staff maintains more than 50 transport vehicles, including reserve units. First line vehicles are fully stocked, and maintain a Departmentally-mandated EMS inventory. These inventories list equipment and materials stocked on ALS units, BLS units, AFRAs, and all fire apparatus first responder apparatus, and the complete listings are accessible to all providers on MCFRS' EMS *Quicklinks* website.

EMS supplies are maintained by station staff who order through a central purchasing system. The budgeting for these supplies is regulated through the EMS Operations Section. Each station has a supply from which their EMS units may restock as necessary, and supplies can also be replenished at the receiving facility (hospital or nursing home), as long as the replacements are compatible with existing equipment.

### **Appraisal:**

In 2010, MCFRS opened its Central Maintenance Facility (CMF), whose staff is responsible for the inspection, maintenance, equipping, and repair of fire and rescue, and EMS vehicles. The CMF management and staff have reduced the length of time MCFRS units are out of service, expedited the procurement of new apparatus, and stocked and prepared for service all new apparatus. During these past few months, CMF staff has facilitated and expedited the acquisition, stocking, and preparation for service of 18 new EMS transport units.

Plan: Within the coming year, a large area of the CMF warehouse will be customized and furnished to store a supply of EMS supplies and equipment, with a temperature-controlled, secured compartment for drug storage. Establishing a centralized location for EMS equipment and supply storage will mean greater convenience for re-supply for all MCFRS apparatus and EMS transport units in the future.

### **References:**

[COMAR](#)

**5K.2** The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response to US&R related incidents and to be compliant with local, state/provincial, and national standards.

**Description:**

In 2000 FEMA supplied all 28 task forces with a complete cache of equipment that was deemed necessary by the logistics working group. The national logistics working group meets twice a year to update and maintain the cache list of necessary items, and the updates are purchased by the team with budgeted grant funds. The initial supply of equipment also included rolling stock vehicles to move the equipment which for MDTF-1 included 2 tractor trailers and 1 box truck. The team hired a warehouse manager within the last year to assist with the purchase and maintenance of the equipment.

**Appraisal:**

MDTF-1 maintained the current cache and updates the list with the needed items with the provided grant funds. The teams is currently at 97% of the current cache list as identified by the last ORE with the other 3% being large items that are in the procurement process and will be on hand within the calendar year.

**Plan:**

MCFRS will continue to maintain its current cache of equipment as identified by FEMA and anticipate the purchase of other related items through the procurement process.

.

**Reference:**

2012 Cache List

MD-TF1 Administrative Manual

2010 Operational Readiness Evaluation

**6E.2 Tools and equipment replacement is scheduled, budgeted, and implemented, and is adequate to meet the agency's needs.**

**Description:**

A funded and implemented tool and equipment replacement schedule is key to the success of this program. This is not fully in place for MCFRS

**Appraisal:**

According to the MCFRS Apparatus Management Plan the MCFRS Fleet Section has the responsibility for portable tools and equipment. In FY12 the MCFRS Fleet Section was delegated the responsibility for this function. There were various programs in place within the LFRDs prior to this change. For various reasons there were no consistent business practices among the stakeholders.

**Plan:**

The MCFRS Fleet Section is developing replacement schedules for our tools and equipment consistent with NFPA Guidelines; OEM requirements; technology changes and product availability; cost and budgetary limitations.

**References:**

MCFRS Apparatus Management Plan

**6D.1** *An apparatus maintenance program is established. Apparatus maintenance is conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and federal and/or state/provincial regulations. Attention is given to the safety, health, and security aspects of equipment operation and maintenance.*

**Description:**

The MCFRS consistent with the recommendation of the 2004 MCFRS Apparatus Management Plan has established a maintenance program designed to meet all the manufacturer's recommendations; NFPA Standards and State and Federal Guidelines.

This program includes the scheduling of vehicles; task list for technicians based on breed to ensure consistent maintenance and documentation to meet OEM needs; completion of annual or semi-annual COMAR/DOT Inspection based on age; and the same requirements outside vendors.

**Appraisal:**

The MCFRS Fleet Section uses Vehicle Task Lists to identify an expected level of service to MCFRS Fleet technicians and external vendors alike. Vehicles repaired in-house are randomly selected for review to assure compliance with MCFRS requirements. **All** vehicles sent to outside vendors are reviewed for compliance. (Vehicles must comply with COMAR/DOT guidelines)

**Plan:**

MCFRS will continue to review its practices against published requirements; OEM requirements; and fleet best practices.

**References:**

Vehicle Task Lists (Engines, Aerials, Rescue Squads & Ambulances)  
COMAR/DOT Inspection Guidelines

## **Category VI – Physical Resources**

### **Criterion 6D: Apparatus Maintenance**

The MCFRS currently conducts maintenance to meet or exceed the requirements of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR); the original equipment manufacturers maintenance (OEM) and warranty requirements; and the NFPA 1911 Standards. We currently maintain all of our heavy units at least twice a year and our EMS units at least three times per year. All of our command and administrative are on a schedule consistent with OEM requirements and the contract between Montgomery County Government and the contractor.

**7E.1 Rates of pay and compensation are published and available to all employees/members.**

**Description**

All employees have access to their respective pay scales in several ways. Personnel covered by a collective bargaining agreement are provided a copy of their respective contract after the completion of the negotiation process. Pay scales for personnel not represented by collective bargaining agreements are published on-line in the OHR library.

**Appraisal**

Montgomery County makes excellent use of all forms of media to provide up to date information regarding compensation.

**Plan**

No changes are planned at this time.

**Reference**

Collective Bargaining Agreements  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov), pay scales

## **Category VII – Human Resources**

### **Criterion 7E: Personnel Compensation**

#### **A system and practices for providing employee/member compensation are in place**

Montgomery County, Maryland has a long history of being a premier work location. Historically, the County has been in the top 10 counties in the United States for overall wealth. The County has provided excellent benefits and salaries are competitive with other jurisdictions in the surrounding area. Many employees are covered by collective bargaining agreements. MCFRS employees are covered by collective bargaining agreements with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Local 1664 and the Montgomery County Government Employees Organization (MCGEO). Each of the employee unions have negotiated strong agreements for employees in both salary and benefits. A small group of managers, Chief Officers and others are not covered by an employee representative organization.

**7A.2 The human resources program has adequate staffing to accomplish the human resources administrative functions.**

**Description**

The HR Section is responsible for the personnel program and labor relations program. It is staffed with an Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief, Manager III, Administrative Specialist III, Administrative Specialist II, and an Office Service Coordinator.

**Appraisal**

The current staffing level in the HR Section is challenged. Because of this, the section personnel can only respond to issues and matters that are time sensitive. The implementation of County-wide records management system and timekeeping program has brought additional workload to the HR staff, but no additional staff support. As a result, proactive work is sometimes not possible. Revision of outdated department policies and procedures is an example of proactive work that is not being addressed. In addition, when projects are undertaken to update department practices or policies, finalization of the change is very slow because of the lengthy amount of time it takes to complete non-urgent work.

**Plan**

Adjust staffing to accommodate the level of work that is required to be done. Staffing should be increased by three personnel: A policy analyst (Program Manager III), an editor/writer position (Administrative Specialist III), and hiring/benefits position (Administrative Specialist II). The policy analyst would be responsible for policy writing and analysis. The editor/writer position would support the policy analyst. The policy analyst would report to the Battalion Chief. The hiring/benefits position would report to the Administrative Specialist III in employee services. In addition to the aforementioned responsibilities, the policy analyst and staff would support Employee Services in the formulation of disciplinary actions, written labor relations projects, and personnel and labor research activities.

**Reference**

MCFRS Organizational Chart

**8A.1 The organization has a process in place to identify training needs, which identifies the tasks, activities, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to deal with anticipated emergency conditions.**

Description: In addition to the regular training needs caused by new or less experienced members, new training needs may also be precipitated by new research, new state or national standards, new equipment, and/or new apparatus. The Fire Chief and Training Chief routinely evaluate which subject areas need increased class or practical time to achieve targeted training. In addition to the formal courses listed below, training currently delivered by the Academy also includes continuing education for command officers, EMS providers, and instructors, officer training programs, single/multiple company drills, driver/operator programs, strategy & tactics, and defensive driving training.

Rescue: Site ops, vehicle machinery, trench, confined space, rope I and II, swift water.

Strategy and Tactics  
EMT-B  
EMT-I/P  
Aerial Apparatus Operator  
EMS officer I  
Instructor I and II  
Firefighter I and II  
EVOC  
EVOC IIA and B  
FO I and II  
Pump operator

Our facility also hosts various conferences including Arrive Alive, Fire House Magazine's Hands On Training program, Maryland Fire Chiefs Program and Leadership Montgomery.

Appraisal:

The MCFRS has a very aggressive training schedule that addresses the training needs of the department. These programs have provided quality didactic and hands-on training. Student evaluation coupled with instructor input has provided an effective self evaluation program.

Plan:

MCFRS Training Chief will continue to oversee all programs and to confer with the Program coordinators to evaluate their programs. A semi annual meeting will be held by the MCFRS

Training Chief to identify training needs within MCFRS and to identify the tasks, activities, knowledge, skills, and abilities required for emergency operations. This training program will enable MCFRS to stay on target with needed training for the department.

Course evaluations will be distributed to members participating in training activities for feedback on the facility, courses and instruction for all classes and programs held at the Training Academy. The evaluations will be reviewed by the appropriate program coordinator and then forwarded to the Training Chief. This will provide an avenue for the infusion of new ideas and improvements for the delivery and content of all courses and programs held at the Training Academy.

References:

[MCFRS Training and Certification Policy](#)

United States Department of Homeland Security (Exhibit 807)

[Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Systems](#)

[Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute](#)

Montgomery County Police Training Programs

MCFRS Recruit Training Program (Exhibit 802)

National Fire Academy

[MCFRS PCAP Promotion requirements](#)

MCFRS COPDI for Command Officers (Exhibit 801-801D)

## **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 9B.1**

*A system is in place to ensure communications with portable, mobile, and fixed communications systems in the field.*

### **Description**

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service operates with an 800 MHz radio system utilizing 20 conventional channels and over 300 talk groups. The MCFRS 800 MHz radio fleet map is organized into a system of Zones (applicable to a specific mutual aid jurisdiction or in-county agency) and Talk Groups (individual radio sub-sets found within a Zone). Zones are numbered (1-18) and Talk Groups are lettered (A-P).

Trunked radio systems are used whenever a relatively large number of radios need to share radio frequencies. They are used by local government as wide-area private radio networks, and are the radio equivalent of the public switched telephone system. Trunked radios offer much greater airtime efficiency than traditional systems. Compared with conventional single channel networks, a trunked system is more efficient, simpler to use, and less likely to be busy. Radio trunking systems feature computer technologies that dynamically allocate a common pool of frequencies between different users. The advantages of radio trunking when compared to conventional duplex radio repeater systems include:

- More efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum - e.g. Montgomery County is able to create 300+Talk Groups within 18 zones but only uses 22 traditional radio channels
- Wide-area coverage is possible
- Greater privacy is possible via computer aided encryption
- A higher grade of service
- Enhanced features such as private paging, scanning etc.
- Automatic selection of a clear channel

In order to ensure clarity and conciseness with regards to radio communications, the MCFRS mandates the use of a combination of a numeric (Zone) and alphabetical (Talk Groups) designations to denote “where,” in our radio system, a fire/rescue unit(s) is conducting operations. For example the main MCFRS dispatch Talk Group is known as 7Alpha.

Most MCFRS fire/rescue apparatus have been equipped with a complement of portable radios, and at least one mobile radio. Portable radios remain with their “assigned” apparatus; radios are issued to one vehicle and are cross-referenced to a specific unit’s stock number. MCFRS portable radios are tracked by the radio system alias database. This enables the ECC to identify with specificity a radio’s assigned fire/rescue unit, including riding position. This information is critical to both the PSCC and the IC, in the event a user experiences an emergency.

In general, when operating within Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service’s (MCFRS) Talk Group Zones (i.e., Zones 7, 71, 72), fire/rescue personnel must follow the specific direction of the ECC with regards to which talk group to switch for incident (event) operations.

A Public Safety Systems Modernization (PSSM) project is underway to update the radio system with new subscriber units and radio infrastructure. Over 6 ½ million dollars was spent on new mobile and portable radio subscriber units in FY 2011. The new radios were purchased to enable compliance with rebanding of the 800 MHz frequency band. The PSSM project includes planned expenditures of over 51 million dollars to modernize the 800 MHz radio system in FY12 through FY15.

### **Appraisal**

Currently each Fire and Rescue provider assigned to an apparatus is provided a portable radio for use during operations. These devices are assigned to the riding position of the apparatus and adequately support the MCFRS end user. Where areas have been identified that have poor reception, new technology has been introduced to overcome these deficiencies. Vehicular Repeater Systems have also been placed on all command units to help against poor reception. The PSSM project is in full operation and full

funding by the Montgomery County Government. In 2012 the MCFRS replaced all portable radio subscriber units with the latest technology by employing Motorola APX XE (Extreme) Firefighter Ruggedized radios for each firefighter on the apparatus.

### **Plan**

The Public Safety Systems Modernization Project will seek to modernize the entire communications system in Montgomery County. Currently the subscriber units (portable and mobile radio) have been upgraded. The ECC has been outfitted with new subscriber back up radios. If needed for back-up purposes, unit officer subscriber radios also now carry the legacy VHF system which is simulcast through the jurisdiction and can be used in lieu of the 800Mhz system. The ECC can also transmit and receive on this VHF system in lieu of the 800 MHZ system.

All facets of the PSSM project will modernize the technologies and the communications systems used by the firefighters in the field and the ECC. The ECC will remain fully operational based on current practices and routinely evaluates business practice and functionalities, in an effort to streamline call processing and event dispatch. The ultimate goal is reduction in overall response time, to calls for service.

### **Reference**

- Montgomery County. (2009), Communications Interoperability Plan
- Montgomery County. (2009). Public Safety Systems Modernization Plan.
- State of Maryland. (2008). Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan.

## **Criterion 10B: External Agency Agreements**

*The fire service agency has well-developed and functioning external agency agreements. The system is synergistic and is taking advantage of all operational and cost effective benefits that may be derived from external agency agreements.*

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) participates in written Mutual Aid Assistance Agreements with all five federal fire departments located in Montgomery County, which include the National Naval Medical Center, the National Institutes of Health, the Naval Surface Warfare Center, the National Institutes of Standards and Technologies, and the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. MCFRS also participates in a written National Capital Region (NCR) Mutual Aid Agreement through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), which encompasses the District of Columbia, surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia, self-governing municipalities within those counties, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

In addition to these written mutual aid agreements, MCFRS also participates in several MWCOG regional mutual aid plans including the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan and the Mutual Aid Operations Plan.

MCFRS does not have written mutual aid agreements with non-MWCOG members. Mutual aid with these counties, which include Howard County and Carroll County in Maryland, is conducted on an informal basis.

**10B.1** *External Agency agreements are current and support organizational objectives.*

**Description**

The Mutual Aid Assistance Agreements with the federal fire departments and the NCR Mutual Aid Agreement are current and support the overall organizational objectives of the MCFRS as stated in the MCFRS FY11 Strategic Plan. These agreements not only advance the broader understanding of regional public safety issues, but also help meet the public safety needs of the regional member jurisdictions and their residents.

**Appraisal**

Both set of agreements have been signed by Montgomery County's Chief Administrative Officer and adopted by the Montgomery County Council. The adoption of the MWCOG Mutual Aid Operations Plan (MAOP) in 2004 has allowed all jurisdictions in the National Capital Region to combine response resources when required or requested. Additionally, the Regional Emergency Coordination Plan has provided a structure through which MCFRS can collaborate on planning, communication, information sharing and coordination of activities before, during, and after a regional emergency.

**Plan**

MCFRS will continue to participate in the MWCOG planning process for regional emergency response. MCFRS will continue to maintain all Mutual Aid Assistance Agreements. MCFRS will seek out written mutual aid agreements with jurisdictional partners where none currently exist.

**Reference**

Regional Emergency Coordination Plan. (2002). MWCOG.

Mutual Aid Operations Plan. (2004). MWCOG

Approval of a Mutual Aid Agreement between Federal, State and Local Governments in the National Capital Region. (2006). Montgomery County Council

Approval of Mutual Aid Agreements between Montgomery County, Maryland and National Naval Medical Center; Montgomery County, Maryland and Walter Reed Army Medical Center; and Montgomery County, Maryland and National Institute of Standards and Technology. (2008). Montgomery County Council Mutual Aid Assistance Agreement between Montgomery County, Maryland and National Institutes of Health.