



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

DIRECTIVE

NUMBER: 95-10

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TO: All DFRS Personnel

FROM: Chief Jon C. Grover, Director
Department of Fire and Rescue Services

SUBJECT: Ambulance Operation

Power demands placed upon ambulance electrical systems have historically caused battery drain. Shutting down the engine often meant not being able to restart the unit. Improvements to the ambulances including the upgrade to 880 CCA batteries should allow for restart of the unit after shutting down. Additionally, all area hospitals have often commented that vehicle exhaust fumes reach irritating levels in the Emergency Departments. This is primarily due to ambulances continuing to run, often in "high idle", while crews are inside.

Therefore, in an effort to conserve fuel, reduce engine operating hours and to work more cooperatively with area Emergency Departments, the following procedures will be followed by all DFRS personnel:

- o Attach ambulances to in-station charging systems where available.
- o When starting the ambulance all Master switches must be off. Do not activate Master switches until the engine is running.
- o Upon arrival at emergency scenes, the "high idle" will be left in the activated mode. Turn off any emergency lights not required to ensure scene safety.

- o Following transfer of the patient to the Emergency Department, the driver will immediately return to the unit and shut off the engine. During cleaning and restock, two or three dome lights will not significantly drain the batteries. If more lighting and/or heat or air conditioning is needed during restock and cleaning at the hospital, the unit must be started and moved to a safe distance from the building entrance to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the structure.

The Apparatus Committee will be tracking unit performance through Apparatus Maintenance personnel. Adherence to these procedures should eliminate ambulance restarting problems, prevent exhaust fumes from entering hospitals and also reduce fuel consumption and engine operating hours.