




MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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TO: MCFRS Membership

FROM: Demetrios Vlassopoulos 
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SUBJECT: MCFRS Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This document is a first attempt to provide a quick resource to answer some of the most frequently asked MCFRS [Commission on Fire Accreditation International](#) (CFAI) accreditation questions (FAQs). The reality is there have not been too many FAQs up to this point, although, as MCFRS continues to institutionalize the accreditation process it is anticipated there will be. Questions about this process are highly encouraged and may be asked of me by emailing MCFRS.Accreditation@montgomerycountymd.gov or 240-777-2405. These FAQs may be updated in the future if there are questions that come in that have not been answered here so check Quicklinks every once in a while.

Q: What is a performance indicator and how many of them are there?

A performance indicator or PI is a measurable value or competency that helps determine how a business, or in this case, a Fire-Rescue agency, is performing. The CFAI accreditation model contains 252 PIs which reside under 45 Criteria and under 10 high-level Categories. Out of these 252 PIs, 86 are considered Core Competencies, which are pass/fail.

Q: Where can I see these Performance Indicators?

All of the CFAI accreditation Performance Indicators, Criterion, and Categories are listed [here](#) along with the MCFRS Category Managers delegated the responsibility to conduct our required self-assessment and write to these PIs. The end result of conducting this self-assessment is producing a self-assessment manual (SAM) describing (1) how MCFRS is performing to each of the PIs, (2) what our appraisal is regarding how we have performed, measured over time and using quantitative measures when possible, and (3) what is our plan moving forward to improve upon the PI's intent. Writing to each of these PIs will also require two to three exhibits of documentation.

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Q: Can I see the MCFRS 2013 Fire and Emergency Service Self Assessment Manual (FESSEM or simply SAM)?

The MCFRS SAM that was produced during the 2012-2013 accreditation effort was never put together as one complete electronic file. It does exist as a hard-copy and can be viewed at PSHQ by contacting the [Accreditation Manager](#). However, click [here](#) for some examples from within that SAM.

Q: What does Distribution mean in the context of the CFAI accreditation framework?

Distribution is the geographic location of all first-due resources for initial intervention. This is our first-due unit response time performance for incidents within their first-due station response area. For structure fire calls (fire full assignment) and single engine fire calls (Adaptive 1F vehicle, transformer, dumpster, etc.) we measure the performance of the first engine. For ALS calls we measure the performance of the first-due paramedic (AFRA, EMS Supervisor, Chase Unit/Car, Medic Unit, etc.). For all other types of incidents, we measure any unit from the appropriate station as the first unit performance.

Q: What does Concentration mean in the context of the CFAI accreditation framework?

Concentration is the spacing of multiple resources arranged so that an initial effective response force (ERF) can arrive on-scene within the time frames outlined in the on-scene performance expectations. It is the minimum amount of staffing and equipment that must reach a specific emergency location within a maximum prescribed travel time. Concentration performance times are measured when the last unit of a prescribed ERF package arrives. MCFRS has determined through its time-to-task analysis, community risk assessment, and other factors what its ERF is for all of its operational programs. Additional information on these determinations can be found beginning on PDF page 368 (document page 365) of the MCFRS 2013 [Standard of Cover manual](#). For a list of the 19 MCFRS programs where the ERF is measured and the required units and staffing for those programs see [Appendix G Table 4, Page 3 of the 2016-2022 Master Plan](#).

Q: I thought there were more than 19 MCFRS accreditation operational service delivery programs?

The aforementioned 19 within the ERF context are applicable to only our ERF measurements. MCFRS also measures first arriving engine performance to low-risk vehicle, trash, etc. fire incidents (A1F) and first arriving unit to other low risk incidents, such as, wires down, fuel leaking from vehicle, AFA etc. (A1N). Adaptive 1F and 1N incidents only measure the first engine and/or unit performance, not an ERF. With these two programs added there are now 21 programs MCFRS measures its operational performance.

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Q: So what does it mean measuring operational performance?

Total response time (TRT) performance and every part of the TRT continuum. The TRT continuum consists of 911 phone call to dispatch [(PtoD) i.e., ECC call processing], turnout time, and travel time all measured at the 90th percentile fractal; thus, TRT is PtoD + Turnout + Travel. Every one of the 21 MCFRS programs are measured for first unit performance and the 19 for ERF (last unit to arrive on-scene of the predetermined ERF package).

Q: What do baseline times versus benchmark times mean?

Baseline response times are what the agency is actually doing at the 90th percentile fractal (we do not measure our average response times because that does not provide a good depiction of service delivery performance). Benchmark response times are our future goals on where we want our response times to be. Please take a look at [Appendix G Table 3 of the 2016-2022 Master Plan](#) for our 2022 benchmark response time goals for first-arriving unit. You can then also look at our 2022 ERF BENCHMARK goals listed in [Table 4 of Appendix G](#). Here are our multi-year programs BASELINE analysis for [PtoD times](#), [Turnout times](#), [1st unit Travel times](#), and [1st unit TRT](#).

Q: What are density zones?

CFAI requires Fire-Rescue departments to measure their performance against several variables, which in some cases are up to the authority having jurisdiction. MCFRS measures performance within station response areas and box areas. However, CFAI requires agencies to measure their performance based on the population densities within those station response areas and box areas. A map displaying the four CFAI density zones can be seen in the [Master Plan Appendix G](#). MCFRS continues to utilize the CFAI 5th Edition Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover guidance which mandates rural zones as populations less than 1000 people/sq. mile, suburban zones 1,000-2000 people/sq. mile, urban zones with 2,000 to 3,000 people/sq. mile, and metropolitan zones where there are over 3,000 people/sq. mile.

Q: Is there a way to actually see what legacy and current Computer-aided Dispatch (CAD) system call types point to what MCFRS reporting mechanisms, including accreditation?

Sure, click [here](#).