



MOUNTAIN BROOK FIRE DEPARTMENT

POLICY NO. 105.02 VOLUME: 1

SUBJECT: Radio Communications and Dispatch Procedures

SIGNED: Chris J. Mullins DATE: 9/13/23 Revised
Chris J. Mullins, Fire Chief

PURPOSE: The purpose of this document is to provide a standardized format for the operation of Fire and Emergency Medical Communications in the City of Mountain Brook.

POLICY: All personnel shall abide by the procedure contained herein when communicating over the departmental radio system.

OBJECTIVE:

To specifically cover the following areas:

1. General procedural guidelines.
2. Dispatch of apparatus.
3. Routine and emergency communications with mobile radio units.
4. Command communications.

FCC INFORMATION:

Licensing and Ownership

1. The City of Mountain Brook is the licensee for all radio frequencies and radio equipment operated at the Police/Fire Communications Center.
2. Frequency assignments:
 - a. "FD Main" shall normally be used as primary dispatch frequency for all units.
 - b. FD Tac 1, FD Tac 2, and FD Mobile Repeater shall be used as secondary frequencies. They may be used to improve communication at a working incident, or as requested by field units and/or as directed by Shelby County 911 Communications Center.
 - c. Additional tactical channels may be assigned by Control for mutual aid event types.

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION STANDARD 1221:

The dispatch standards outlined in NFPA 1221 (see appendix Z) will be the standards set for the dispatch of fire and emergency medical services in the City of Mountain Brook.

1. Ninety-five percent of alarms received on emergency lines shall be answered within 15 seconds, and 99 percent of alarms shall be answered within 40 seconds.
2. Ninety percent of emergency alarm processing shall be completed within 64 seconds, and 95 percent of alarm processing shall be completed within 106 seconds.

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Transmission Procedure:

The Shelby County 911 Communications Center shall be referred to as “**Control**” by units over the radio.

PROCEDURES:

A. Incident Dispatch

1. Specific information

- a. Determine location first.
- b. Determine nature of call.
 1. Structure Fire/Alarm – If there are people inside, advise the caller to get everyone out of structure, if possible.
 2. Vehicle Fire – Type of vehicle, if inside or near structure, and the type of cargo (if applicable).
 3. Natural Gas Leak – Determine if the leak is inside structure or outside. Advise the caller not to hang up the phone and not to activate any electrical switches, but to have everyone leave the building (if the leak is inside the structure).
Notify gas dept.
 4. Vehicle Accident – Determine if the vehicle is on fire, number of injuries, if anyone is trapped.
 5. Emergency Medical Call – Use the Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols as trained.

NOTE: ALWAYS SEND A FIRE DEPARTMENT UNIT TO INVESTIGATE. NEVER MAKE ASSESSMENTS OVER THE PHONE. IF THE CALLER REPORTS THAT THE FIRE IS OUT, LET ALL APPARATUS CONTINUE UNTIL THE FIRST UNIT ON THE SCENE CAN ASSESS THE SITUATION. ADVISE THE CALLER THAT A COMPANY WILL BE RESPONDING TO MAKE A REPORT ON THE INCIDENT. RESIDENTIAL FIRE ALARMS MAY BE CANCELLED BY THE HOMEOWNER, BUT THEY MUST PROVIDE THE PASSWORD OR CODE. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE OBTAINED BY CONTROL. IN THE EVENT THERE IS CONFUSION ABOUT AN ADDRESS, A TRACE SHOULD BE INITIATED. WHEN TRACE RESULTS ARE RECEIVED, RESPOND A COMPANY TO THE TRACED ADDRESS TO INVESTIGATE. IF THE TRACE COMES BACK TO ANOTHER JURISDICTION, CONTACT THAT AGENCY AND HAVE THEM INVESTIGATE.

2. Documentation

- a. Time “marks” shall be made in the CAD time system when:
 1. The call is received.
 2. The call is dispatched.
 3. The first unit and other units designate responding.
 4. The first unit and other units arrive.
 5. Units go in-service.
 6. Rescue Unit reports enroute to hospital.

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7. Rescue Unit reports out at hospital.
 8. Rescue Unit reports in-service (complete)
 9. Command reports "fire under control."
 10. Utilities are reported on the scene.
 11. Other "marks" as the Incident Commander may request.
3. Determining the response
- a. Response of closest fire apparatus:
 1. The closest piece of fire apparatus shall be dispatched to an incident.

NOTE: IN-SERVICE UNITS CLOSER TO A DISPATCHED LOCATION WILL NOTIFY BATTALION ONE OF THEIR AVAILABILITY AND LOCATION.

4. Dispatching the incident (Each dispatch will be transmitted at least two times).
- a. Sound a short alert tone.
 - b. Announce company (ies), units, due to respond in the order they are due.
 - c. Announce location of incident (to include building name and/or cross street if applicable).
 - d. Announce type of incident (structure fire, vehicle fire, medical call, etc.).
 - e. Repeat b, c, and d, one more time after original.
 - f. Announce company (ies), units to respond.
 - g. Announce location of incident (to include building name and/or cross street if applicable).
 - h. Announce type of incident with additional information on hand.
 - i. Report units responding as they report they are responding.
 - j. If there is no enroute response after **90 seconds**, establish radio contact with the first due unit and/or contact the station via phone.

5. Classification of Alarms

- a. Regular Fire Alarms – (Two Engines, Truck, & Battalion One)
 1. Odor of smoke.
 2. Lockout with food on the stove.
 3. Flooded basement with fire and/or life hazard.
- b. Reported or confirmed Fires – (Two Engines, Truck, Battalion One, & Rescue [Automatic Aid] Vestavia FD - One Engine and Battalion One)
 1. Any fire within a structure, including chimney fires.
 2. Any fire adjacent to or threatening a structure.
 3. Building collapse.
 4. Anytime the Shift Commander feels that the call needs a full response.
- c. Single Company Alarms (One Engine or Truck)
 1. Vehicle fires. (Engine)

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2. Automobile accidents no injuries confirmed.
 3. Investigations
 4. Emergency service calls (wires down, etc.).
 5. Details (wash, water, etc.).
 6. Brush or grass fires (unless structure endangered then full response).
 7. Medical assists (Not EMS).
 8. Tree fire.
 9. Utility shut off.
 10. Elevator emergencies (unless fire is involved then it will be a regular alarm).
 11. Lockout with children inside.
- d. Emergency Medical Services
1. **Tier One:** Two Engine Companies, Rescue, & Battalion One

Cardiac Arrest	Stroke	Suicide
Violent Pt.	Multiple Pt's.	MVA with injuries
Severe Bleeding	Pt. not breathing	Severe difficulty breathing
Unknown medical	Chest Pain	Unresponsive
 2. **Tier Two:** One Engine Company & Rescue

Fall w/ minor injury	Labor/childbirth	Fractures (Extremities)
Cuts/abrasions	Check person (stable)	Chest Pain (stable)
General Illness		
 3. **Medical Alarm:** One Engine Company, Rescue, & Battalion One

Note: When dispatching units to a medical event that involves gunshots or stabbing (whether homicide or suicide), the police department will be dispatched as well and relevant information will be given to the units responding (the PD needs to secure the scene before entry is made by paramedics).

6. Dispatch/Radio Transmissions

- a. Single Company alarm example:

Tone out "Beep"

Fire Alarm: "Engine 2, #3611 East Street, dumpster fire; Engine 2, #3611 East Street, a dumpster fire."

RE-TRANSMIT:

Fire Alarm: "Engine 2, #3611 East Street, dumpster fire at the drill field."

- b. Regular Alarm Example:

Tone out "Beep"

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Fire Alarm: "Engine 1, Engine 2, Truck 1, Battalion 1, #56 Church Street, a fire alarm; Engine 1, Engine 2, Truck 1, Battalion 1, #56 Church Street, on a fire alarm."

RE-TRANSMIT:

Fire Alarm: "Engines 1, Engine 2, Truck 1, Battalion 1, #56 Church Street, on a fire alarm, this will be City Hall. Alarm indicates fire in the copy room."

UNIT RESPONSES: "Mountain Brook Engine One responding;" "Mountain Brook Engine Two responding;" "Mountain Brook Battalion 1 responding;" "Mountain Brook Truck One responding."

7. Reporting on the scene: The Incident Command Procedures shall be used on all dispatched calls. An on-scene report shall be given by the first arriving unit and shall consist of:
1. Unit number and address.
 2. Height of building in stories.
 3. Type of building (Single-family, Multi-family, Commercial, Educational, etc.).
 4. Conditions (nothing showing, light smoke showing, fire, and the location of such).
 5. Unit establishing Command <street name> /command
Example: "Engine One on the scene, 56 Church Street. Two story commercial, nothing showing. Engine One establishing Church Command. Standby for a 360."
 6. The first arriving unit selecting to pass command to closely responding unit will announce on-scene, state address, size-up, and "Passing Command."

NOTE: CONTROL WILL REPEAT THE ON SCENE REPORT AS STATED. OTHER UNITS ARRIVING WILL WAIT UNTIL AFTER CONTROL HAS REPEATED FIRST UNIT'S ON SCENE REPORT BEFORE TRANSMITTING THEIR ON SCENE STATUS. "ENGINE 3 ON SCENE."

8. Command Progression – Battalion One may assume command after arrival and obtaining relative information from the Incident Commander. The change of command should be announced via radio by the new Incident Commander.
- a. Example:
Battalion 1: "Battalion 1 is assuming Church Command."
NOTE: THE MESSAGE OF COMMAND ASSUMPTION SHALL BE RETRANSMITTED BY CONTROL.
Control: "Battalion 1 is assuming Church Command."
 - b. "Command" is the only individual who will communicate with Control.
9. Situation Report – As soon as possible, the Incident Commander shall make a report to Control updating the situation.
- a. Example: "Control from Church Command, no problem found at this location."

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Alarm reset.”

10. Emergency Message (May Day for firefighter down, lost or trapped) – anytime a unit is in distress and/or needs to communicate a life-threatening message they will use the Emergency Message process.

- a. Emergency messages are restricted to emergencies where life or personal injury are at stake, or critical situations requiring immediate assistance.
- b. Emergency messages will be given priority over all other phone or radio traffic and will be immediately acknowledged.

Example: “Church Command from Engine 2 – **EMERGENCY** repeat **EMERGENCY.**”

- c. Same priority will be given when a **MAYDAY** is declared or **RADIO ALERT** is activated by firefighters.

11. Use of Apparatus Air Horns

- a. Emergency/Immediate Evacuation: multiple short apparatus air horn blasts lasting (10-15 seconds).
- b. Open hydrant: **two (2) short** apparatus air horn blasts lasting (2-3 seconds).
- c. Close hydrant: **three (3) short** apparatus air horn blasts lasting (2-3 seconds).

12. Use of Alert Tones

- a. Alert tones are used to gain the attention of personnel or a station. Alert tones are only used during an incident or radio testing.
- b. One short alert tone (2-3 seconds) shall precede incident dispatches.
- c. Mayday message: Firefighter declaring a MAYDAY will activate their hand-held radio alert button after transmitting “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY.” **ALL TRANSMISSIONS ARE TO CEASE ON THAT FREQUENCY AND EVERYONE IS TO LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE.**

13. Calling for Additional Units – When requesting additional units from Control, standby for Control to acknowledge. Then give the message for assistance. Make the request specific.

Example:

Battalion 1: “Control from Battalion 1.”

Control: “Go ahead Battalion 1.”

Battalion 1: “Control, dispatch an additional engine company to my location.”

Control: “Battalion 1 requests an additional engine company to location.”

14. Walk-ins/Still Alarms: A station may receive a call by either landline or walk-in. In this case, the unit should respond to the incident and inform Control by radio.

Example:

Engine 3: “Control from Mountain Brook Engine 3, hold Engine 3 on a still alarm, CHEST PAIN. Start Rescue 2 to Station 3. Engine 3 is establishing Old Leeds

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Command.”

15. Mutual Aid/Disaster Assistance Calls – On mutual aid calls surrounding jurisdictions, that jurisdiction’s dispatcher will be asked as to the location, nature of call, and what unit type will be needed (i.e. Engine Company, Truck Company, Rescue). Control will contact Battalion 1 for a decision with respect to the deployment of the requested resources. All radio dispatches to responding units will include the fact that the call is mutual aid.
16. Placing Units In/Out of Service – Units going In/Out of service will transmit over the radio to notify the department of their status. Unit number and reason will be stated via radio and will be acknowledge by Control.

Example:

Engine 1 – “Control from Mountain Brook Engine 1 out of service, mechanical.”

Control - “Engine 1 out of service, mechanical.”

17. Paging of Personnel

- a. The paging of individuals for personal matters will not be done, except in cases of emergency.
- b. Any problems or complaints should be referred to the on-duty Shift Commander.

18. Automatic Aid will be dispatched on “Fire Main” simultaneously with Vestavia Hills Fire Department. Control will assign a responding channel at the end of the initial dispatch for all responding units.

Example:

Control: “Vestavia Engine 5, Engine 3, Quint 4, Battalion 1, Rescue 34, Mountain Brook Engine 2, Battalion One, reported house fire at 3607 Lexmieux Lane. All units respond on Vestavia Main.”

BASIC RULES FOR VOICE OPERATION & MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS:

- A. Make certain the channel is clear and organize your thoughts before transmitting.
- B. Keep all transmissions brief and to the point.
- C. Speak distinctly and pronounce words carefully.
- D. Depress the microphone switch fully and pause a moment before starting to talk. Talk at conversational level with mouth 2” from the microphone, DO NOT SHOUT.
- E. Use official titles, authorized units, and complete designations, (i.e. Lieutenant Holt, Rescue 2, Truck 1, etc.). Broadcasts of first names are not permitted. Cursing is not permitted.
- F. The uses of “10 Signals” are not permitted.
- G. Remain calm during all radio and telephone conversations. Avoid uncivil, angry, abusive, derogatory, or sarcastic remarks.
- H. The word “Received” will be used to signify acknowledgement, (i.e. That the message is understood and will be followed). The code signal “10-4” will not be used.

Example:

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Control: "Engine 3 from Control, we do not have a call-back number for this address."

Engine 3: "Engine 3 received."

- I. Mobile radio units will use complete identification designations for all transmissions made by the unit.

Example:

"Engine 2, Truck 1, etc."

- J. Individual Hand-held radios will be designated by apparatus and position to which the individual is assigned, for example: Engine 1 Officer, Engine 1 Driver, Engine 1 Nozzleman, and Engine 1 Plugman. Truck 1 will have the same designations: Truck 1 Officer, etc.
- K. Control shall comply with all orders issued by commanding officers of the fire department while operating on the fireground.
- L. Control will only accept orders from the Incident Commander. When orders or instructions are given to Control by personnel other than the IC, Control will inform that person of the IC and direct that traffic to the IC.
- M. Firefighters will broadcast "**Signal 25**" to notify Control that POLICE are IMMEDIATELY needed at their location. Signal 25 should only be used during situations that requesting Police might cause safety concerns on scene. Control should only respond "**Control received, Signal 25**" and should not ask why Police are requested.

STANDARD AUTHORIZED WORDS/PHRASES:

- A. Advise – Give this message to – or provide me with the necessary information.
- B. Brush Unit – Vehicle used for brush/wood fires.
- C. Command Post – The physical location (area/vehicle) of the fireground or incident commander.
- D. Cross Street – The street that intersects before the block of the incident.
- E. Engine – A mobile Engine usually carrying 500 gallons or more with 3 persons on apparatus.
- F. En Route - On the way to... (location).
- G. ETA – Abbreviation for estimated time of arrival.
- H. PX – A telephone; also to be used as a request to call by telephone.
- I. Out-of-Service – Not available for response.
- J. On the Air – Way to notify Control that a unit is available by radio.
- K. On the Scene – Indicates that a unit has arrived at its destination.
- L. In-Service – Available for response.
- M. In Quarters - Returning to their station
- N. Responding – A unit is on the way to a specific destination.
- O. Situation Status – Status report of incident.
- P. Situation Under Control – Signifies that the emergency still exists but conditions are under

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control.

- Q. Test Count – For test purposes, a 5 count will be made, 1 to 5, 5 to 1.
- R. Verify – Verify entire message and correct if necessary.
- S. Walkie Talkie – radio designation for hand-held radios.

RADIO TESTING:

- A. Standard testing of radios shall be conducted daily at 0700 hours.
- B. Alert tones are to be used.
- C. If an incident is in progress at 0700, the radio test will be suspended to the following day.
- D. If a radio fails the morning test, it shall be take out-of-service immediately.

UNIT DESIGNATIONS:

The following (in bold) are the unit designations that will be used by department personnel and Fire Alarm dispatchers.

Fire Chief – Chief 1	Engine 1	Rescue 1
Deputy Chief – Chief 2	Engine 2	Rescue 2
Fire Marshal – Fire Marshal	Engine 3	Rescue 3
Training/Safety Officer – Safety 1	Truck 1	
Executive Officer – Safety 2		
Shift Commander – Battalion 1		
Prime Mover – Prime Mover		
Engine Two Reserve – Reserve 2 (when activated)		
Engine Three Reserve – Reserve 3 (when activated)		
Reserve Shift Commander Veh. – Battalion 2 (when activated as second command vehicle)		
Reserve SUV Vehicles – Utility 1 (when activated as a utility vehicle to cut off water, etc.)		
All-Terrain Vehicle(s) – ATV1 (Station #1) & ATV2 (EMS Cart @ Drill Field),		

Note: When units take their first line piece of apparatus out-of-service and go in-service on a reserve unit, the unit designation will be the same as the first line apparatus. When reserve units are staffed under the department SWIFT plan as extra units in-service, the unit designation will be the reserve unit designation.

WORKING FIRE/MAJOR INCIDENT NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL:

Working Fire Defined: A fire that requires the laying of hose lines from a fire hydrant by one or more companies. A working fire will usually have substantial fire and/or smoke showing as confirmed by the

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first arriving company.

Major Incident Defined: A major incident is defined as any incident of significant proportion which impacts the community or department in such a way that would require notification of other agencies or senior department members. Examples would include: EMS scenes with mass casualties, explosion in a structure, a significant weather event, and any scene that the media would determine to be of significant interest.

Procedures-Working Fire: The incident commander shall formally announce to Control that a working fire is in progress and to initiate the working fire protocol. Example: "Control from Battalion 1, we have a working fire in progress, initiate the working fire protocol."

Control will immediately begin notifying the following resources in the order listed:

Alabama Power Company	(205) 326-8001
Spire	326-8320 or 1-800-292-4008
Fire Chief (Chief 1) Chris Mullins	Day, office: (205) 802-3837 Cell: (205) 438-2796 Home: (205) 329-3870
Emergency Operations (Chief 2) Stacey Cole	Day, office: (205) 802-3831 Cell: (205) 438-2569 Home: (205) 438-2569
Fire Marshal (Fire Marshal) Leland Rhudy	Day, office: (205) 802-3832 Cell: (205) 438-2778 Home: (205) 353-3303
Safety Officer (Safety 1) David Kennedy	Day, office: (205) 802-3833 Cell: (205) 438-2797 Home: (205) 602-5550
Executive Officer (Safety 2) Jonathan King	Day, office: (205) 802-3842 Cell: (205) 438-3006 Home: (205) 910-6646
Contact Oncoming Shift Commander (Battalion 2)	
Patrick Dean (A-Shift)	Cell: (256) 338-2931
Brent Cooper (B-Shift)	Cell: (205) 913-4522
John Entrekin (C-Shift)	Cell: (205) 296-0823

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Fire Marshal Designee (Investigator 1)

Adam Bomar

Cell: (205) 577-1002

Alex Jessen

Cell: (205) 365-5254

Kevin Wilson

Cell: (205) 937-6302

Control shall report to Command that the above task has been completed. Example: "<Street Name> Command from Control... The working fire notifications have been made."

Time On-the-Scene Report: Control shall report to the Incident Commander the elapsed time in 10 minute intervals beginning with the time that the first unit reported on-the-scene. This process will continue until such time as the fire is formally reported under control by the Incident Commander. Examples: "Overhill Command from Control, you are 10 minutes into your incident," "Overhill Command from Control, you are 20 minutes into your incident," etc.

Weather Report: Control shall give a weather report to the Incident Commander at the same time as giving the first 10 minute on-the-scene report. This report will only be required for the first 10 minute report. The report will include: temperature, humidity, wind speed, and wind direction.

Procedures-Major Incident: The Incident Commander shall formally request Control to notify senior staff personnel that there is a major incident in progress. Control will notify the above listed **Fire Department Personnel** and give a brief description of the incident and the incident location to each.

Control will report back to the Incident Commander that notifications have been made and that the senior staff personnel are en route to the scene.

