

Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

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Dispatch Policy

The Salt River Fire Department will respond to any EMERGENCY situation that threatens LIFE, SAFETY or PROPERTY. In cases when the Salt River Fire Department is not the appropriate agency or is not capable of delivering the needed assistance, or if the situation is not a true emergency, an attempt will be made to place the caller in contact with an appropriate provider. The Salt River Fire Department will dispatch the closest available unit(s) with the assigned capability to control the emergency. The judgment of both Alarm and emergency response personnel is an integral part of the decision making process, taking into consideration both information received, and the potential that exists.

Timely response and effective management of medical, rescue and fire control situations represent the most immediate priorities of the Salt River Fire Department. Upon receipt of adequate information (location and nature of the emergency) Alarm will send the appropriate assignment. Alarm will upgrade the response, as required, until command is established upon the arrival of the first unit.

Jurisdiction

Emergency incidents within the Salt River Community or within the jurisdictional limits of a participating agency of a Mutual Aid agreement will be dispatched without regard to jurisdiction. Units will also be dispatched to borderline locations, when Alarm personnel cannot make accurate determination of the jurisdiction.

Calls for assistance from public or quasi-public agencies outside the Salt River Community limits will be dispatched as mutual aid incidents.

Calls for assistance from citizens outside the Salt River Community will be transferred to the appropriate agency. If that agency requests mutual aid assistance, the appropriate assignment will be dispatched.

Call Routing

Determination of the nature of the problem may indicate that a caller does not have a true emergency and that Fire Department response is not necessary. The avoidance of unnecessary response is a basic part of the dispatch function. The call routing process must not delay response to valid emergency incidents, but should attempt to verify the nature of questionable calls. When a positive determination of need for emergency response cannot be made, *THE FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICY IS TO DISPATCH.*

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Incident Taker

The primary responsibility of the Dispatcher is to determine, without delay, the nature and location of the emergency, the source of the call (call back number), and to verify entry of the incident into the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system.

The Dispatcher determines the appropriate response based on the information gathered from the caller. This information is necessary to process the incident. Additional details may be sent to responding units, as they become available.

Event Types

The Dispatcher enters the appropriate Event Type, based on information derived from the caller. The Incident Taker determines the appropriate response based on the nature of the emergency, the location and the jurisdiction in which the incident is located. On some incidents, the on scene fire officer will select various types of capabilities, from different jurisdictions. This guarantees an appropriate response in the different cities that have varied capability requirements for similar incidents.

Unit Selection

The Event Type identifies the requirements needed on the assignment. Requirements can be identified by unit capability, such as Engine, Rescue, or Ladder, or by specific unit, such as Prevention 291 or Car 291. Requirements are also expressed as primary or secondary. A unit can fulfill only one primary requirement. A unit can fulfill more than one secondary requirement when necessary. (For example: EP291 is ALS and can provide extrication).

Incidents

Event Types can be broken down into several different types of incidents. They include: EMS, Fire, Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue and Special Duties. The following are the Event Types, Alarm Levels and Response Lists for the respective Incident types.

Event Types and Response Selection

Purpose:

To standardize responses for all incidents within the Community. Establish minimum resource response to the various requests for service. To minimize departmental liability from inadequate application of emergency response resources. Response Guides are in place to ensure that the desired initial response units are placed on a specific incident.

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Definitions:

Special Duty: Defined as non-emergency situations or public assistance request. These are requests for service, which includes vehicle lockouts, internal structural flooding, check odor, check hazard, pest removal, invalid assistance, welfare checks, police assistance, and bomb threats.

Code Three Special Duty: Defined, as situations that need emergency response because of the potential to become a life threatening or dangerous to the surrounding property. These requests for service requiring immediate attention such as; a child locked in a vehicle, wires down, or an immediate hazard to life and health, which is not readily identified.

Still: Defined as any request for fire/hazard situations that are non-structural in nature. These are requests for service which includes vehicle fires, brush/grass fires, pole fires, tree fires, dumpster fires, debris fires, field fires, and cotton module fires.

EMS: A request for service dealing with medical emergencies such as ill person, vehicle accidents, injury to person, child birth, cardiac arrest, and any other traumatic event requiring medical assistance. **A child locked in a vehicle would be an EMS response.**

First Alarm Medical: A request for service dealing with medical emergencies involving multiple patients or a dynamic circumstance. These incidents include vehicle accidents involving *three or more vehicles*, medical emergencies involving three or more patients, construction accidents involving trapped or pinned patients, trench rescue accidents, water rescues, and any other complex medical operation.

Residential Fire: A request for service involving a fire or hazardous condition inside a residential structure that requires immediate attention. These incidents include any type of fire inside or on the exterior of residential structure, fire events involving any type of appliance within a residential structure or mounted to a residential structure, a gas leak within or exterior to a structure, smoke within a structure, explosion within or exterior to a structure, a brush fire threatening a structure, and a vehicle fire within a carport-garage or impinging on a residential structure.

Grade One Residential: A request for service involving a fire alarm within a residential structure with no signs of fire. This includes water flow indications.

Commercial Fire: A request for service involving a fire or hazardous conditions that require immediate attention within or adjacent to a commercial structure. These incidents include any type

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of fire inside or on the exterior of a commercial structure, fire events involving any type of appliance within a commercial structure or mounted to a commercial structure, a gas leak within or exterior to a commercial structure, explosion within or exterior to a commercial structure, a brush fire threatening a commercial structure, a vehicle fire within a cover structure or adjacent to a commercial structure, and dumpster/trash compactor fires connected to or adjacent to a commercial structure. This classification includes any fire alarm that involves a nursing home or educational facility, which is in session.

Grade One Commercial: A request for service involving a fire alarm within a commercial structure. This includes water flow indications with no signs of fire. Within this classification are responses to educational institutions, which are **NOT** in session or a religious assembly, which is **NOT** being occupied at the time of alarm.

Mutual Aid Request: A request, initiated by a company Officer, for additional resources from neighboring communities. The closest mutual aid department should be notified of the request. These requests can include single resources (one engine, one tender/tanker, one ambulance), or multiple units (two engines and one ladder, or a residential/commercial response).

Chief Officer Notification: shall be made on the following incidents:

- Any working structure fire.
- Any fatality accident within the Community.
- Any hazardous materials response.
- Any request for mutual aid from other jurisdictions.
- Any special incident (i.e. confined space rescue, large brush fire, aircraft down, swift water rescue).

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Response List

<u>Event</u>	<u>Alarm Level</u>	<u>SRFD</u>	<u>Mutual Aid Units</u>
Special Duty		1 Engine OR 1 Attack	
Code Three Special Duty		1 Engine OR 1 Attack	
EMS (Medical)		1 Engine / 1 Rescue	
EMS (Trauma)		1 Engine / 1 Rescue	Rescues as needed
EMS (Trauma / Major 1-5 Patients) "First Alarm Medical"	1	2 Engines / 2 Rescues Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	Rescues as needed
EMS (Trauma / Major > 5 Patients) "Mass Casualty Incident"	2	2 Engine / 3 Rescues Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	Eng./Rescue as needed
Still (Brush)		1 Engine / 1 Brush Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01C</i>
Still (Car Fire)		1 Engine	
Still (Commercial Veh. Fire)		2 Engine / 1 Rescue Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	

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Structural (Residential) “Grade One Residential”		1 Engine	
Structural (Residential) “Residential Assignment”		2 Engine / 2 Rescues Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	As Needed
Structural (Residential) “First Alarm Residential”	1	<i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01A</i>
Structural (Residential) “Second Alarm Residential”	2	<i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01A</i>
Structural (Residential) “Third Alarm Residential”	3	<i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01A</i>
Structural (Commercial) “Grade One Commercial”		1 Engine Battalion Chief – <i>Notification</i>	
Structural (Commercial) “Commercial Assignment”		2 Engine / 2 Rescues Battalion Chief <i>Officer Notification</i>	Units as Needed
Structural (Commercial) “First Alarm Commercial”	1	<i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01A</i>
Structural (Commercial) “Second Alarm Commercial”	2	<i>Officer Notification</i>	<i>-See SOG 205.01A</i>

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Structural (Commercial)
"Third Alarm Commercial"

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Officer Notification

-See SOG 205.01A

Special Call

A Special call is a request for the dispatch of any combination of additional unit types, unit capabilities or specific units. The requestor must specify the desired quantity of unit types or capabilities or the specific units desired.

When formulating a recommendation for a special call, no consideration is given to the units already assigned to the incident. All response requirements for the special call request are satisfied by the recommendation of additional units.

Balance of Assignment

A balance of an assignment is a request for the dispatch of additional units necessary to upgrade the response type. Either the desired response type or a specific event type must be specified

Alarm

The Dispatcher is responsible for reviewing the units' selection based on additional information or circumstantial factors. The Dispatcher transmits the call to the assigned units, sending the information to the FIRE STATION ALERTING system.

The voice dispatch message is broadcast over FIRE CHANNEL 3 giving:

- Alarm Tone
- Units Assigned
- Type and/ or Nature of Incident
- Location
- Companies Assigned

DURING PERIODS OF HIGH ACTIVITY, THE DISPATCH MESSAGE MAY BE MODIFIED.

Self Dispatch

When appropriate, units may add themselves to an incident by advising alarm. Companies adding on to an assignment must advise the Dispatcher on the assigned Tactical Channel if they are substituting for another unit or responding in addition to the original assignment. The Dispatcher will cancel the original unit dispatched.

The Dispatcher will advise Command Officers of units responding in addition to or in place of the dispatched assignment.

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Initiating Incidents

Units initiating new incidents should request the desired assignment and give the nature and location to the Dispatcher.

Working Incident Notification

It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to ensure incident notifications are made. Page notifications will be made as the first means of notification. **The Incident Commander will request alarm to page the appropriate groups.**

Move-up Policy

When several Fire Department units are assigned to emergency operations and it appears their assignments will be prolonged, telephone contact should be established by the dispatch to aid in initiating move-up and mutual aid procedures. If multiple or major incidents are occurring, the following stations should be staffed by move up, off-duty SRFD personnel, or mutual aid:

Stations 291 should be staffed through these procedures. If Station staffing drops below this level, mutual aid should be considered if it appears no other units will soon become available. The Fire Dispatcher must initiate telephone contact, if necessary, and be ready to fill the appropriate stations upon command. If mutual aid is initiated and it appears their assistance will be required for longer than thirty minutes, callback of off-duty SRFD personnel should be initiated.

Moved-up companies retain their normal identity ("Engine 292 out of Station 291").

The need for move-up companies should be evaluated whenever:

- A working fire is declared.
- Two or more units are committed to an incident in an outlying area.
- Greater alarms are dispatched.
- Simultaneous incidents occur in one area of the Community.
- Coverage in an area is compromised.
- Two or more adjacent first due areas will be uncovered for more than 30 minutes.
- Move-ups will be Code 2 unless advised to respond Code 3 due to a critical gap in coverage.

Change of Status

All companies are in either AVAILABLE QUARTERS, AVAILABLE, UNAVAILABLE, or OUT OF SERVICE. The status refers to the company's availability to accept a dispatch. Units assigned to an incident are considered UNAVAILABLE until released.

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Units changing to an UNAVAILABLE or OUT OF SERVICE status should report to Alarm by radio or telephone the reason and the length of time they will be unavailable. When becoming available again, units are responsible to report this status change to Alarm.

It is important that company officers contact Alarm prior to putting their unit unavailable. Alarm will determine the need for any unit to stay in service.

Acknowledgement

All units responding to dispatches shall acknowledge Alarm by radio.

If Alarm does not receive an acknowledgment within one minute, the Dispatcher will request acknowledgment by radio on all channels.

Alarm will send a cover company if no reply is received after three attempts, while continuing attempts to contact the original company on all other radio channels.

If unable to contact, the company will be placed unavailable and the appropriate Battalion Chief notified of the circumstances.

Responding

All fire and EMS responses will be Code 3 unless otherwise indicated by Alarm or Command.

Units responding to calls “on” the freeways will proceed Code 2 while on the freeway. Warning lights will be utilized upon approach to the scene and when “Blocking the right of way”.

While responding, companies may communicate with one another if radio traffic permits.

Effective communications during this period can set the stage for effective action and improve the overall rescue and fire attack effort. Factors such as occupancy hazards, access, traffic conditions and response routes may be communicated.

Company officers should review tactical information map books and any pre-fire planning information carried on the vehicle for specific tactical information.

Subsequent arriving units should monitor radio traffic to be fully informed of the situation based on reports of the first arriving units.

Additional Information / Subsequent Calls

Alarm will relay any additional information gained from subsequent calls as soon as possible.

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Critical information may be voiced to responding/on scene units by Alarm.

Companies needing specific additional information shall request it from Alarm.

On-scene Reports

Units arriving at the scene of incidents should report "ON SCENE".

When more than one unit is responding, the first arriving unit should report, "(Unit ID) on the scene" on the assigned Tactical Channel.

Size-up Report

The first unit arriving at the scene of a Residential or Commercial fire will give a brief size-up report describing the situation.

For structure fires, the report should include:

- Size (large, medium, small)
- Structure type
- Height (assumed one story unless otherwise reported)
- Occupancy
- Nothing showing (indicates checking)
- Smoke showing (amount and location)
- Working fire
- Fully involved
- Assuming Command

A size-up report is also required for brush fires and any other significant incidents.

The Dispatcher should repeat the report (paraphrased)

Command

Once command has been established, all routing communication between Alarm and an incident will be directed through Command.

Progress Reports

During active firefighting operations, Command will provide Alarm with regular progress reports or whenever significant tactical plans are changed or unusual situations are encountered.

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The first progress report should be given after initial action has been implemented and should include the correct address and an improved description of the building and fire conditions if the arrival report was incomplete. The first report should include the declaration of a working fire.

This assists Deployment in making move-up decisions.

Alarm will repeat the significant facts from all progress reports for the information of monitoring units.

Working Fire

The term "Working Fire" indicates a situation that will require the commitment of all responding companies. This report advises Alarm that the companies will be engaged in tactical activities and will be held at the scene for an extended period of time.

When notified of a **Working Fire**, Alarm will dispatch a working fire response, which includes:

1. Dispatch a Fire Investigator.
2. Dispatch PD for traffic and crowd control.
3. Dispatch appropriate gas and electric companies.
4. Start the elapsed time notifications.

Dispatch will monitor radio traffic on all incidents to anticipate the needs of Command.

Incident Status & Benchmarks

The following are different incident status changes that need to be indicated; Working Fire, Working HazMat, or Major Medical.

For Working Fire and Working HazMat incidents, this change will prompt ELAPSED TIME NOTIFICATIONS. The system will generate an elapsed time notification every 5 minutes until the incident is placed Under Control.

The Dispatcher will verbally pass this information to the Incident Commander until the situation is declared under control or Command requests to discontinue notifications.

The following are the definitions of the Incident Benchmarks:

All Clear- Can be used on a fire or medical incident. On fire calls an All Clear indicates the fire building and all exposures have been searched and all civilians evacuated. In the case of a building that is well involved in fire, the All Clear may be delayed and not come until the fire is out.

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For medical calls, it indicates the patient has been extricated. It is used most commonly when patients have been trapped in a vehicle in a 962 or during a water or mountain rescue when the patient has been removed from the endangered area.

Primary All Clear--A primary search has been completed.

Under Control--The fire has been contained, and will not extend. It does not mean the fire is out. It may also be used during HazMat calls, indicating a leak has been secured.

Stopped-- Salvage has been completed and there should be no more damage to the building involved.

Report (PAR)--All personnel assigned to a particular company, work area or sector have been accounted for. It is used to confirm there are no missing fire personnel on the incident site.

Command Terminated--There is no longer a single person in charge of the incident. Communications can be held with anyone still on the scene.

Secondary All Clear--A more comprehensive search of the building has been completed.

Returning Companies

Only Command can release companies from an incident. Command will indicate the units to "HOLD" at the scene and release the remainder of the assignment. Alarm will retransmit this report from Command and the balance of the assignment will automatically return to service.

Committed companies returning back to service will change status to Available when ready.

Branches / Groups / Divisions

Branch / Group / Division officers should use face-to-face communications with assigned companies as much as possible, but should keep Command informed of progress via radio on any problems encountered and significant progress.

Staff

Staff members with fireground responsibilities will respond to greater alarms for assistance with various sector functions.

Staff members will report in person to the Command Post and will automatically assume sector duties in their area of responsibility unless ordered otherwise.

Communications from staff personnel should be with Command as much as possible; however, there will be situations that require direct communications with Sector Officers.

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Staff communications should be face to face as much as possible.

ORDER MODEL

Radio communications will be regulated by the following order model guidelines.

1. Sender will call "Alarm" and give their unit ID (When contacting Alarm).
2. Sender will give unit ID and call the receiver by their unit ID (Car to Car).
3. Receiver will give their ID to indicate they are ready to receive.
4. Sender will then extend message, order, etc.
5. Receiver will give ID and acknowledge receipt of message. A brief restatement is the best acknowledgment. Critical information should always be restated.
6. Dispatch will acknowledge all communications directed to it by a brief restatement of the message, with particular attention given to repeating on the scene, size-up and progress reports, recall reports, requests for additional resource and all Incident Status changes and milestones.

May-Day

"May-Day" is a term to be used only in the event of a lost or trapped firefighter. (See "May-Day" Communications for further details.) A well-defined communications structure is essential in any rescue operation. Dispatch will play a crucial role in ensuring the effective rescue of firefighters.

Emergency Traffic

The term "**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**" will be utilized by the Incident Commander (IC) and/or the scene Safety Officer when any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive the highest communications priority from Dispatch, Command and all operating units.

EXAMPLE: "Alma School Command to Alarm copy **Emergency Traffic**." Alarm will immediately activate a pre-designated tone (*Lasting 5-10 seconds*). The unit will transmit their message. Alarm will repeat message one time.

If Alarm does not acknowledge (special tone not activated), the unit will then establish contact with Command and transmit the emergency message. Command will then re-initiate emergency traffic sequence with Alarm.

Unit Designation

For radio communications, the following designations will be recognized as standard:

Dispatch & Deployment	Alarm
Officer of any unit	"Captain" Unit ID
Engineer of any Pumper	"Engine" Unit ID
Engineer of any Ladder	"Truck" Unit ID

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Battalion Chiefs

Battalion

Radio Code

"Plain language" radio messages should be used in preference to numerical codes to facilitate understanding. There is no official Mesa Fire Department radio code. Plain language supports effective communications throughout the automatic aid system.

The following code messages (from the Police radio code) may be used in sensitive situations, when a plain language message could cause a problem at the scene:

901-H Dead body

961 Vehicle accident (MVA), no injuries

962 Vehicle accident (MVA), with injuries

963 Vehicle accident (MVA), with fatality

EXAMPLE: "EP291 to Alarm copy EMS, EP291 has rolled up on a 962"

RADIO PROCEDURE

Short-specific

Before transmitting, know what you are going to say. Choose precise terms to communicate the desired message as clearly and briefly as possible without wasting airtime.

Task Oriented/Company Oriented

Command's orders to operating companies should indicate a specific task. They should be of a magnitude reasonably performed by a single company alone or in concert with other companies.

Indicate Objective

In addition to being task and company oriented, assignments should indicate an objective to the action. The company or sector should know exactly where to go, to whom to report, what is the task and what is the objective of the task. Orders should tell what to do--not how to do it (unless Command wants something specific).

Clear Tone/Self-Control/Effective Rate

Speak clearly at a practiced rate . . . not too fast . . . not too slow. Control your emotions and excitement deliberately. If you do not consciously control your voice, it will become garbled under stress.

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Well Timed/Spaced

- Prioritize your messages. Do not use up valuable airtime with unimportant messages and insignificant details. Let critical messages go first. Maintain an awareness of the overall situation and your role in it.
- Do not interrupt conversations unless you have Emergency Traffic. Listen before transmitting and wait until a message transaction has been completed.
- Pause between consecutive messages. This will make it clear when one message has been completed and another started. It will give other units a chance to get on the air with important messages.