

Orchard Farm Fire Protection District Standard Operating Procedure

Division: 200 Emergency Operations
Section: 202 Fire & Rescue
Subject: 202.19 Railroad Emergencies



Supersedes: N/A

Approved By: 

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Date Last Reviewed: N/A

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PURPOSE:

To define the District's response to railroad emergencies

RESPONSIBILITY:

All District Personnel

PROCEDURES:

Upon arrival, the first arriving apparatus shall give an initial size-up. Some issues to report on include:

1. Are there any survivors (passenger or freight)?
2. On or off the tracks (Upright or not)?
3. Is the train on fire?
4. Any hazardous leaks?
5. Exposures?

A full size-up should be performed and any additional requests for assistance should be made. An operational perimeter should be set-up as well as a command post. The Incident Command System shall be utilized. First arriving apparatus or officer will assume command of the scene upon arrival at the incident site.

Have dispatch notify the railroad of the exact location and nature of the incident. Coordinate with the train conductor, engineer and/or any available railroad personnel at the scene. Request that all trains be stopped or diverted and a railroad representative respond. Request Police assistance as may be needed to handle the emergency. Consider placing lighted red emergency flares on the tracks (in the center, between the rails) $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in each direction of the incident. This will notify on-coming trains to stop. Command shall designate a person with a radio to stand by as a flagman with the flares until you are notified that on-coming trains have been stopped or diverted. Obtain a copy of the shipping papers from the conductor or engineer to determine the nature of cargo in the involved railcars. **Note: All intersections with crossing arms have a large control box in the vicinity of the junction. Obtain Critical Call Center number and 4-digit DOT written on the control box. Notify Call Center A.S.A.P.**

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Safety

Responding personnel shall wear full protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus. Some situations involving cargo fires (when the cargo is a hazardous material) may dictate evacuation of the immediate and/or surrounding area.

Engine Fires

Coordinate with the conductor and/or engineer for shut-offs or other expertise. Use CO₂ on electrical fires. Diesel Engines utilize considerable quantities of diesel fuel on board. Handle these fires as you would a combustible liquids fire. Consider available water supply.

Tank Car Fires and Leaks

Identify the product, if possible. Be guided by the nature of the product. If technical assistance is needed consult the DOT hazardous material guideline book. Contact CHEMTREC, St. Charles County Haz-Mat Team when hazardous materials are involved. A defensive mode rather than an offensive mode may be called for and evacuations may be necessary. Consider the use of master streams in place of hand lines and availability of water supply.

Passenger Train Considerations:

When responding to an incident that involves a passenger train, it is important that the incident command system be utilized from the start of the operation – even through the assessment and analysis of the dispatch information as the call is received. It is important to determine the exact location of the crash as the derailment may have blocked crossing and roads that provide access to the scene. The Incident Commander may be able to get information as to whether the train is occupied and an estimate of the potential number of victims from the 911 dispatcher. Unfortunately in many instances the exact number of passengers is known only to the conductor of the train who verifies number of people aboard by collecting the tickets once the passengers have boarded.

Direction and Control

Direction and control of the fire ground operations is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. With a situation of this magnitude, the IC may consider establishing a unified command with key response agencies that are working at the scene. This may include mutual aid districts, SCCAD, law enforcement, and representatives from the railroad. The IC must be sure that the engine and the rail cars have been rendered safe to approach. The diesel engine of the locomotive must be shut down (either by the train crew or by activating the fuel-shut off switch on the side of each locomotive) and power to the cars must be disabled. Consider each car to have power until the absence of power

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is verified either by the IC or the Safety Officer. The IC should consider establishing a division on each side of the train if appropriate and if access can be gained on each side of the train. This will allow responders to work independently without having to make their way through the train cars. If a fire is involved the IC may designate a fire group to handle the extinguishment and work in cooperation with the rescue divisions. The IC should also consider assigning personnel to the following positions to assist in the management of the resources at the response:

1. A public information officer to handle media requests and manage the on-scene media
2. A Liaison Officer to work with the railroad
3. A Safety Officer
4. A Logistics Section Chief to manage resource requests
5. A Planning Section Chief to work on incident action plans for the upcoming operational periods

The IC should consider the need for an incident command post and may request the St. Louis Metro Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. This team may be used for command, mitigation and rehabilitation as needed. Train wrecks may be very complicated responses that take several hours if not days to mitigate.