

SOG# 501-12	Standard Operating Guideline			
	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.</h1>		Approved By	
			Steven W. Parrish, Fire Chief	
	Communications		Effective Date	Revised Date
		November 5, 1991	August 1, 2021	

Purpose:

This document will establish guidelines for portable, mobile, and fixed communications regarding emergency and non-emergency incidents. The following covers radio use, repair failures, and daily testing procedures. This policy directs the emergency communications and supporting elements employed by Cumberland County Fire Station 5, Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.

DEFINITIONS

General – The definitions contained in this Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) shall apply to the terms used in this Standard Operating Guideline.

Approved – Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) – An organization responsible for adopting or approving and enforcing the requirements and procedures of a standard.

Alarm – A signal or message from a person or device indicating the existence of an emergency or other situation that requires action by an emergency response agency.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) – A combination of hardware and software that provides data entry, makes resource recommendations, and notifies and tracks those resources before, during and after alarms, preserving records of those alarms and status changes for later analysis.

Communication Center – A building or portion of a building that is specifically configured for the primary purpose of providing emergency communication services or public safety answering point (PSAP) services to one or more public safety agencies.


Emergency – A condition that is endangering or is believed to be endangering life or property; an event that requires the urgent response of an emergency response agency.

Emergency Alarm Processing/Dispatching – A process by which an alarm answered at the communication center creates a call for service and is transmitted to emergency response facilities (ERF's) or to emergency response units (ERU's) in the field.

Emergency Response Agency (ERA) – Agencies providing emergency **fire, medical, rescue,** law enforcement, communications, and related support services.

Emergency Response Facility (ERF) – A structure or facility that houses emergency response agencies, equipment or personnel for response alarms.

Emergency Response Unit (ERU) – Personnel who respond to fire, medical, rescue and other emergency situations for the preservation of life and property.

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Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) – A facility in which 9-1-1 calls are answered.

Shall - Indicates a mandatory requirement.

Should – Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) – Written documents that help establish or prescribe specific operational or administrative methods that are to be followed routinely or how members are expected to carry out specific duties outlined in general terms.

Tele-Communicators – An individual whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, or disseminate information of a public safety nature via telecommunication devices. Also known or referred to in this standard as Dispatchers.

Working Fire – is a fire in a structure requiring the use of at least one hose line and holding all personnel at the initial alarm assignment. All personnel from the first alarm will be assigned and working.

Pre-Alert

Upon verifying the address and determining the general nature of the Incident, the Dispatcher will initiate a pre-alert over the Cumberland County Fire Departments (CCFD) Dispatch Channel 2-A and VHF Fire Channel 1. The pre-alert will consist of the single alert tone followed by announcing recommended station, nature code, and address of incident. This transmission shall be broadcasted one (1) time, and will precede the actual dispatch of the call.

Pre-Alert Examples:

ALERT TONE --- “Station 5 – 69 Structure Fire, 3200 Natal St”

Unit Selection

CAD automatically recommends the correct unit(s) based on availability, response plans, response categories, unit types, nature codes, run order, and AVL once incident location is geo-verified.

The “owning department” shall be dispatched to all fires and fire alarms within the owning stations jurisdiction.

The owning department is the department whose jurisdiction includes the call location.

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Fire Departments depending on available man-power will list units / apparatuses **available in CAD** for immediate dispatch and identify all remaining units / apparatuses as **STAND-BY unless the unit / apparatus is out of service**. Stand-By units can immediately be upgraded to available by checking the unit en-route to a call, thus immediately changing the status code in CAD from Stand-By to available or by simply call dispatch and asking them to show the particular unit / apparatus available.

Dispatch Sequence

Pre-Alert

Activate Station Pagers

Announce Unit(s)

Announce Nature Code response determinant code followed by the descriptive nature code

Give Address (**repeated twice**)

Advise Cross street(s) and or **Housing Area / Development Name**

Assign Tactical Channel (assigned by dispatcher)


Once all units are en-route, the dispatcher shall repeat the tactical channel and give any additional information related to the incident on CCFD Channel 3-A Fire Ground.

Dispatch Acknowledgement

Upon receipt of dispatch information all CCFD units will acknowledge by **solely** depressing the appropriate key on the apparatus Mobile Computer Terminal (MCT) or **Tablet**.

Only the primary responding unit shall provide verbal acknowledgement via radio, indicating unit number and repeating dispatched address.

In a multi-unit response, all unit responding other than the primary unit will check en-route by only depressing the en-route button on the apparatus MCT or Tablet. Communication shall be by radio in the event that MCT's are down or not present in the apparatus. It is recommended that Company Officers use a portable radio to monitor the

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assigned operations (OPS) channel. Mobile radios should remain on Channel 3-A / Fire Ground. The OPS channel assigned should be utilized by all responding units for unit-to-unit radio traffic.

Upon arrival on scene the first arriving unit will report their arrival on scene by depressing the Arrive button on the MCT or Tablet and verbally announcing their arrival on CFD Channel 3-A / Fire Ground, and relaying all pertinent information consistent with the ICS system. The Communications Center will no longer repeat the first arriving unit's scene size-up. After providing the arrival information the unit will then move to the assigned OPS channel. Upon arrival of a multi-unit response all other units other than the first arriving unit, shall check on scene by MCT, and inform the Incident Commander of their arrival on the assigned OPS channel. While on scene, the Incident Commander shall communicate with the Communications Center on CFD 3-A / Fire Ground. CFD 3-A / Fire Ground has been designated as an information channel and shall be continuously monitored by the Communications Center. All benchmarks' notifications and requests for assistance shall be communicated on this channel.

Anytime other responding units are canceled while on scene or still en-route, it shall be the Incident Commander responsibility to cancel units on the OPS channel. The Communications Center will no longer repeat this information. Units canceled shall enter the appropriate incident disposition code in the MCT or Tablet (108).

No Response to Dispatch


Once a department has been dispatched, if there is no response from the department after 2 minutes from the original dispatch time, the fire dispatcher will use CAD recommendations to send the next available department. The fire dispatcher will simultaneously dispatch the call again to the second department and first dispatched department, as a second dispatch.

Working Fire

The working fire alarm ensures incident commanders have additional resources sent to the scene of a working fire that requires **less** than a second alarm. This alarm only applies to residential and commercial structure fires.

The intent is easing the burden on the incident commander and ensuring adequate manpower is on scene to effectively conduct fire ground operations.

The working fire alarm fills the gap between the first and second alarm assignments, and provides the incident commander two additional engines from uninvolved and unassigned stations on the first alarm, and the utility company providing electricity and gas if this information is on record at the communications center.

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Procedure for Requesting/Receiving a Working Fire Alarm

The incident commander triggers the working fire alarm by declaring his/her incident as a “working fire”. Incident’s commanders must state the term “working fire” to receive the additional resources. Once transmitted, communications will dispatch the additional resources.

Terms such as “smoke showing” or “heavy fire showing” do not constitute a working fire alarm.

The term “working fire” on any other incident type (e.g., brush or woods fires) will not receive the additional resources. Should incident commanders not require additional resources, simply do not refer to the incident as a “working fire”.

Because not every working fire requires the on-call air support unit, the response of an on-call air Support unit when a working fir is declared will not be automatic. The Incident Commander must specifically request the on-call air support unit if needed.

Unit/Apparatus Re-Direct/Divert or Diverting after Dispatch

Under certain circumstances, it may become necessary for a unit to divert or redirect from an automatic/mutual aid response to answer a call within their fire district. This would apply when man-power levels of the responding automatic/mutual aid station are depleted and/or service delivery would be affected by a delay in response. Any time a unit must divert or redirect from their response, the unit shall immediately notify the communications center, and advise them of their diversion and request the next available/closest unit to be dispatched.

Unit Arrival on Scene of Incident

The primary units should strive to arrive on scene within 14 minutes of dispatch. If a unit has not acknowledged that they are on scene within nine (9) minutes after leaving the Station, the dispatcher shall contact the unit by radio and verify status.

Status Checks

CAD is programmed with a timer in place that is set to activate if specific time limits are exceeded. To support efficient and safe operations, this timer (watchdog timer) is set to prompt the dispatcher to check unit/situation status during the following situations:

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)

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Most emergency incidents are mitigated within twenty (20) minutes of dispatch. If a unit's status in the CAD does not change within twenty (20) minutes, the dispatcher **shall** contact the Incident Commander and ask for a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). **The Incident Commander shall report the PAR to the dispatcher to include the total number of personnel operating on the scene.** This shall continue every twenty (20) minutes until the scene is stabilized and personnel are no longer exposed to Immediate Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres.

Example: "All personnel operating on the scene are accounted for, total of 15".

Clearing a Call

At the completion of an incident, the primary unit will **enter the appropriate Disposition Code** in the **MCT or Tablet and terminate command via radio**. To close the call in CAD, the code must be transmitted to Communications by radio or entered by MCT. These codes are actual NFIRS Codes, and will populate directly to the Incident Report generated in *Firehouse RMS*. All other units will clear with the code 108, **via MCT or Tablet**. This applies to non-primary units cancelled en-route as well.

Radio Talk Group Designations Effective with NEW RADIOS

CFD Emergency	Zones A – E	Channels 1 and 16	
CFD Dispatch	Zones A – E	Channel 2	
CFD Ground	Zones A – E	Channel 3	
OPS and TAC Channels	Zones A – E	*	
MDVR	Zone D	Channel 14	
LZ East	Zone D	Channel 15	
MDVR	Zone E	Channel 12	
LZ East	Zone E	Channel 13	
LZ Central	Zone E	Channel 14	

* Each county department will have its own designated primary operations talk-group (OPS) along with a simplex channel Talk Around Channel (TAC or line of sight Channel). Zone 1 Channels 4 and 5 will be Station exclusive, thereafter, OPS and TAC channels will be listed in sequential order. This will eliminate the need request for OPS channel

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assignment. Request for an OPS channel would only be needed if the primary OPS channel is already in use by the department and a subsequent emergency call is received.

Examples Operational / Tactical Channels Radio Templet –

The radio templet for Station 5 – Zone A Channel 4 is designated as OPS 5, Zone A Channel 5 is designated as TAC 5.

The radio templet for Station 13 – Zone A Channel 4 is designated as OPS 13, Zone A Channel 5 is designated as TAC 13.

Other Radio Talk Group Designations

Zone 6	Cumberland County EMS
Zone 7	Fayetteville Fire
Zone 8	Fayetteville Fire
Zone 9 **	Hoke County Fire
Zone 10 **	Robeson County Fire
Zone 11 **	Bladen County Fire
Zone 12 **	Sampson County Fire
Zone 13 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 14 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 15 **	Harnett County Fire
Zone 16 **	Moore County Fire
Zone 17 **	Moore County Fire
Zone 18	Law Enforcement
Zone 19	NC Highway Patrol
Zones 20 - 25	Emergency Management
Zones 26 – 28	Domestic Preparedness Zone 1-3
Zone 29	Air Operations
Zone 30 - 34	Cumberland County Fire Durham System
Zones 35	National Public Safety
Zones 36	Current Cumberland County Fire (lower case)

** Zones 9 – 17 may be arranged/program station exclusive.

Severe Weather / Hot Weather Mode

Severe Weather Announcements

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The fire dispatcher is responsible for announcing weather related warnings and severe conditions over VHF (1), CCFDDISP (2A) and CCFGRN (3A).

Example: TONE “Cumberland to all units in the field, a tornado warning has been issued for northern Cumberland County until 16:45. All units in the field, a tornado warning has been issued for northern Cumberland County until 16:45”.

Hot Weather Mode

If the predicted high temperature for the day is greater than or equal to 85 degrees, 2Hot Weather Mode will be announced during daily Radio Checks and will be in effect from that time until 2200 hours. In Hot Weather Mode, the initial alarm for any structure fire shall be given two additional engines and a QRV automatically dispatched to assist for

rehab. Any additional alarm shall, for any structure also be given two additional Engines. Any working woods fire shall receive a dispatch of two additional Engines (in addition to any additional initial equipment from elevated Fire Readiness Plans as described in Cumberland County Emergency Services General Operating Guideline and SOP Fire Dispatch policy 6.6.3.

Severe Weather Mode

During periods of severe weather, it is not uncommon for call volumes to quickly exceed the availability of fire units to respond to reported emergencies. To reduce the demand for service, the Severe Weather Mode will be initiated thus modifying our normal dispatch and response procedures in accordance with the following:

The Severe Weather Mode may be activated by the President of the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs Association or his/her designee and/or by the Cumberland County Communications Manager during any severe weather event. The Severe Weather Mode activation shall be announced by the Fire Dispatcher over the radio on Fire Channel 1 and CCFD Dispatch Channel A-2. The response to Fire Alarms will be limited to a single unit unless there is additional information that would indicate an actual fire.

As call volumes return to that which is consider routinely anticipated, the President of the Cumberland County Fire Chiefs Association or his/her designee and/or the Cumberland County Communications Manager will contact the Communication Center and request to resume normal dispatch. The Fire Dispatcher shall announce over the radio on Fire

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Channel 1 and CCFD Dispatch Channel A-2, that communications are resuming normal dispatch and response procedures.

Refer to CCFA SOG 2018-002 Severe Weather Operations effective April 1, 2018.

CAD System Failure

Upon notification/discovery of a CAD system failure the following actions will be taken to minimize the impact of the system failure and provide for continuity of dispatch operations.

The dispatcher will make a single broadcast on CCFD Channel 2A pre-empted by a single alert tone, advising that the CAD system is down.

Radio Inventories

The following outlines the number of radios each unit shall have which shall be accounted for during daily driver check and weekly inventories.

In an effort to maintain accountability, any radio missing or needing repair should be reported immediately to the Shift Captain in charge so attempts can be made to locate it or replace it as needed.

- 511,531,532 will be assigned five portables and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800
- 561 is assigned four portable units and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800.
- 571 is assigned two portable units and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800.
- 591 is assigned one portable unit and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800
- Chief Officers are assigned two portable and one mobile.
- All other officers are assigned one portable unit. **Subject to change due to inventory.**

Radio Repair Procedures

Employees of the fire department shall not tamper or alter the radio in any way, including replacing the antenna with other marketed products designed specifically for use with the unit(s).

Only employees trained, and approved by the Fire Chief, will make repairs and or adjustment to any communications device assigned to the Fire Department.

A defective portable radio shall be written up on Aladtec and passed up the chain of command to get repaired or replaced.

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The replacement radio becomes part of the permanent inventory of the unit to which it is assigned.

Emergency Button Situations and Radio Operation

This function is to be used in the case of a “Mayday”.

Each radio is assigned a numeric identifier that appears on the radio console with each transmission.

In the event an “emergency button” is activated, the identifier at a minimum will identify the unit to which the radio is assigned.

Radios will not be moved between units, as this procedure will reduce the accuracy in determining which unit has declared an “emergency” either accidentally or intentionally.

1. Situations Warranting Activation

A fall through a floor or roof of a structure

A building collapses

Firefighter lost with no line or direction out

Firefighter trapped by debris or entangled/stuck in an unknown object

An activation low air alarm and/or an activated PASS device from an unaccounted firefighter/fire officer inside an IDLH atmosphere

A volatile situation where immediate police assistance is needed

2. Emergency Button Activations

- Upon activation of the emergency button, a signal is sent to the communications center identifying the unit in which the signal originated.
- This signal is sent only if the emergency button is activated on channels identified as FFD DISP, FFD GRND, or any of the CFD channels. (Cumberland County EOC monitors DISP, GRND, and TAC channels for all county related emergencies.)
- Having encountered an emergency condition, the user depresses the orange button, located on the top of the radio, to dispatch the emergency signal.
- At the time of activation, the user’s radio is automatically routed to the 911 HELP channel.
- The dispatcher, upon receiving the emergency signal, will attempt to contact the radio from which the signal originated via the same channel.
- The dispatcher, having received the emergency signal, will attempt to verify the existence of an actual emergency condition.
- The dispatcher will then respond to the signal by announcing the unit number and inquiring as to the existence of an actual emergency.

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3. Accidental “Emergency Button” Activations

- If the emergency button is accidentally activated, the user should state their unit and the phrase accidental activation. Example: “Engine 1, negative accidental activation”.
- If the attempt by the dispatcher to make contact is not acknowledged and the unit is on a call, the dispatcher will contact a Chief Officer by radio and dispatch a FPD or CCSO unit to the unit’s location via AVL status.
- To reset the “emergency button” the operator should depress the orange button on top of the radio for approximately 2 seconds until a medium pitched tone sound, followed by releasing the button, or by turning the radio off for 5 seconds and then turning the radio back on. This process resets the radio to a state of normalcy.

Communications Testing Procedures

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a schedule and define the procedures for the testing of telephone circuits and radio equipment for the Cumberland Road Fire Department. For purposes of operational efficiency, all telephone and radio dispatch circuits shall be tested daily. During radio testing, do not break traffic unless it is for a true emergency situation.

1. Dispatch and Ground Channel(s) Test

The County Communications Center will conduct a radio check daily at 0915 hrs. The test will include all Cumberland County Fire Departments. This test is conducted on the VHF (Fire Channel 1) CFD DISP and CFD GROUND.

Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of each member of the department and supervisors to ensure that the provisions of this standard are followed.