

DUTY OFFICER – COMMAND CAR RESPONSE

Page Number: Page 1 of 3 **Effective Date:** 04/01/2007 **Supersedes Editions:** 07/01/2005; 01/01/2005; 04/01/2003

Purpose: *There shall be a Duty Officer system to allow for proper command and control at incidents so as to promote operational efficiency. The Procedure also addresses the number of command cars that respond to calls for service.*

Procedure:

1. There shall be one Duty Officer for the district.
2. The Duty Officer shall be the command officer authorized to act in department command authority when other higher rank persons are off duty, or unavailable.
3. The Duty Officer shall use the call sign "8009" during his shift.
4. The scheduling of Duty Officers shall be the responsibility of the chief officer in charge of duty officer scheduling. Every effort shall be made to equalize the workload and assignment to duty officer rotations. Such schedules must be completed prior to the beginning of the month. Monthly duty officer calendars shall be posted at each station, copies sent to all chief officers and made available to the shift supervisors for inclusion in the daily morning report
5. The tour of duty for the day duty officer shall be from 0600 to 17:59. For the night duty officer, the hours are from 18:00 to 05:59.
6. A duty officer shall be responsible for attending to those incidents that occur during his scheduled shift. Alternative coverage is permissible, by having another command car respond in his place. It is the responsibility of the duty officer to make these arrangements.
7. In the event of a command car that is not serving as duty officer, but happens to be in the vicinity of an incident, that car may respond to the scene for command purposes. When the duty officer calls responding, that command car should notify the responding duty officer of his location, and that he will be handling the incident.
8. When acting as the Incident Commander, that person shall have full authority to cause and take the actions necessary to bring an incident to a successful conclusion. *(As a reminder, the person in charge of the first arriving fire department vehicle is automatically the Incident Commander until that responsibility has been transferred to someone else.)*
9. At an incident scene involving multiple command cars, the first arriving command car shall assume Incident Command, regardless of him being the duty officer.
10. The Incident Commander shall make assignments to command cars arriving at the scene. For guidance purposes, the Incident Commander should retain the Operations Officer assignment for fires on the scale of single family dwelling structure fires. The following are the orders of preference for chief officer assignments: Accountability, Safety, Operations and Division Leader (if necessary).

Standard Operating Procedures are meant only to be guidelines. Actual conditions may warrant alternative actions.

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11. The duty officer shall have the discretion regarding whether to respond to low priority runs, or monitor the incident via radio. Low priority runs are: any single station dispatch incident, car fires, trees/brush/grass/trash fires, steam ruptures, power lines down, smoke scare/odor, unauthorized burning, mitigations, controlled burning, carbon monoxide detector sounding and other alarm activations. If the duty officer is not responding, he should call "On the air"¹. The officer of the first arriving apparatus may request the duty officer to respond to the scene if deemed appropriate.
12. One (1) command car shall respond to all mutual aid incidents to other fire districts.
13. There shall be two (2) command cars responding to structure fires. A structure fire is an incident reported as ". . . you have a house fire . . .". An alarm sounding or a stove fire is not considered to be a structure fire. (Granted this may be confusing and a certain amount of judgment is needed on the part of chief officers). A third command car (not including chief and on-call fire prevention inspector) may respond to confirmed working structure fires. If an incident is elevated to a multiple alarm, all command cars may respond to the scene.
14. There shall be three (3) command cars (not including the chief and hazardous materials officer) responding to hazardous material incidents.
15. There shall be three (3) command cars responding to rescue incidents and incidents occurring on the interstate highways.
16. In the event of a working structure fire, the fire chief and on-call fire prevention inspector (in addition to the on-call investigator) should respond, and such response shall be in addition to the above command car responses. The fire chief may assume command or simply observe the incident. The on-call fire prevention inspector shall conduct the fire cause investigation and assist residents with Red Cross support if appropriate.
17. In the event of an incident to which extra apparatus has been called, such as a multiple alarm fire, the training officer may respond for the purposes of videotaping and documenting the incident activities for critique purposes.
18. For the purposes of the following, the first command car shall be the duty officer. The second and third command cars are chief officers and response captains.

¹ "Responding" means the officer is responding to the incident. "On The Air" means the officer is not responding, rather he is monitoring the incident on the radio and can be called if necessary.

² 8011's area is station 1 and 4, 8013 is station 3.

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19. Response captains should respond to the scene of an incident under the following conditions: A – as the scheduled duty officer; or, B – while covering for the scheduled duty officer; or, C – as the third command car when his station is the first dispatched station to a three command car incident *except when two chief officers have called responding in a reasonable time*. In any other situation, the response captain should report to his assigned station².
20. Assistant and battalion chiefs should be the primary responding second and third command cars to three command car incidents (except in the situation described in number 7 above) based on the following geographical location:

Incidents north of the railroad tracks bisecting the district - 8002, 8003, 8005, 8008.

Incidents south of the railroad tracks bisecting the district - 8004, 8006, 8007.

The intent of this section is to avoid an inappropriate number of command cars responding to incidents. With this intent stated, there may be the situation where the primary chief officers are unavailable, in which case other chief officers (or applicable response captain) may respond, while exercising prudent judgment.

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