PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

General Order Number: 06-29	Effective Date: October 1, 2020
Division: Emergency Operations	
Chapter: Unit Production and Accountability	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Tiffany D. Green	Issue Date: October 1, 2020

POLICY

This General Order establishes the best possible service delivery and response time performance by improving the probability of the closest unit is available and sets forth uniform expectations regarding unit production and accountability. The Department intends to maximize the number of unit hours produced - given available staffing, equipment, and apparatus.

The goals of coordinated unit production and accountability are to:
- Maximize service delivery capability (unit hours)
- Minimize complexity and variability within the system
- Establish personnel accountability and effective span of control prior to response
- Ensure safe operations and unit level supervision
- Facilitate volunteer participation

DEFINITIONS

Closest Available Restriction – A status when stations are unable to provide adequate staffing to maintain an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transport unit in service.

Dedicated Staffing – Minimum qualified personnel assigned to staff primary response units and are not affected by staffing of other units from the same station.

Qualified Driver – Any employee or member that meets the requirements to serve as the driver/operator of a unit.

Qualified Personnel – Any member that has completed all of the requirements to establish and maintain operational privileges in accordance with Subtitle 11 or the Professional Development Guidebook.

Qualified Officer – Any member that has completed the requirements outlined in the Professional Development Guide or defined within Subtitle 11.

Primary Response Units – Units that are staffed to provide fundamental fire/EMS services. These are defined as:
- Ambulance (A)
- Paramedic Ambulance (PA)
- Medic Unit (MD)
- Engine (E), Rescue Engine (RE), Paramedic Engine (PE), Engine Tanker (ET)
- Truck (TK), Tower (TW)
- Rescue Squad (SQ)

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 1 of 9

Secondary (Specialty) Response Units – Specialty units that require additional qualifications to support the response of primary response units, and utilize the suppression unit staffing from the station:

- Hazardous Materials Unit (HM)
- Hazardous Materials Support Unit (HS)
- Technical Rescue Unit (TR)
- Technical Rescue Support Unit (TS)
- Water Rescue Unit (WR)
- Boat (BT)
- Medical Ambulance Bus (MAB)
- Medical Care Support Unit (MCS)
- Tanker (TN)
- Water Supply Unit (WS)

Tertiary Response Units – Units that provide support and utilize additional members/personnel that are not included as part of the minimum staffing needed for primary response units. These units are NOT authorized to respond to an incident with only a single person except when dispatched in direct support of a primary and/or secondary response units.

- Battalion Officers (BO)
- Volunteer Chief Officers (VC)
- Brush Units (BR)
- Rehab (REHAB)
- Rehab Support Unit/Canteen
- Water Supply Support Units (WSS)
- Air Unit (AU)
- Utility Vehicles (UTV)
- Mini-Pumpers (MP)**
- Recon Units (REC)**

**Tertiary Response Units that may be utilized in place of a primary response unit provided;
- Staffed with a minimum of two (2);
- Incident can be handled without other resources, and;
- Will not have any impact on primary unit(s) staffing.

Unit Hour – The unit of production for a Fire/EMS service delivery organization. A unit hour is produced when a unit is provided with adequate and qualified staffing, equipment, and apparatus necessary to respond to incidents for the period of one (1) hour.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 2 of 9

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

I. **General Guidelines**

A. The Department measures performance based on the number of unit hours that are potentially produced, actually produced, utilized for responses, or lost due to various reasons. Unit reliability and staffing reliability are key performance indicators. The more dedicated unit hours that are produced, the better the system performs in response to the community's demand for service. Therefore, dedicating multiple units is essential to improved performance. Volunteer leadership and career station officers must plan for and commit to staffing levels, both career and volunteer, for scheduled periods. The number of station and unit staffing changes that occur in a given operational period should be minimized by these efforts.

B. All personnel are responsible to accurately account for and report station level staffing and unit level staffing assignments at all times. Personnel will immediately report their arrival or intended participation to a supervisor and arrange for a riding assignment. Career station officers and volunteer leadership will coordinate and report accurate staffing levels.

C. Exceptions to this General Order must be submitted in writing via the chain-of-command and approved by the Fire Chief.

II. **Station Level Staffing**

A. The station level staffing configuration is based on a combination of the current available volunteer staffing and the assigned career staffing complement. Expected staffing is determined by the number of qualified drivers and qualified personnel.

B. Station leadership is responsible to apply available staffing to achieve maximum dedicated unit staffing. This improves the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery to ensure the best and closest available unit is dispatched. This also serves to establish clear expectations for employees/members during their duty periods and improves turn out time performance. Staffing of dedicated units should be supported by staffing rotations to distribute experience opportunities and response workload whenever possible.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 3 of 9

C. The following station staffing models are expected:

Total Available Qualified Staffing	Staffing Model
0 1	**Unavailable due to Staffing –** The station is considered unavailable due to staffing and all units are placed in UAS status.
2	**Dedicated EMS Only Staffing –** Stations are considered to have dedicated EMS Only staffing when staffing is available for a single BLS transport unit.
3 4	**First Unit Only Staffing –** Staffing available can only produce a single suppression unit* or a single BLS transport unit. Suppression units are the first dispatched unit for suppression call types; EMS transport units are the first dispatched unit for EMS call types, including rescue locals. Units with UAS EMS transport units are placed on closest available restriction.
5 6 7 8	**Dedicated Unit Staffing –** One (1) suppression unit and one (1) EMS unit are staffed. Career personnel are always expected to operate in a dedicated staffing configuration. At least three (3) minimally qualified personnel are dedicated to staff the primary, secondary, and tertiary suppression units. A qualified officer will supervise the unit whenever possible. Dedicated EMS Staffing of at least two (2) qualified personnel operate independently from the suppression unit(s).

*Suppression apparatus must have a minimum qualified staffing of three (3) to include a driver, an officer, and a firefighter, with a minimum of one (1) being a qualified EMT.

III.   Unit Level Staffing Assignments

A. Unit level assignments are coordinated between volunteer leadership and career station officers when they are on duty. All qualified personnel who are intending to participate must be accounted for by the unit officer and given a riding assignment prior to any unit response.

B. Career station officers are charged with the supervision of their assigned career employees. Staffing configurations that utilize a career employee to increase the number of available units, but not with their supervisor for any period, can only be made at the direction of the career supervisor. These decisions are made considering all of the goals described above in this General Order, primarily to enhance dedicated staffing and improve effective unit availability.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 4 of 9

C. Only stations appropriately reporting dedicated units prior to the dispatch of an emergency incident are permitted to respond with multiple suppression units. Units that report additional crews after an incident dispatch are placed in an "available in quarters" status.

IV.   Station Staffing vs. Unit Staffing Expectations

Qualified Staffing	1st EMS Unit	1st Suppression	2nd EMS Unit	2nd Suppression
0-1	UAS	UAS	UAS	UAS
2	DEDICATED	UAS	UAS	UAS
3-4	FIRST UNIT ONLY		UAS	UAS
5-8	DEDICATED	DEDICATED	UAS	UAS
9+	DEDICATED	DEDICATED	PREFERRED	ALLOWED

V.   Unit Production

A. The Department produces unit hours by combining three critical elements: Qualified Staffing, Vehicles, and Equipment. In any case, where one of these elements is missing, the unit is not available to deliver service.

$$Unit = Qualified\ Staffing + Apparatus + Equipment$$

B. Unavailable and Out of Service Units

1. In any case, when a station places a unit unavailable (UA) or out of service (OOS), the last name and ID number of this person will be reported to Public Safety Communications (PSC). Battalion Chiefs and any appropriate Volunteer Chiefs must be notified by the person placing the unit in that status. Units can be placed in any of the following statuses:

Status	Shortfall	Description	Potential Cause(s)
AOR Available on Radio	None	Unit has all required elements to deliver service.	Normal operations
AIQ Available in Quarters	None	Unit has all required elements to deliver service.	Normal operations
OOS Out of Service	Apparatus	Indication that the unit or equipment is unable to meet the minimal requirements of an emergency response.	Mechanical, electrical, safety issue, periodic decontamination.
	Equipment		Unit critical equipment failure or requiring replacement/replenishment: water supply, monitor/AED, extrication equipment, etc.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 5 of 9

UAS Unavailable Staffing	Unit Staffing	Staffing level is inadequate for a response. UAS status is cancelled as soon as the existing staffing shortfall is corrected.	Less than two (2) qualified personnel, no driver, no qualified EMS provider.
UAT Unavailable Training	Discretionary Training	Training assignment requires the unit(s) to be temporarily unavailable for emergency responses. UAT status must be requested through the ESC chain-of-command to the Duty Chief. Training assignments must be requested in advance and documented on the Department's Master Calendar. UAT status can be cancelled at any time by the Duty Chief.	Hazardous Materials/ Technical Rescue Training, Driver's Training or Testing, ALS/BLS Internship requirements, station drills requiring units be unavailable.
UAD Unavailable Detail	Discretionary Detail Assignment	Assignment that requires the unit to be temporarily unavailable for emergency responses. UAD status must be requested through the ESC chain-of-command to the Duty Chief to ensure adequate coverage for the unit. UAD status can be cancelled at any time by the Duty Chief.	Units committed to an event detail, Battalion Chiefs "out of the battalion," Units "shuttling" apparatus, parades/funerals, public events.

C. Units that are placed unavailable or out of service, for any reason, will not be dispatched on incidents and the closest available in-service unit is dispatched.

D. Failure to Respond

1. In cases when a unit fails to respond, the PSC Dispatch Supervisor places the units "unavailable due to staffing" and notifies the Battalion Chief immediately. In many cases, this is a failure of communication between personnel in the station and PSC. The goal of the Department is to have no failure to respond events. All events when a unit fails to respond require review by the Battalion Chief.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 6 of 9

E. Closest Available Restriction

1. Any condition that places the BLS Ambulance "unavailable due to staffing (UAS)" is closely monitored by the career and volunteer Duty Chiefs and career and volunteer Battalion Chiefs. This condition will result in the suppression units in that station being on "Closest Available Restriction." The available suppression unit from that station is only dispatched when it is the closest available unit by unit type.

2. Stations placed on "Closest Available Restriction" can only have this restriction removed by contacting the on-duty career Battalion Chief responsible for that battalion. Once confirmation that adequate resources reliably exist in the station, the limitation can be lifted by the appropriate Battalion Chief through the on-duty chain-of-command.

VI. Staffing Requirements

A. Any station able to commit to providing dedicated staffing to multiple units for a reasonable period of time will contact PSC via the direct line. Clear identification of which units are dedicated, including at least one BLS transport unit, and the time period will be conveyed. The last name and ID number of the highest-ranking person making the staffing status change must be documented.

B. To be considered for multiple unit responses, stations must have sufficient qualified personnel (not counting probationary members or observers) to provide dedicated staffing, above the required minimum, for two (2) or more suppression units, as well as at least one (1) EMS transport unit.

C. Stations staffing two (2) or more engines will be dispatched as individual units. Each engine is assigned responsibilities according to the roles and responsibilities outlined by the prevailing response General Order.

Example: Station 850 with dedicated staffing for two (2) engines.
Unit: "Engine 850 with 4 & Engine 850B with 3 personnel."
Dispatcher: "Ok Engine 850 you are 2nd due, Engine 850B you are 3rd due."

D. Multiple suppression units are not authorized to respond from the same station when either has less than minimum staffing.

VII. Periodic Staffing Reports

A. Periodic staffing reports are transmitted by PSC at three (3) critical times during each 24-hour shift. The purpose of these staffing reports is to ensure effective service delivery can be achieved by maximizing available staffing. These efforts intend to verify career staffing, anticipate and account for volunteer participation, and address service gaps that may arise prior to the staffing period.

1. 0700 hours

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 7 of 9

    a) Battalion Chiefs – Verify staffing levels at the beginning of the operational period.
- Verify station and unit staffing levels.
- Overnight UAS units are verified and placed back in service prior to 0700.

    b) PSC Staff Announcement
- Announce all "Primary Response Units" that are unavailable for service.

2. 1500 hours
    a) Battalion Chiefs – Verify continuous service at conclusion of day work schedules.
- Verify station and unit staffing levels.
- Coordinate with volunteer leadership to maintain adequate staffing.
- Execute transfers as directed by Duty Chief to ensure effective service delivery throughout the County.

    b) PSC Staffing Announcement
- Announce all Stations in an out of service status (UAD, UAT, UAS, OOS).

3. 2200 hours
    a) Battalion Chiefs – Verify overnight staffing and anticipated volunteer participation
- Verify station and unit staffing levels.
- Account for all personnel available for response during overnight hours.

    b) PSC Staffing Announcement
- Announce all Stations in an out of service status (UAD, UAT, UAS, OOS).

VIII. Responsibilities

A. All Qualified and Minimally Qualified Personnel

1. Report participation and availability to station leadership.
2. Report to unit officer with understanding of riding position assignment.
3. Provide PGFD ID number when reporting any unit is UAV or OOS to PSC.
4. Ensure the appropriate volunteer leadership and Battalion Chief are aware of the unit availability when it changes.

B. Career Station Officers and Volunteer Leadership

1. Notify PSC with real-time accountability for station and unit level staffing.
    a) Dedicate unit level staffing, whenever possible.
    b) Report specific units that are out of service or unavailable.
2. Provide PGFD ID number when reporting a unit is UAV or OOS to PSC.
3. Ensure the appropriate volunteer leadership and Battalion Chief are aware of the unit availability when it changes.

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 8 of 9

C. Battalion Chiefs

1. Monitor real time and performance trends in unit and staffing reliability.
2. Make recommendations regarding deployment of resources to address performance gaps.
3. Review each Failed to Respond Event to prevent reoccurrence.

D. Duty Chief

1. Coordinate with PSC to make deployment changes (transfers) to maintain performance.

E. PSC Supervisor

1. Ensure accurate tracking of unit(s) status in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.
2. Utilize the closest available units (as pre-determined by the dispatch listing and sequence, or as determined by Automatic Vehicle Locators when in use) to fill each assignment with the proper number and type of units.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

N/A

Division 06 – Emergency Operations
Chapter 29 – Unit Production and Accountability
Effective Date – October 1, 2020
Issue Date – October 1, 2020

Page 9 of 9