



Policy Statement

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Discourage the Practice of Self-Dispatch Among Emergency Response Personnel to Emergency Incidents Without Notification or Request

One aspect of responding to disasters of major proportions is that local fire departments have in place a system of aggressive monitoring and enforcement practices to control the self-dispatching of personnel and/or apparatus to the scene.

In major disasters the fire service needs to be disciplined in its response, ready and available to the local community, and when requested, ready and available to respond to the major disaster should the call for assistance be received from that jurisdiction.

It has been proven in several past disasters that the local fire department command structure while struggling to organize and control resources at the scene have had to commit additional resources to the management of those people and equipment that self dispatched to the scene.

Uncontrolled and uncoordinated arrival of resources at emergencies cause significant accountability issues as a result of personnel freelancing and creating additional safety risks to firefighters, civilians and others who are operating within the parameters of the incident action plan. Chaos at the scene occurs, creating additional safety risks because these companies or individuals are not aware of the overall strategic plan.

Further, unrequested emergency units and emergency personnel at incidents disrupt the accountability and incident management system.

An incident management system requires that a formal structure is utilized to determine the needs of an incident. The needs of the incident are in most cases directly related to personnel and equipment. When resources show up that have not been requested, the incident management system fails. Unplanned resources in many cases block roads, create traffic jams, restrict access and ultimately affect the safety of those fire fighters who are operating at the scene by denying them needed resources. Freelancing of personnel and fire companies adversely impact incident management systems and require that the Incident Commander

assign more personnel to control and coordinate these resources that were not requested.

The ultimate risk is to emergency personnel when uncoordinated resources and freelancing by individuals and crews, create additional risks that are unnecessary and could be avoided. Lives are at risk when fire companies or personnel leave their local communities, thereby reducing the level of protection and support should an emergency occur, or when other fire fighters perform contradictory operations or interfere with assigned units performing their duties.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the IAFC and the NVFC encourage state and federal organizations to develop pre-determined mobilization plans to address this issue and encourage those states and federal agencies that do have a plan to incorporate this issue into the plan

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the IAFC and the NVFC encourage local fire chiefs, elected officials, managers and labor leaders to develop written policy to control emergency personnel from self-dispatch to an emergency event unless requested by the incident commander.

Category: Governance/Leadership

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Proposed By: Chief John Buckman

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