Title: Effective Response Force and Staffing Levels

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01. **Purpose:**

To establish a policy that defines the minimum required certified fire fighters along with reporting of unit staffing to accomplish the adopted “Effective Response Force”.

02. **Overview:**

The Effective Response Force was adopted to define the minimum number of certified fire fighters required to safely and effectively meet the objectives for operations of a structure fire. Below is the matrix:

- 18 certified fire fighters for the 1st alarm
- 18 for the 2nd alarm.
- Additional alarms, effective response force is 12 certified fire fighters.

An effective response force minimum response for an unprotected area will be as follows:

- 21 certified fire fighters for the 1st alarm
- 21 for the 2nd alarm.
- Additional alarms, effective response force is 15 certified fire fighters.

This policy also adopts how to report staffing levels on the radio to assist with accurate accountability.

03. **Definitions:**

Certified Fire Fighter: Personnel who, at a minimum, meet the "Fire I" classification in accordance with Standard 500-03, §4.2

DES: Division of Emergency Services

ECC: Washington County Emergency Communications Center

Effective Response Force: Desired number of certified fire fighters to perform "work" on the fire ground
IC: Incident Commander - The senior or designated officer in charge of an incident, responsible for the strategic decisions and the assignment of other officers and supervisory personnel necessary to control an incident per the Incident Management Standard.

ISO II Incident Safety Officer- II is an approved countywide Incident Safety Officer Team Member that has completed all requirements to be assigned to this position and is qualified to perform the duties and functions related to the safe performance of our operations personnel on an incident scene and to assist with any Safety documentation.

Non-Certified Personnel: Any operational responder that does not meet or exceed the training requirements established by NFPA 1001 for Firefighter I. This individual shall be identified by 2 inch NC letters on three (3) side of his or her helmet. The “NC” shall be defined as either Non Certified or Non-Compliant

Protected Area: An area with an established water supply system offering constant protection and utilizing hydrants for delivery

PAR: Personnel Accountability Report - A Personnel Accountability Report that is conducted on a periodic basis (typically every 20 minutes) where each unit supervisor is contacted to positively affirm the unit’s location/assignment and the number of personnel attached to the unit.

Unprotected Area: All other areas in the county not already addressed (no hydrants)

WCVFRA: Washington County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association

04. Procedures:

The ECC will be responsible to record staffing levels and dispatching additional units until the effective response force and apparatus for each corresponding alarm level is obtained. The ECC will also apprise the IC of staffing levels and the actions being taken to supplement the shortage of personnel. Referencing Standard 500-06, Standardized Dispatch - Fire, a 1st alarm assignment in a protected area (not High Risk Occupancy) is comprised of the following:

- (4) Engines
- Aerial Device
- Rescue Squad
- ALS Transport Unit
- ISO II
05. **ECC Process:**

Once the initial assignment is considered "full", meaning all of the dispatched units are responding, and the staffing level of certified fire fighters is under 18, the ECC will immediately begin dispatching the next closest engine company to respond with personnel (certified fire fighters).

It will be the sole discretion of the ECC on how many "supplemental" engine companies are alerted to achieve the effective response force. When the effective response force is reached for the appropriate alarm level, the ECC will no longer dispatch supplemental units, and any resource requests must originate from the IC. The ECC will make the following announcement to the IC once the effective response force is met:

I. “Washington County to Command;  
   You have the Full assignment and the Effective Response Force has been met”

II. “Washington County to Command;  
   You have the Full assignment and the Effective Response Force has NOT been met”

06. **Standardized Response Procedure:**

When units respond to incidents they are to report their staffing levels to the ECC utilizing the following format:

- Two sets of numbers;
  - First depicting the number of certified personnel on the unit
  - Second providing the total number of personnel on the unit (certified and non-certified)

- i.e. "ENGINE 1 IS RESPONDING WITH 3 AND 5"
  - In this example Engine 1 has 3 certified personnel and 5 total personnel on the unit

- i.e. "UT-1 IS RESPONDING WITH 1 AND 1"
  - In this example UT-1 has 1 certified person and 1 total person on the unit

- Officers and EMS units are exempt and can respond with one number as all are certified providers
  - i.e. Chief 75 is responding with 1
  - i.e. P75-1 is responding with 2

- **DO NOT** add both numbers together!
Certified personnel are specific to the minimum staffing for a unit type as outlined in Standard 500-01, for example:

- Engine 1 was dispatched for a structure fire, therefore the certified personnel number is communicating the number of certified fire fighters
- Rescue Squad 1 was dispatched for a personnel injury collision, therefore the certified personnel number is communicating the number of certified Rescue Technicians/Rescue Technicians – Vehicle & Machinery Rescue
- When Non-certified fire fighters are split from their crew, they are to report to the rear of the initial attack engine until a staging area is established to ensure accountability.

When the ECC is communicating staffing levels to the IC, the same format will be Communicate: Example –

"WASHINGTON COUNTY TO COMMAND: YOUR PAR IS 22 AND 35."

Every effort will be made to inform and ask for compliancy from out of county mutual aid partners; however, in the event the mutual aid partner only gives one number for staffing, the ECC will assume that number represents the number of certified personnel, as well as the total number of personnel.

- This can be verified when they arrive on the scene by the accountably officer and at that time they can advise ECC and they will update the information in CAD.