

Expanding Services – Regional Automatic Aid

CHIEF CHRIS BARRON

Who Am I?...



- 32 Years In Fire Service
- 22 Years As Chief
- 15 Years Texas Firefighters' Assn. Executive Director
- 2014 International Association of Fire Chief's Association Fire Chief of Year Recipient
- 2012 IAFC John Buckman Leadership Award
- Numerous fire and EMS service certifications
- Education – Associates degree in Fire Technology, Bachelors & Masters Degree in Business Administration
- CEO, Emergency Services Solutions, LLC

Agenda

- Background Information
- Initial assessments
- Initial areas of improvement
- Develop a plan
- Low hanging fruit
- Implementation
- Results

Background Info

- Set the stage
- Travis County
 - Home of the Capitol and Austin, Texas
 - It's mid 1990s



Challenges



Call Volumes

Picture this....

- 13 VFDs/ESDs surrounding the City of Austin / Austin Fire Department
- 10-13 separate dispatch centers
- Mutual aid agreements in place
- County wide Firefighter's Association
- Mid-late 90s - Need for Chiefs to get together to discuss operational issues

**TRAVIS COUNTY
FIREFIGHTER**

Background Info

- Capital Area Fire Chief's Association Born (CAFCA)
- Increasing Call Volumes
- More RFPDs / VFDs holding elections for ESDs
- As Chief's, how can we make things better?
 - Ahh Ha! How about being able to identify who is a firefighter and who is an officer on the scene!!??



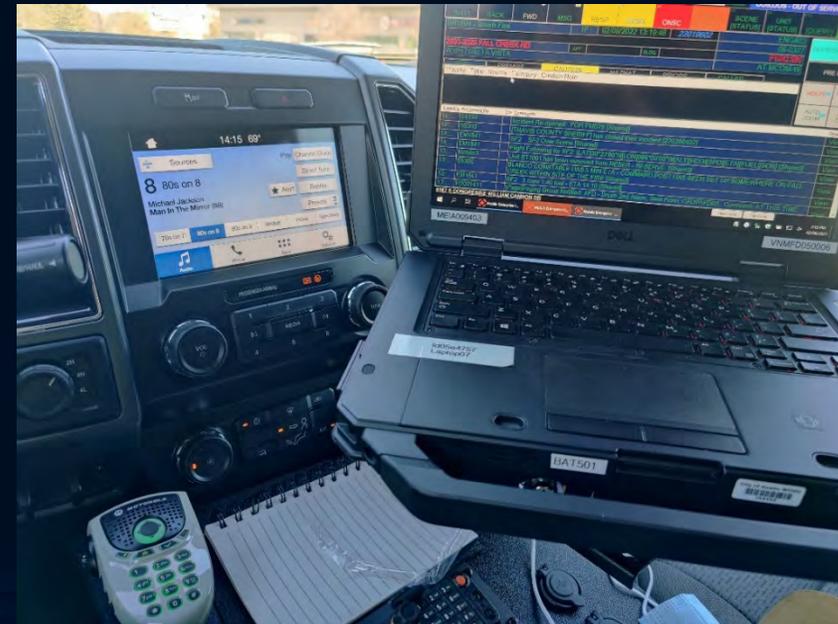
Why would we want to do such a thing?
It's about....



Background Info

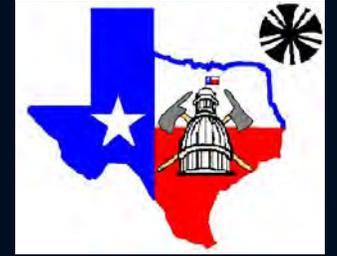


- Helmet Color Standardization
- County Wide Numbering Standardization
- Radios/Mobile Data Computers, Automated Vehicle Location (AVL)
- Terminology
- Dispatching
- Knox Box



Background Info

- And Then....
 - Training/Certification recognition/equivalencies (SFFMA/TCFP)
 - Several bordering fire departments with Austin Fire Department start
 - Standard Operating Guidelines
 - In 2008, 6 ESDs joined the Auto Aid coalition
 - In 2016/2017 – the rest of the ESDs joined



Automatic Aid in 2008

Fire Stations

● AFD

■ ESD

Travis County

AFD / SUNSET VALLEY / ESD 4

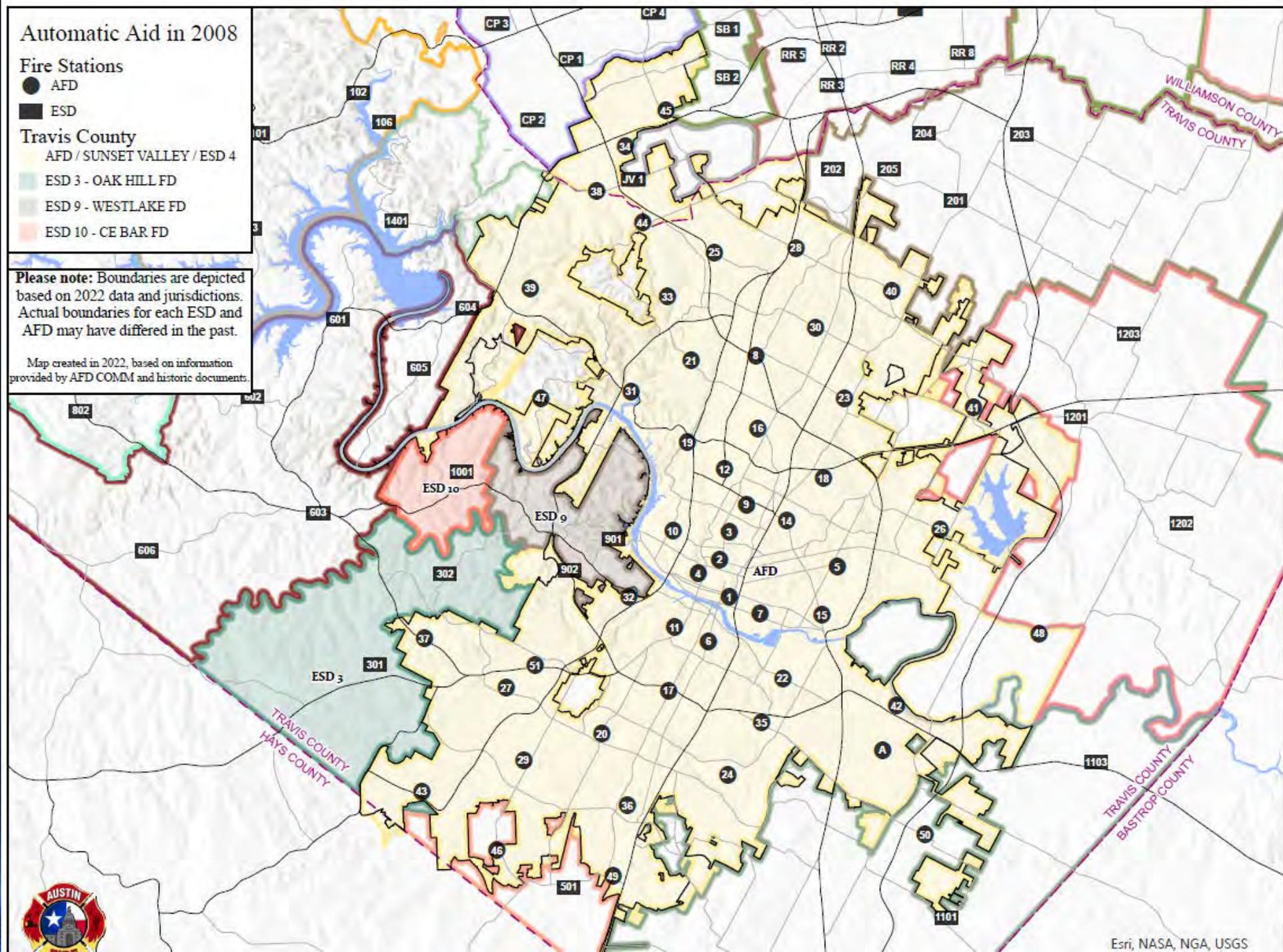
ESD 3 - OAK HILL FD

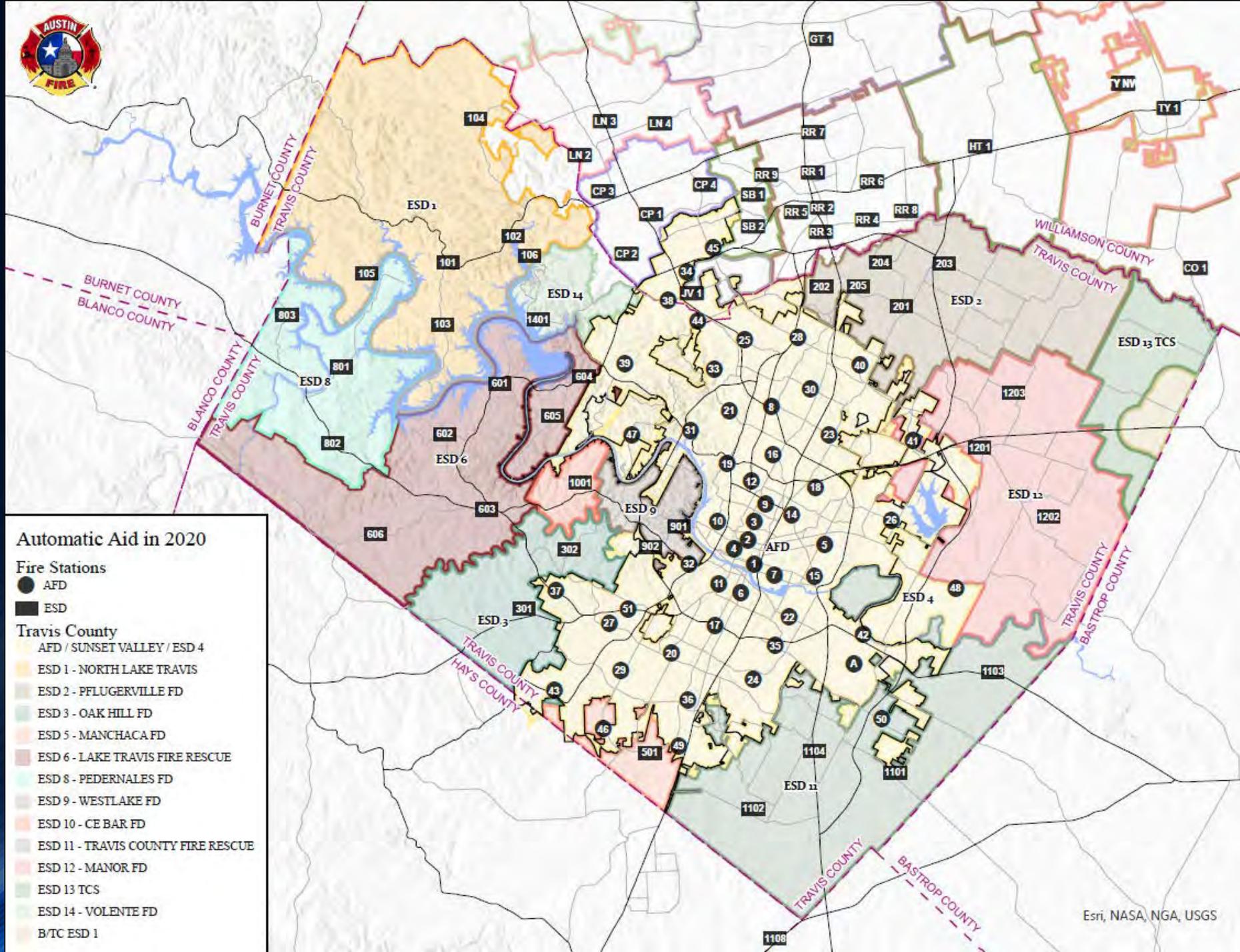
ESD 9 - WESTLAKE FD

ESD 10 - CE BAR FD

Please note: Boundaries are depicted based on 2022 data and jurisdictions. Actual boundaries for each ESD and AFD may have differed in the past.

Map created in 2022, based on information provided by AFD COMM and historic documents.





Automatic Aid in 2020

Fire Stations

- AFD
- ESD

Travis County

- AFD / SUNSET VALLEY / ESD 4
- ESD 1 - NORTH LAKE TRAVIS
- ESD 2 - PFLUGERVILLE FD
- ESD 3 - OAK HILL FD
- ESD 5 - MANCHACA FD
- ESD 6 - LAKE TRAVIS FIRE RESCUE
- ESD 8 - PEDERNALES FD
- ESD 9 - WESTLAKE FD
- ESD 10 - CE BAR FD
- ESD 11 - TRAVIS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE
- ESD 12 - MANOR FD
- ESD 13 TCS
- ESD 14 - VOLENTE FD
- B/TC ESD 1



INFORMATION BULLETIN

TO: All AFD Personnel

FROM: Brian Tanzola, Assistant Chief

DATE: December 28, 2016

SUBJECT: 2017 Automatic Aid Additions

In our effort to continue to enhance our regional approach to emergency response throughout Travis County, I am pleased to welcome Emergency Services District #1 (Jonestown) and Emergency Services District #5 (Manchaca) to the Automatic Aid Group.

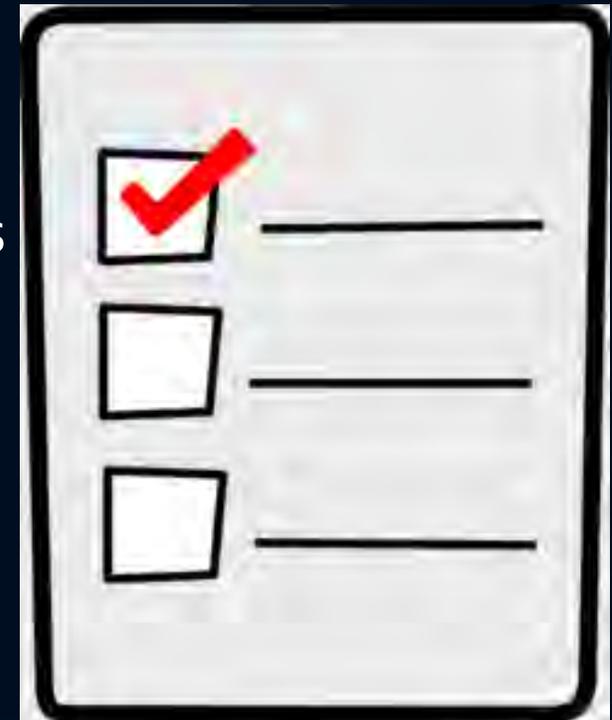
Effective January 3 and January 4, 2017, respectively, these two ESDs will go "live" as full Automatic Aid partners. Both districts have worked extremely hard to prepare themselves for this transition; while we understand there may always be growing pains in any new partnership, we have complete confidence in these two agencies to maintain the standard that the Auto Aid Group expects from our partners. With these additions, we are one step closer to providing true "closest unit response" throughout the county.

We have also begun conversations with Emergency Services District #4 (Fire Control) and Emergency Services District #12 (Manor) about their inclusion in the group during the 2017 calendar year. Both districts have expressed an interest and we will begin cross-departmental training and evaluation in the spring.

Lastly, it has been several years now since we have evaluated our response plans. Early next year, we will begin working with all of our partners to review the current unit allocations and the response plans for ESDs to determine if we are sending the correct resources. In many cases, this might lead to a reduction of AFD units being assigned to incidents in other districts. As always, our goal is to provide the right resources to the incident, in the right amount of time, without creating a burden on any one department.

Initial Assessments

- Where are you now?
- A comprehensive assessment!
 - Your fire department/emergency medical services
 - County agencies
 - EMS / First Response
 - Fire Departments
 - Emergency Management
 - Communications
 - Radios
 - 911/Dispatch



Initial Assessments.. Cont.

- What agreements already exist?
 - Mutual Aid
 - Auto Aid
 - Private/Public agreements
 - ESD/VFD agreements
 - ESD-Municipality



Identify initial/key areas of improvement

- What's the goal?
 - Lower Response Times
 - Lower ISO Ratings
 - Consistent staffing
 - Make up for VFDs without staff?
 - Closest unit response
 - Standardize equipment
 - Advantages
 - Multi agencies – standardized connections, equipment, operations
 - Bulk purchasing



Developing a Plan

- Timelines
- Partners
- Participating agencies
- Priorities
 - 911 Improvements
 - Communications
 - Firefighters to the scene
 - Quicker response times



Implementation

- Go for the low hanging fruit first!
 - Terminology
 - Engine = Engine
 - Ladder = Ladder
 - Brush Truck = Brush Truck
 - Type 1 - 6
 - NIMS Typing of Apparatus



Implementation

- Timelines!
- Communications
 - Radio Systems – Vhf, 800, 700, etc.
- Dispatching
 - Multiple dispatching centers?
- Where are your PSAPs? (public safety answering point) – Multiple?
Single? Consolidation?
- Training / Meetings!



The Easy Items

- Stuff that costs Nothing (except time)!
 - Terminology
 - SOGs
 - CAD/Response Plan changes
 - Cooperation/Working Together

	<p align="center"> Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association Central Texas Regional Procedures </p>	
<p align="center">#03</p>	<p align="center"> STRUCTURE FIRE INCIDENTS STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES </p>	<p align="center"> Adopted October 1, 2021 </p>

PURPOSE

To provide the safest possible fireground work environment for all Williamson County and Travis County Fire Department personnel operating at structure fire incidents with automatic aid response, recognize the inherent risks at every scene, simplify decision-making requirements under potentially stressful situations and to meet the requirements of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP).

Exhibit A

Automatic Aid Agreement Travis and Williamson County Agencies Operational Guidelines

I. PURPOSE

To establish operational guidelines that will address the basic provision of emergency service response into the designated service areas identified within the Travis and Williamson County Automatic Aid Agreement(s).

II. BACKGROUND

Each agency participating in an Automatic Aid Agreement agrees that automatic aid provides for the most efficient and effective delivery of emergency response services to the citizens of our respective jurisdictions.

However, all agencies must operate under an Incident Command System (ICS) that is National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant as promulgated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In order for there to be a core standard when it comes to an ICS, all agencies participating in this agreement agree to utilize the "Blue Card" certification system or the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) certification for Incident Command qualifications.

These guidelines shall be reviewed at least annually by the participating agencies. Any revisions shall require prior notification, review, and approval from all participating agencies.

III. DEFINITIONS

- "Automatic Aid" is an agreement between jurisdictions to respond the nearest available unit(s) to mitigate an emergency situation.
- "Certified Personnel" are certified as Structure Fire Protection – Basic (or higher) through the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP).
- "Staffing of Units" involves TCFP commissioned Firefighters. Cadets do not count towards staffing, nor should they be riding in apparatus in any other role other than as an observer (non-participant).

Some personnel minimums

D. Certifications of Personnel

(AHJ shall have a clearance process for members operating in a higher class role. The credentialing of positions below is for those promoted to the specified rank.)

1. Firefighter Rank:

- a. Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) Structure Fire Protection – Basic or higher-level certification
- b. EMT-Basic or higher-level certification
- c. NIMS 100, 200, 700, and 800 certifications
- d. Preferred qualifications:
 - i. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland Firefighter Type II

2. Driver/Apparatus Operator

- a. All lower-rank certifications and;
- b. Minimum of one (1) year experience as a full-time paid firefighter
- c. State of Texas Class A, B, or B Exempt driver's license
- d. TCFP Driver/Operator certification
- e. Preferred qualifications:
 - i. Blue Card or TCFP Incident Commander certification
 - ii. NWCG Wildland Firefighter Type I
 - iii. NWCG Engine Operator

3. Lieutenant

- a. All lower-rank certifications and;
- b. Minimum of two (2) years' experience as a Driver/ Apparatus Operator
- c. TCFP Fire Officer I certification
- d. NIMS 300,400, and 703 certifications
- e. Preferred qualifications:
 - i. Blue Card or TCFP Incident Commander certification
 - ii. NWCG Engine/Crew Boss certification

Something to cover the basics

A. Response

1. Until common Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) can be established that incorporate all of the safety elements found within the current SOGs of all AHJs that ensure use of common terminology, standard definitions, common strategies and tactics, and standardized procedures and incident management, AHJs residing within Travis County agree to continue adhering to the following previously agreed upon Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines:
 - a. A101 - Fire ground Operations
 - b. A104 -Two In and Two Out
 - c. A105 - Mayday and Rapid Intervention Company
 - d. B402 - Emergency Terminology
 - e. B104 - Lost Firefighter Strategies
 - f. A110 - Light Box Alarms
 - g. A201 - High Rise Fires
 - h. A202 - Mid-Rise Fires
 - i. A708 - Response to Alarm Activations
 - j. A610 - Response to Active Shooter Incidents
 - k. A401 - Wildland Fire Response

A process...

For approving changes...



Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association



AUTOMATIC AID STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE APPROVAL PROCESS

PURPOSE

This document is designed to provide guidance and clarity on the process to adopt the Central Texas Regional Procedures for the Fire Chiefs in the Travis County/ Williamson County Automatic Aid Coalition.

BACKGROUND

In February 2020 during the development of the Automatic Aid Interlocal Agreement the Fire Chiefs agreed that the automatic aid partners should work to implement standardized, regional operating guidelines for all automatic aid agencies. Although there may be several regional procedures, it was decided to work toward the adoption of Incident Command, Fireground Operations and Mayday/ Rapid Intervention Crew. Sub-Committees were established and the first products were submitted to the coalition fire chiefs in September 2020. In the spirit of cooperation, all coalition fire chiefs have committed to the development of the regional guidelines and agree that standardized guidelines provide the safest possible work environment for personnel operating at emergency incidents, improve the use of agency resources, and meet federal, state and local regulations.

PROCESS FOR ADOPTION

A. Establish Sub-Committee Members

1. The Capital Area Fire Chief Association Automatic Aid Committee Chair shall establish working automatic aid committees to discuss, design and develop requested Central Texas Regional Procedures. Multiple committees may be working on separate individual procedures or may be working in collaboration to develop procedures.
2. The Automatic Aid Committee Chair shall provide notice to all automatic aid fire chiefs on the topic the working committee will be creating. The Fire Chief or their designee may assign a department member to be on the committee, but a department may not request more than 2 members on any one committee.
3. A Committee Chair should be established on any working automatic aid committee. The Chair will provide goals, set meeting dates and work with other Chairs as needed to complete the procedure.

Stuff that costs

- Helmets
- Gear
- Radios
- Certification Fees (TCFP vs SFFMA)
- Communication Systems
- Apparatus

Benefits!

- Bulk discounts
- Regional Grants
- Co-Operative Purchasing Agreements (BuyBoard / HGAC)
- Replacement Schedules

Sometimes

- Swallow your pride
- Adjust your response plans to meet the needs of the majority
- Think differently
- Learn new ways



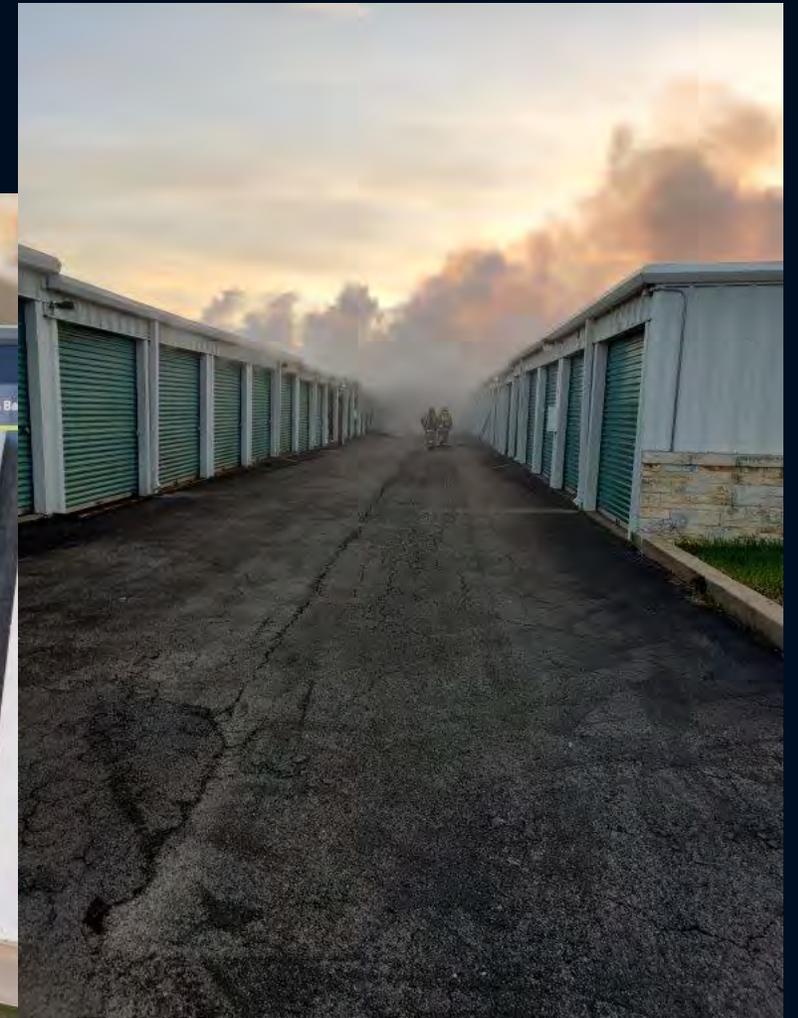
Roadblocks

- Autonomy!
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it
- We've done it this way for 100+ years
- Existing By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation that might create some issues
- Community support/donations

To make it successful

- Get out!
 - Meet
 - Train
 - Interact
- Be flexible
 - Doing things differently
- Work together as a team for the common good

Does it Work?



Remember, it's not about the patch...
It's for...



Questions/Discussions?

Thank you!

Chief Chris Barron
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