

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the background and introduce the Metro Zone resource ordering system.

POLICY

From inception, California's Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System has been guided by the fire services operating within the state including local, state, and federal agencies. The California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan provides a practical and flexible pattern for the orderly development and operation of mutual aid on a voluntary basis between cities, cities and counties, fire districts, county fire departments, and applicable state agencies. Normal fire department operations are utilized, including day-to-day mutual aid agreements, and plans that have been developed by local fire and rescue officials.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services' (Cal OES) Fire and Rescue Branch is responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan¹. The Plan is developed and updated under the guidance and approval of the Fire Rescue Service Advisory Committee/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors.

The California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan ("Plan") is a supportive document to the California Emergency Plan. The Plan, basic and uncomplicated, is based on the concept of "self-help" and "mutual aid". The State of California, all 58 counties, and nearly all city governments are signatory to a Master Mutual Aid Agreement. Aid agreements, automatic and mutual aid, come in many variations and may involve many political jurisdictions. Procedures for the deployment of resources are set forth in the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan.

Operational Area fire and rescue resources are those made available through the approved and adopted Operational Area (County) Fire and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan. The San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan² includes all resources within the county's political boundaries. San Diego County resources are divided into four geographic and organizational areas called "Zones". The Metro Zone(MZ), once known as "Zone 3", is identified in Annex B of the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan. It consists of the following fire service and rescue emergency agencies:

1. Chula Vista Fire Department (CHV)
2. Coronado Fire Department (CRD)
3. Federal Fire Department – San Diego (FFD)
4. Imperial Beach Fire Department (IMB)
5. Miramar Fire Department (MSM)
6. National City Fire Department (NAT)

7. Poway Fire Department (POW)
8. San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SND)

In cooperation with the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association, the primary purpose of the Metro Zone is to assure a readily accessible pool of resources, apparatus and equipment, to fill mutual aid requests from the agencies it represents. Secondly, the Metro Zone shall maintain an up-to-date pool of qualified personnel to fill incident command system (ICS) positions for area, regional, state, and national needs, if requested.

A system has been developed that provides guidance to Metro Zone departments for meeting the operational standards regarding resource requests including ICS positions, and provides an activation process when requests for ICS-qualified personnel are made through the Metro Zone Coordinator.

PROCEDURE

1. Metro Zone Coordinator

The Metro Zone coordinator is a Fire Chief elected by his/her peers to serve as the point of contact with the Cal OES San Diego area coordinator and facilitate the cooperative and collaborative efforts of each Metro Zone agency.

The Metro Zone coordinator is responsible for the deployment of resources within the zone.

The Metro Zone coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all zone resources follow the policies and procedures pursuant to the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan and California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System.

The Metro Zone coordinator is responsible for maintaining an Emergency Resource Directory (ERD) representative of zone resources (apparatus, equipment, and personnel).

The current Metro Zone coordinator is the Fire Chief of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

2. System Description

All Metro Zone agencies shall follow the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) as established by the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the State Board of Fire Services (SBFS), and the California State Fire Marshal's (CSFM) office. The SBFS recognizes National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310-1 as the model for the CICCS format. It can readily be adapted to "all-risk" use.

The NWCG 310-1 standard includes a system administrator's guide, prerequisites, minimum training standards, experience requirements, physical fitness requirements, currency requirements, and Position Task Books that identify the skills necessary to perform in all the ICS positions.

Metro Zone departments committing personnel to incidents via requests at the zone, regional, state, and federal levels must assure their personnel are trained, prepared, and truly qualified for the assignment. This is imperative when the ICS position is expected to provide supervision over personnel from any other agency, regardless of political jurisdiction. The responsibility and liability rest with each department's Fire Chief to ensure their personnel have been trained, have completed the appropriate trainee experience, maintain currency, and can perform in the field in a safe, competent, and experienced manner. Personnel who respond to fill ICS positions must possess the ability to navigate within the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan.

*** It is extremely important that Metro Zone departments recognize the significance of sending only qualified personnel to fill ICS positions because they not only represent their own department, but also represent all the departments within the Metro Zone.

There are circumstances such as initial attack or immediate need strike teams where the assigned battalion chief is not strike team leader qualified. If it is determined that the incident will go beyond one operational period, typically 12 hours, the battalion chief will be replaced by a qualified strike team leader and the original battalion chief will assume the trainee position. In the event this occurs, it will be the responsibility of the responding agency to provide a qualified strike team leader.

*** This is the one exception to the rule.

3. Responsibilities

Personnel must possess CICCS certification to fill ICS positions requested at the regional, state, and national level. Each Metro Zone fire department is responsible for selecting their personnel for the various ICS positions. Only the Fire Chief of each agency, or their appointed designee, may initiate Position Task Books. Position Task Books shall be initiated only when all other prerequisites have been fulfilled.

Each department retains responsibility for ensuring that proper training/certification has been met and maintained, and that the individual has the appropriate field experience.

Personnel who obtain CICCS certification for an ICS position will be placed in the Metro Zone ERD upon request. The request must be submitted on the appropriate zone's ICS Certification Form, signed by the submitting department's Fire Chief, and include a copy of the position CICCS certificate. All requests shall be forwarded to the designated ERD coordinator.

The Metro Zone ERD shall be updated within the first ten (10) days of every month. Each agency in the zone will be responsible to perform a monthly review and provide any updates to the ERD coordinator by the last day of the month to be included in the next month's updates. The updated ERD shall be made available to all Metro Zone Fire Chiefs. Information in the Metro Zone ERD will also be forwarded to Cal Fire/USFS for inclusion in the San Diego Operational ERD (ROSS).

The Fire Chief of each agency in the Metro Zone shall be responsible for the accuracy of their personnel's deployment status in the ERD roster. It is also the Fire Chief's responsibility to provide qualified personnel for the Metro Zone ERD based upon the requirements found in CICCS. This responsibility includes evaluating personnel for recertification when position qualification has been lost due to a lack of current experience. A key component in the certification and re-certification process is the subjective evaluation by each department's management of an individual's capability to perform in a position.

Completion of prerequisite training and experience requirements alone does not guarantee that an individual is qualified to perform the position's responsibilities. This is the primary reason for ensuring position performance within each individual department before qualification for a position is granted.

In addition to the monthly review, each agency in the Metro Zone is responsible for performing an annual audit (between April and May) of their personnel posted in the ERD to determine position qualification status. Once the review has been completed, written confirmation on department personnel qualification status shall be sent to the Metro Zone coordinator no later than May 31st.