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**ILLINOIS FIRE SERVICE NOTICE**

**November 13, 2020**

**With the resurgence of the COVID-19 Virus, the possibility of**

**fire agencies experiencing personnel quarantines that impact**

**their ability to provide continued service has increased. Many departments today are experiencing personnel shortfalls due to COVID 19 exposures.**

**The Office of the State Fire Marshal, Illinois Fire Chiefs Association and MABAS encourages fire agencies to have in place a**

**Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) to address these**

**potential shortfall situations.**

1. **Stricken agencies can utilize normal mutual aid to request help either through divisional or inter-divisional aid. This can be done immediately.**
2. **If longer term aid is anticipated, and departments have exhausted all avenues of local assistance, consider requesting assistance from IEMA. Contact your local Emergency Management Agency and request that they contact the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and request an Emergency Declaration due to the COVID 19 Pandemic to provide aid. This will allow for the recovery of any expenses incurred by the stricken and providing agencies.**
3. **MABAS can provide logistical support such as shelter systems, Decon Vehicles, Mission Support Units, and decontamination equipment to provide a clean-living environment for assisting personnel.**
4. **It will be greatly appreciated that departments able to aid stricken members please do so. MABAS will do everything possible to provide equipment to keep firefighters safe.**
5. **Please contact your local MABAS Operations Branch Chief or MABAS Operations if you have any questions.**

**Please stay safe and thanks for your efforts during this difficult time.**

**The following pages are a guide produced and issued earlier this year by the Illinois Fire Service Institute and MABAS to assist fire departments in planning for COVID 19 staffing issues.**

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**Purpose:**

This document is intended to assist fire department leadership to discuss and plan for operational adjustment that may be necessary during the COVID-19 Pandemic. These adjustments may be necessary due to a myriad of reasons, such as a reduced workforce due to illness, disruption in EMS supply chain, increased workload, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortages and more.

The discussions and planning process should include your local response partners, labor, management, and municipal leadership.

**Essential Services:**

A first step is to identify the Essential Services provided to the community so adjustments can be made to reassign staff and workload. Examples of fire department essential services are:

* Fire Suppression
* Emergency Medical Services
* Rescue Services

**Planning Discussions:**

Leadership must engage in large scale “What If” scenarios to identity the potential impact of a Pandemic. For each “What If”, a plan/procedure should be developed to mitigate the impact on the Essential Services of the fire department.

Examples of “What Ifs”.

Staffing:

* What is the absolute minimum you need to respond to emergencies in the identified essential services?
  + How many of your personnel are available to meet this minimum?
* How many Mutual-Aid personnel are needed to mitigate this type of response? What is your operational period? (12 hours, 24 hours or otherwise)
* What are your alternate staffing opportunities?
* What are your staffing limitations?
* How are you requesting additional resources?
  + A complete staffed engine?
  + A complete staffed ambulance?
  + Singular personnel request to staff your apparatus?
  + Command Staff coverage?
* Will you require a member from your department to staff your apparatus? Has your village/city/town approved outside agencies to drive, operate, ride in your apparatus?
  + Will MABAS members drive/operate your apparatus?
    - If so, who will drive your apparatus?
    - What training / familiarization is required?
    - Does your insurance cover non-employees to drive/operate your apparatus?
* See USFA Staffing Planning Tool located at <https://fsi.illinois.edu/documents/covid19/first_responder_pandemic_operational_capabilities-2.pdf>

Policies

* Can personnel requested operate in your EMS system or with your personnel with varying medical protocols?
* Labor agreements: What adjustments are needed to address staffing shortages?

Workforce Protection

* PPE requirements, supplies, policies
* Administrative controls
* Quarantine / Isolation policies
* Housing support
* Mental Health support
* Health screening and monitoring
* Employee testing
* Return to work policies

Resource Sharing

* Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGA) and MABAS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide staff and/or apparatus in the event of staffing shortages or depletion.
* Communication with MABAS Division President and MABAS Branch Chief.
* Communication with County Emergency Management Agency Coordinator.

Training

* What familiarization training is required for Mutual-Aid personnel to operate your equipment?
  + Communications – mobile radios
  + SCBA
  + RIT pack, response/deployment
  + Extrication
  + Medical

Housing:

* How and where will you house the relief crew(s)?
  + Some agencies may not want their personnel in your firehouse to reduce exposure to Coronavirus.

Food:

* Will you provide food for the relief crew(s)?
  + If so, how?
  + If not, how will they get and cook food?

Finance

* Is your jurisdiction capable of documenting for federal reimbursement?
* Can your local government fund coverage from other agencies?
* Do you need to setup an intergovernmental agreement (IGA)?
* ICS 214 Unit Log
* Public Assistance Grants <https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/covid19/FSI%20COVID-19%20Overview/Public%20Assistance.cfm>

**Staffing and Resource Tables**

Utilize the tables below to determine staffing and response adjustments based upon Staffing numbers and reduction Number on the previous page. (See Sample 1 & 2.)

**The Fire Department Deployment:**

(Describe your standard deployment in this area)

**Staffing Numbers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of personnel on Department |  |
| Number of Personnel reduced by 10% = Tier 1 |  |
| Number of Personnel reduced by 20% = Tier 2 |  |
| Number of personnel reduced by 30% = Tier 3 |  |
| Number of personnel reduced by 40% = Tier 4 |  |
| Number of personnel reduced by 50% = Tier 5 |  |

**Note:** The personnel reduction percentage can be adjusted by each department based upon planning assumptions.

**Apparatus Assignments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Personnel Needed for Daily Staffing |  |
| Number of Staffed Fire Apparatus |  |
| Number of Staffed EMS Units (Ambulance) |  |

**Contingency Staffing Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tier | 1 (-10%) | 2 (-20%) | 3 (-30%) | 4 (-40%) | 5 (-50%) |
| Scheduling |  |  |  |  |  |
| Min. Staffing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staffed Apparatus |  |  |  |  |  |
| Response Mode |  |  |  |  |  |
| Additional Response |  |  |  |  |  |
| IGA Request |  |  |  |  |  |
| Housing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Meals |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |

**Staffing and Resource Tables – SAMPLE 1**

**The XYZ Fire Department Deployment:**

The XYZ Fire Department daily operations consist of a minimum of 16 on duty frontline response personnel assigned to 3 fire stations. Out of these stations the minimum staffing provides (2) Engine Companies with 3 personnel assigned to each Company and (1) Ladder Company also staffed with 3 personnel. The XYZ Department also deploys (3) ALS Ambulances, staffed with 2 personnel on each rig. Finally, each shift is commanded by a Battalion Chief to complete the 16 personnel minimum. Each shift has 20 total personnel to account for benefit time which enables the department to deploy the 16 daily personnel.

The XYZ Fire Department also works closely with 4 neighboring departments to supplement emergency response with automatic-aid and mutual-aid agreements. These agreements provide apparatus and staff to supplement response ranging from emergency medical responses, fire alarms, and structure fires.

**Staffing Numbers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total number of personnel on Department | **60** |
| Number of Personnel reduced by 10% = Tier 1 | 54 |
| Number of Personnel reduced by 20% = Tier 2 | 48 |
| Number of personnel reduced by 30% = Tier 3 | 42 |
| Number of personnel reduced by 40% = Tier 4 | 36 |
| Number of personnel reduced by 50% = Tier 5 | 30 |

**Note:** Planning Assumption that 50% of our staff will always be available.

**Apparatus Assignments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Personnel Needed for Daily Staffing | 16 |
| Number of Staffed Fire Apparatus | 3 |
| Number of Staffed EMS Units (Ambulance) | 3 |

**Contingency Staffing Plan – SAMPLE 2**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tier | 1 (-10%) | 2 (-20%) | 3 (-30%) | 4 (-40%) | 5 (-50%) |
| Scheduling | Overtime based no change in staffing | Overtime based no change in staffing | Overtime & reduction of a company. Move support staff to line | Overtime, cancel benefit time, reduction of a company and EMS unit | Noted changes at tier 4. Increase mutual aid for response coverage |
| Min. Staffing | 16 | 16 | 13 | 11 | 9 |
| Staffed Apparatus | 3 fire companies / 3 EMS units | 3 fire companies / 3 EMS units | 2 fire companies / 3 EMS units | 2 fire companies / 2 EMS units | 2 fire companies / 2 EMS units |
| Response Mode | Unchanged | Unchanged | Outgoing automatic aid fire responses reduced | Outgoing automatic aid fire/medical responses reduced | Cancelation of outgoing automatic aid |
| Additional Response | Unchanged | Unchanged | Receive increased automatic aid | Receive increased automatic aid | Receive increased automatic aid |
| IGA Request | Not required | Not required | Possible change in aid agreements | Yes, 1 staffed EMS unit for 24-hour periods | Yes, 1 EMS unit and 1 fire company for 24-hour periods |
| Housing | Not required | Not required | Not required | Possibly | Required / Separate quarters for mutual-aid coverage |
| Meals | Not required | Not required | Not required | Possibly | Required |
| Other | Document costs | Consider moving support staff back to line | Designate what aid resources are needed / Consider reduction in benefit time | Designate what aid resources are needed | Place shift commander on fire company - Admin Chief provides shift responses |

**Additional Resources**

Illinois Fire Service Institute

* <https://www.fsi.illinois.edu/content/covid19/>

National Volunteer Fire Council

* <https://www.nvfc.org/coronavirus-19-information-and-resources-for-ems/>

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

* <https://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org/education/covid-19/>

Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois

* [https://www.affi-iaff.org/covid19/](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.affi-2Diaff.org_covid19_&d=DwMFAw&c=OCIEmEwdEq_aNlsP4fF3gFqSN-E3mlr2t9JcDdfOZag&r=38UnvBReZ0LxbzQGQKHW85_hmJ_abyT4L0HarH46S8U&m=IzTh_0CwX2FkKD0czSowYGdD_5zauMShRv-rBQe9JCc&s=jcoqBbnAS-98wUjstcIkYH6mHCd7_JVUMfIvSmnP2YA&e=)​

International Association of Fire Fighters

* [https://www.iaff.org/coronavirus/](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.iaff.org_coronavirus_&d=DwMFAw&c=OCIEmEwdEq_aNlsP4fF3gFqSN-E3mlr2t9JcDdfOZag&r=38UnvBReZ0LxbzQGQKHW85_hmJ_abyT4L0HarH46S8U&m=IzTh_0CwX2FkKD0czSowYGdD_5zauMShRv-rBQe9JCc&s=9o_MsRQbs_k_hGYOYNkN3mCR19iJyMmemzE0mvKtwsA&e=)

U.S. Fire Administration

* [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/coronavirus/index.html](file:///C:\Users\lukehowieson\Library\Containers\com.microsoft.Word\Data\Downloads\•%09https:\www.usfa.fema.gov\coronavirus\index.html)

International Association of Fire Chiefs

* <https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/coronavirus-covid-19>

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

FEMA - Continuity Resources and Technical Assistance

* <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/continuity>