

ANNEX F

FIREFIGHTING

CITY OF HOUSTON

APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

Annex F

Firefighting



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6 Nov 06

Date



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Date

RECORD OF CHANGES

Annex F

Firefighting

Change #	Date of Change	Entered By	Date Entered

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ANNEX F
FIREFIGHTING

I. AUTHORITY

See City of Houston Basic Plan

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to provide the City of Houston with a firefighting plan to meet the demands of a disaster situation. In addition to fire fighting, responsibilities in rescue are also addressed in order to describe a trained and equipped emergency rescue response force which can locate, identify and remove survivors, injured, marooned, and dead from stricken areas.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

NIMS National Incident Management System

RRP Regional Response Plan

Refer to City's Basic Plan.

IV. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

Fire prevention and control are daily problems faced by fire service personnel. These problems become more significant during emergency situations. Several hazards present difficulties with regard to fire protection against conflagrations, explosions, forest fires, nuclear attack, hazardous materials and natural disasters. Severe structural damage from these hazards could result in people being trapped in damaged and collapsed structures, missing persons and casualties.

Fire scenes may present problems requiring a response by law enforcement, public works, utilities, public health authorities, and environmental protection agencies. In these cases, effective interagency coordination using the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) is essential.

B. Assumptions

1. Existing fire personnel and equipment will be able to handle most emergency situations with departmental resources.
2. When additional support is needed, assistance can be obtained through existing mutual aid agreements.
3. A trained, equipped and organized rescue service will provide the capability to conduct search and rescue operations to minimize loss of life, shore up and stabilize weakened structures, release trapped persons and locate the missing or dead.
4. Specially trained and equipped airport units can provide on-airport capability to handle aircraft accidents and rescue of passengers.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The City of Houston is responsible for providing the services to its citizens on which they depend for public health and safety, mobility, and other services that affect quality of life. The Department has the responsibility to lead or assist in the restoration of basic services to accomplish the above in the event of a domestic incident.

During major emergencies, disasters, or catastrophic incidents, it may be necessary to transition from the normal ICS structure to a Multiagency Coordination System. The EOC is central to this System, and functions as a conduit for coordinating information and resources. The IC will manage and direct the on-scene response from the ICP. The EOC will mobilize and deploy resources for use by the IC, coordinate external resource and technical support, research problems, provide information to senior managers, disseminate emergency public information, and perform other tasks to support on-scene operations. In the event of a catastrophic incident, considerations will be made for the implementation of the Regional Response Plan (RRP).

B. General

1. The responsibility of fire services in disaster situations is basically the same as in daily operations.
2. During emergency operations, assistance may be required from the following City departments in order for the Houston Fire Department (HFD) to effectively provide fire control, hazardous material and oil spill response, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) services, and High Water Rescues. These include:
 - Houston Police Department (HPD)
 - Public Works & Engineering Department (PW&E)
 - Houston Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
 - Solid Waste Department (SWD)

Specific support needs from these departments are described in section VI.B of this annex.

C. Protective Action Recommendations

As fire service personnel are generally the most knowledgeable of the threat posed by fire and hazardous materials, they are generally responsible for assessing the threat posed by those hazards and recommending appropriate protective actions for emergency responders to the IC, including requirements for personal protective equipment. Fire service personnel are also responsible for recommending appropriate protective actions for the public in the vicinity of the incidents involving those threats.

D. Evacuation Operations

1. During the response to a fire, flooding or a hazardous materials incident, the IC may determine that expedient evacuation is necessary to protect people at the incident site and in the immediate vicinity. Fire service

personnel and other emergency responders at the incident site will normally warn affected residents and direct their evacuation.

2. For major emergencies and disasters, significant evacuation may be necessary. During such evacuations, the fire service may be tasked to:
 - a. Assist in alerting those in the affected area who have not been warned by other means.
 - b. Assist in the evacuating individuals who require assistance.
 - c. Notify OEM if further coordination is required.

E. Terrorist Incident Response

Refer to Annex V.

F. Requesting External Assistance

Refer to the City's Basic Plan.

G. Phases of Management

1. Prevention

- a. Enforce fire code
- b. Provide public fire safety information programs
- c. Maintain a resource inventory of equipment available for rescue operations
- d. Develop public awareness programs in an effort to reduce accidents
- e. Inspect emergency shelters for compliance with fire codes

2. Preparedness

- a. Maintain equipment
- b. Train fire personnel to include NIMS/ICS. [Our emergency response personnel meet the NIMS national qualification and certification standards.]
- c. Develop communications procedures
- d. Train rescue squads on a regular basis
- e. Test, maintain and repair equipment on a scheduled basis
- f. Revise and update plans at regular intervals
- g. Prepare and execute mutual aid agreements for fire suppression and rescue

3. Response

- a. Contain, control and extinguish fires
- b. Initiate rescue missions as necessary
- c. Mobilize support services and equipment as needed
- d. Conduct radiological monitoring and assessment within

departmental capability. Maintain an operational Radiological Protection Program in accordance with state and federal standards (see Annex D). The NRP Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex addresses the federal response to incidents involving radiological materials

4. Recovery
 - a. Perform inspection of restored or reconstructed buildings
 - b. Perform or assist in decontamination or cleanup
 - c. Recommend condemnation of unsafe buildings

H. National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be used to manage and efficiently mitigate any such incident by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications into a common organizational structure. NIMS is used to organize both near-term and long-term field level operations for a broad spectrum of emergencies, from small to complex incidents, both natural and manmade. Description of the implementation is located within the Basic Emergency Management, Annex I - Public Information, Annex M – Resource Management and Annex N – Directions. Departmental policies and procedures are developed based on these principles.

VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. The Suppression Division of the HFD consists of a network of fire stations located throughout the City and staffed by skilled firefighters who are trained in firefighting and first aid. The HFD also has highly trained specialists in high-rise firefighting, technical rescue, hazardous materials incidents, shipboard incidents and aircraft crash rescue. Suppression is divided into four (4) shifts with twenty-one (21) districts. All firefighting communications are controlled from the Fire Department's Communication Center. The HFD has written mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities surrounding Houston who can furnish additional firefighting equipment upon request.
2. The City Fire Marshal heads a division with the responsibility to enforce all laws of the State of Texas and Ordinances of the City that cover the prevention of fires, the storage and use of explosives and flammables, installation and maintenance of automatic and manual fire extinguishing equipment, the maintenance and regulation of fire escapes and ensure the means and adequacy of exits in case of fire, the investigation of all multiple alarm fires, fire of suspicious nature, fire fatalities, false alarms and all bombings and explosions which occur within the city limits. The operations are conducted primarily from Fire Prevention Headquarters with the utilization of five (5) satellite sub-stations and seven (7) specialized inspection teams.

3. The Chief of the HFD is responsible for the organization, training and operations under the HFD Basic Disaster Plan.
4. A representative from the Fire Chief's headquarters, under disaster conditions, will be located in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), when it is activated.
5. The Fire Chief has appointed Fire Department personnel to serve as the Department's Liaison at the EOC when requested. Responsibility of this individual is to coordinate department residual resources with the EOC and keep other City staff officials informed as to the needs of the HFD.
6. Planning by the Fire Chief or Department planning officers will be accomplished to ensure that the following requirements are met:
 - a. That apparatus and equipment can be assembled, as needed, at command posts near the disaster area
 - b. That personnel and/or equipment can be relocated as conditions dictate
 - c. That command personnel can be assembled at facilities where the Department may be controlled without benefit of normal communication facilities
 - d. That resulting fires can be controlled, whether the operational area is within the boundaries of the City of Houston or in nearby communities of the area
 - e. That emergency operations can be instituted and directed toward the rescue of persons threatened by fire or other disasters

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. HFD
 - a. Coordinate all fire services activity within the City
 - b. Dispatch and deployment of fire/rescue personnel and equipment during an emergency
 - c. Fire control
 - d. Fire prevention
 - e. Fire code enforcement
 - f. Preparation of appropriate mutual aid agreements
 - g. Support for other public safety operations
 - h. Technical rescue operations
 - i. Provide and operate rescue and evacuation boats for shallow and deep water rescue operations
 - j. Provide basic and advanced medical life support
 - k. Fire Protection in Emergency Shelters

2. HPD
 - a. Provide on-scene crowd control
 - b. Provide traffic control
 - c. Provide underwater recovery capability
3. PW&E
 - a. Barricade streets, as necessary, during fire and rescue operations
 - b. Assist in clean-up operations and debris removal as necessary
 - c. Assist as requested with Department's Confined Space Rescue Team
 - d. Provide assistance in the demolition of structures
4. SWD
 - a. Provide assistance with High Water Rescues as necessary.
5. OEM
 - a. Overall responsibility for coordination of City resources as well as those from outside agencies as necessary
 - b. Operation of the EOC to support field operations
 - c. Coordination of State and Federal resources
 - d. Coordinate human service needs for emergency responders and victims with The Salvation Army (TSA)
 - e. Coordinate transportation needs as well as requests for buses to rehab emergency responders with METRO
 - f. Coordinate human service needs with ARC

VII. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. General

1. Emergency procedures for the HFD will become effective when the Fire Chief declares that the Department is confronted with a condition in the category of a major emergency and the situation threatens to develop beyond the control of the facilities and resources of the HFD.
2. During a major emergency or disaster situation, which requires activation of the EOC, the Fire Chief or his/her designee will be responsible for coordinating all emergency fire service operations within the jurisdiction in accordance with NIMS. An on-scene command post will be established at the site of the disaster situation in conjunction with other responding agencies, such as law enforcement. The Fire Chief or his/her designee will establish and maintain communications with the on-scene command post and may direct emergency operations from the EOC in coordination with other responding agency representatives at the EOC. If local capabilities are exceeded, the Fire Chief or his/her designee will request outside assistance from mutual aid agreements. If state or federal resources are needed, the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) or

the Deputy Coordinator will make the request to the local Disaster District Committee Chairperson at DPS Region 2A.

3. In emergency situations where other jurisdictions or state or federal agencies are providing significant response resources or technical assistance, it is generally desirable to transition from the normal ICS structure to a Unified Area Command structure. This arrangement helps to ensure that all participating agencies are involved in developing objectives and strategies to deal with the emergency.

B. Incident Management System - EOC Interface

Refer to the City's Basic Plan.

C. Continuity of Government

A chain of command is clearly established so that the line of authority and succession can be followed in the absence of the Fire Chief, as follows:

1. Assistant Chiefs
2. Deputy Chiefs

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

A. Refer to Basic Plan, Section 3.2.2 for Readiness Levels **Green** and **Blue** (Level IV). Part B-D below are specific to this annex and in addition to actions/activities for the identified readiness levels defined in the Basic Plan.

B. **Yellow** (Level III) – Increased Readiness

1. Monitor the situation and consider situation briefings for senior staff.
2. Alert key personnel, determine personnel availability, and update staff call lists.
3. Check readiness of all equipment and repair or replace as needed.
4. Check status of supply items and restock as needed.
5. Review inter-local agreements for use of firefighting resources operated by other agencies.
6. Review plans and procedures and update them, if necessary.

C. **Orange** (Level II) – High Readiness

1. Alert personnel of possible emergency duty.
2. Place selected personnel and equipment on standby.
3. Identify personnel to staff the EOC and ICP when activated.
4. Prepare to implement inter-local agreements.

D. **Red** (Level I) – Maximum Readiness

1. Mobilize selected fire service personnel.

2. Consider precautionary deployment of personnel and equipment, if appropriate.
3. Dispatch fire service representative(s) to the EOC when activated.

IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

- A. Reports, Records and Preservation of Records
Refer to the City's Basic Plan.
- B. Communications
The HFD Communications system will consist of a combination of landline and radio. Primary control and coordination of all operations, however, will be handled by the existing two-way radio system. Refer to the City's Annex B, Communications, for more information.
- C. Resources
A listing of available fire department resources is found in Appendix 1.
- D. Post Incident Review
Refer to the City's Basic Plan.

X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

- A. The Fire Chief is responsible for developing and maintaining this annex. Recommended changes to this annex should be forwarded as needs become apparent.
- B. This annex will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in the Basic Plan.

XI. REFERENCES

- A. Annex F (Firefighting) to the State of Texas Emergency Management Plan.
- B. Texas Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan, May 1998.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Houston Fire Department Resources
Appendix 2	High-rise Fire Fighting Procedures
Appendix 3	Incident Command Procedures
Appendix 4	Hurricane Procedures
Appendix 5	Fire Service Communications Network

APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX F

Houston Fire Department Resources

A copy of this appendix is on file in the OEM. Can be found on the HFD web site located at <http://www.cityofhouston.gov>.

APPENDIX 2 TO ANNEX F

High-rise Fire Fighting Procedures

A copy of this appendix is on file in the OEM.

APPENDIX 3 TO ANNEX F

Incident Command Procedures

A copy of this appendix is on file in the OEM.

APPENDIX 4 TO ANNEX F

Hurricane Procedures

A copy of this appendix is on file in the OEM.

APPENDIX 5 TO ANNEX F

Fire Service Communication Network

The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Section is an integral part of the Communications Command where all communications, particularly emergency communications, are processed. When the actual emergency occurs, the OEC immediately begins the process of minimizing the effects of the emergency. Dispatchers process the information to provide timely responses of the necessary equipment and personnel to the scene of an incident and assist callers with suggested instructions for preliminary medical treatment prior to the responding units arrival.

The Office of Emergency Communications has the primary duty of immediately processing information when notified that an emergency has occurred within the city. The emergency incident may encompass an extensive range of critical situations such as fire-related incidents, hazardous material incidents, or a variety of medical emergencies that require immediate attention. Less critical communications within the department are also received and disseminated throughout the OEC. Numerous administrative communications are received, processed, and relayed, as required, to provide information that is necessary to assist other Commands in accomplishing the department's overall objective. Information is also disseminated through this section to other entities outside of HFD.

A Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System allows the Dispatcher to perform the functions required in a more expedient manner. CAD performs the decision-making process to accommodate the EMS Tiered Dispatch procedure.

The Senior Telecommunicator provides instructions to the caller to assist in medical treatment prior to the arrival of the emergency apparatus. The instructions are programmed within the CAD System to enhance the capabilities of the Dispatcher.

The Communications Management Section provides the engineering, system implementation and maintenance of the HFD Communication Alerting System, and the Emergency Medical Telemetry System. This section is also responsible for all mobile radios, portable radios, emergency pagers, and electronic warning equipment. Communications Management consists of four subsections: Administration, Central Radio Repair, Communication System Repair and Electronic Parts Supply. Communications Management provides emergency communication repairs for the Dispatch Center and emergency medical/fire apparatus service 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

The communications network includes station alerting, mobile data computers with status reporting, a multi-point simulcast voice radio network, portable and mobile radios, interoperability gateway devices, cellular telephones, and satellite telephones.