

Fire and Emergency Services

Responses to 1/20/10 meeting questions

What % of businesses do not rebuild after experiencing a fire?

According to the United States Bureau of Business Statistics, 49% of businesses that suffer a substantial fire loss or interruption of business will not reopen for business. Of those businesses that reopen 24% will fail within the first year.

What is the exact number of positions authorized for the department?

The 2010 budget authorizes 849 positions, including the positions added for Stations 18, 29, and 30.

What is the potential impact to fire services if the airport begins offering scheduled passenger flights?

There are many potential scenarios, but basically there could be a requirement to have dedicated, on-site crash-rescue fire protection. The level of service would be determined by the size and capacity of aircraft and could range from 1 to 4 pieces of equipment. Staffing could range from 2 to 15 personnel depending on the number of vehicles required. Minimum staffed service would be required at least 20 minutes prior to the first flight of the day until 20 after the last flight of the day. Maximum staffed service would be 24 hours per day. Funding could come from various sources depending upon contract agreements. Some grant funds may be available. It is too early to determine the exact impact.

With regard to hydrant maintenance, have there been any instances of a “bad hydrant” in the last year?

We are still researching.

What new technology is being utilized or researched for improvements in efficiency?

Our department is always searching for advancements in technology that are designed to improve efficiency as well as the safety of our citizens and firefighters.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC) – every station is equipped with a TIC which allows firefighters to “see” through smoke to locate victims and hidden fire.
- Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) – improvements are being made in the radio upgrade that will eventually allow the computer to select the closest units to dispatch.
- Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) – provide dispatch information to responding units with regard to the incident.
- Pictometry/Mapping – MDTs are equipped with mapping overlays for hydrants, etc., as well as digital still pictures of the county. Allows responding units to view the area of the incident as well as some digital pre-fire plans (blueprints).
- Large diameter supply lines – 5” hose used to supply fire pumps on apparatus, essentially allows the water main to be “moved” directly to the fire pump.
- GPS – GPS units placed on ambulances provide the driver direct routing to hospitals which reduces transport times.
- Patient monitoring – advances in equipment allow more monitoring options and better transfer of information to the hospital and faster transfer of information to patient care reports.
- Smart fire trucks – new fire apparatus will be equipped with additional safety features, including seat belt mechanisms that will not allow the engine to start unless each passenger is belted.
- Mechanized stretchers – lifting is the number one cause of back injuries to firefighters, stretchers equipped with power-lifting devices will minimize this type of injury.

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- Data collection/utilization – programs and reporting mechanisms are constantly being researched to improve the collection of useful data.
- Patient Care Reports (PCR) – working with Finance and IT to outsource the computers, maintenance, and repair of the computers used by all units for PCRs. The object is to improve the efficiency of reporting (less time out of service) and replace worn computers. The advantage of outsourcing would be to eliminate the department's liability for maintenance, repairs, and replacement of the hardware and software.

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