



COVID-19 Fire Department Continuity of Operations Plan

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 identify 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?



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- 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.



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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>



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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)	



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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



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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	Cancellation 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



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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/>

International Association of Fire Fighters

- <https://www.iaff.org/coronavirus/>

U.S. Fire Administration

- <https://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>