This Afternoon's Fire

06/01/07 75 W, 1 I - **+** 12 **-** 12

Command just cleared from Redford Place Drive, where two single-family dwellings plus a patch of woods burned late this afternoon. Rolesville, Wake Forest, Hopkins, New Hope, Wendell, and Eastern Wake fire departments, plus Rolesville EMS and Wake EMS and that big, honkin' (literally!) Special Ops truck, and a bunch of other folks. Mike battled the traffic and took 350+ pictures after finally arriving. They'll be posted soon.

Where was Engine 28, you ask? They were neither requested nor dispatched. How far were they from the scene? Mapquest says 4.20 miles.
Legeros - 06/01/07 - 21:55

AND YET THE CAD/COMPUTER IS NEVER WRONG!!!! I'm sorry folks, the lines need to be dropped, as well as the criteria in the CAD (speed limits) changed. Look at Charlotte, they had to do it because the system was so out of whack (hint, hint). Put a set speed limit in the CAD and hopefully that will help a little bit with these crazy responses, at least within the city limits anyways.
Silver - 06/02/07 - 11:22

CAD (and any computer system) is only as strong (or as weak) as the logic programmed therein. Station 28 (or any other fringe city station) was not automatically dispatched by choice, with that choice being the combination of SOPs and algorithms and what have you chosen by RFD, ECC, and others. So, no, CAD really isn't ever wrong. It's just the programming that some take issue with.
Legeros - 06/02/07 - 18:46

"Where was Engine 28, you ask?" This "where was Raleigh" question is rather one sided and getting old. Why don't you ask where was Falls, Bay Leaf, Durham Hwy, Eastern Wake, New Hope, Swift Creek, Western Wake, etc when a call is close to them? They are very capable departments that could be arriving prior to Raleigh units, but aren't asked for or dispatched either. So let's see a different viewpoint from time to time.
WC - 06/02/07 - 19:10

wc, i agree with you! Every time there is a major fire in the county, somebody wants to start with the "where was Raleigh" thing. Too many times, fires happen so close to volunteer departments and are never called for. Drop the lines? Same can be said for them also!
so true! - 06/02/07 - 22:28

What I don't get is when the commander asks to re-dispatch departments. If the piece of equipment didn't roll on the initial dispatch, it isn't coming. I have heard this a few times this year. I also know that the departments mentioned by WC had radios in hand ready to respond.
LtEng3 - 06/02/07 - 23:24

Don't worry, starting Monday CAD will dispatch the closest unit regardless if it's city or county along with the appropriate unit. A ton of people wanted "closest unit dispatch" and now we're getting it. So I guess now everybody will have to read about how the county wishes the city would stay in the city since E-28 probably would have been first-in to this call and steal some of the county's "thunder".
pal - 06/02/07 - 23:32

We will see how this works out but I unfortunately don't believe this is going to help the problem…
Roger - 06/03/07 - 01:12

Pal, not sure where you're getting your info from but CAD is not going to closest unit dispatch on Monday for anyone. EMS is PROJECTED to begin later in June but there is no date for fire yet. CAD is programmed with all the information that is provided by each individual department. It is not decided by us down in the ECC. This includes response capabilities (engine, ladder truck, tanker, first responder etc etc etc) that each department decides for each piece of apparatus. If something is not being recommended properly, usually it is because the capability is not correct and the department needs to periodically check to see what apparatus is what. I don't have to tell you how many call swaps we do a day! I'm sure you guys hear it. I keep telling everyone I talk to on the phone every day to come down and visit or sit in here for a while. We are happy to explain how CAD really works for those who think they know already. We welcome any Fire/EMS personnel to come visit. Many have come down here and left with a new or at least different perspective on things and we have learned things from them in the process as well. So until you come down and see it first hand on this side of the radio, leave room for the benefit of the doubt.
Raleigh 911 - 06/03/07 - 03:44

First, a corrected distance. Closer to 5 miles. Because it is a newly added resource on that side of the county, Station 28 certainly crossed my mind more than once as I was monitoring and later responding to Friday's fire. Ergo my posted comment. Who else was close/not close?

1.5 – Rolesville
4.8 – Raleigh (Sta 28)
~5.0 – New Hope (Sta 2)
6.6 – Wake Forest (Sta 2)
~7.5 – Wake Forest (Sta 1)
7.9 – Raleigh (Sta 25)
~8.0 – Wendell (Sta 2)
8.6 – Raleigh (Sta 22)
8.8 – Raleigh (Sta 19)
~9 – Hopkins
9.0 – Bunn (Sta 2)
9.4 – New Hope (Sta 1)
9.6 – Raleigh (Sta 27)
11.1 – Raleigh (Sta 15)
11.6 – Youngsville (Sta 1)
11.7 – Knightdale (Sta 1)
11.7 – Raleigh (Sta 21)
11.9 – Raleigh (Sta 11)
12.5 – Falls
12.6 – Youngsville (Sta 1)
12.9 – Eastern Wake (Sta 2)
~13 – Stony Hill (Sta 1)
13.1 – Knightdale (Sta 2)

Apologies to any stations or departments omitted. I stopped calculating around 13 miles.

That's your super perfect-world run card. Omit Franklin County for a more realistic perfect-world run card.

Resources utilized: Google Maps (primary), MapQuest (second), and Carolinas Fire Page list of North Carolina fire stations:

http://www.firenews.net/contents/nc_fds...

Some distances are estimated, as the mapping sites did not plot direct routes.

Here's an outdated Wake County fire station map, as well: http://www.legeros.com/ralwake/galleryw/..
Legeros - 06/03/07 - 06:19

I understand that monday will be the turn on date for response to the city from the county. this coming from wake county fire services. they sent out an e-mail stating that monday would be the "turn on " date.
kprice205 - 06/03/07 - 07:45

Redispatched? Why? I agree LtEng.3. If they did not come the first time, get somebody else. GPS with staffed, in-service units will save alot of time.
so true! - 06/03/07 - 07:51

I wouldn't always agree with mapquest or CAD for that matter about who is closer to many calls. It calculates some strange routes and speeds. And 911 dude, no disrespect at all, but unless your the top dog you don't have any idea what is coming. just like the rest of us.
WC - 06/03/07 - 08:46

The above distances that are approximate are estimates, due to those strange routes suggested by Google Maps and MapQuest. Edited my comments above to reflect same.
Legeros - 06/03/07 - 08:51

The assignments to this fire were not done by 911, but by the Fire Department whose district it was in (initially), and then by the Incident Commander on the scene.

Extra resources were specifically called for by the IC, such as "Dispatch Hopkins for manpower or coverage."

One other element that took place was an unsolicited Fire Chief calling the IC on the Tac channel and saying "if you need help, just let us know." What if every Chief in the county did that? That really equates to self-dispatching, something that should not be endorsed or encouraged.

Soap box time: Dispatchers down at 911 should be given the authority to dispatch appropriate resources. That's what they are there for. They are the ONLY ones who can see the "big picture" and know where resources are and what their status is. Incident Commanders should request a resource(s) by type, NOT by a specific department. So instead of "Have Holly Springs respond Engine 1 and Swift Creek send Engine 2," the request should be "Dispatch me an additional two engines." Then the DISPATCHERS decide what resources are most appropriate based on location and status.

Having the IC decide WHO to send is inappropriate. What if Engine 2 is on a medical call? How would the IC know that? The IC also wouldn't know if additional major incidents were taking place (unless told so by the dispatcher).

I also think coverage assignments should be handled by the 911 folks. Again, they are the only ones seeing the "Big Picture," knowing how many calls are on-going, where resources are (or aren't), how intensive the phones are ringing, what the weather radar looks like, etc. The IC at an incident should be concentrating on mitigating HIS incident, not worrying if there are enough ladders left for coverage in his part of the county.

It's also doubtful that an IC at a scene would correctly know which companies are closer as he/she needs extensive additional resources. If an incident needed 12 engines, 12 tankers and four ladders, that is TOO much for the IC to compute and place an order for.

Take a look at how EMS does it. When they roll up on a wreck and see multiple patients, their request is "Send me two additional ambulances," NOT "send me EMS3 and 1272." Also look at how EMS handles station coverage.

Exiting the soap box.

The current situation places too many tasks on the IC (creating a less-safe fireground) and doesn't allow the folks at 911 to do what they do

best.

harkey ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 06/03/07 - 11:05

Something else, the "where was Raleigh" question may remain relevant in the context of fully-staffed units. An IC who (rightly or wrongly) "calls for Raleigh" (or Cary, or Durham, or…) knows that they'll be sent a fully-staffed unit. And at any time of day or night. Food for thought, or more flogging of that particular dead horse.

Legeros - 06/03/07 - 12:19

Well mike, there are many volly depts in wake county that have 24hr career staffing, and others that are staffed with night crews.

Guest from the West - 06/03/07 - 12:42

Yes there are. The question "where was Raleigh" can be rephrased as "where was [the as-of-yet-dispatched department with career staffing]" or, more generally, "where was [the as-of-yet-dispatched department with the fully-staffed unit]?"

Legeros - 06/03/07 - 12:44

Rolesville IS staffed 24 with 2 career people, Rolesville also asked to increase to 4 per shift, but the county turned them (as well as everybody else in the county down)... but… the day of the fire, yes we (the career) staff on the first truck (ENG 151, that only seats 2) and because we had volly's at the station responded with engine 153 (seats 6) with 5 more people. so upon arrival with the chief we had 8 on scene within 2 min. I am not arguing with the fact that 28 could and should have been called. We (Eng 151) called for Wake Forest, (since new hope was dispatched automatic aid) while we were en route, we saw the smoke and called for them. So Mike, we being Rolesville did respond the department with career staffing, and yes we responded a fully staffed unit, and even responded a second fully staffed unit along with the first. And for argument sake, yes this is not a regular thing; we usually roll an engine with 2 people and hope the volly's come fast, and depend on mutual aid for help. Please don't think I am arguing about not calling Raleigh, I feel that you should call anybody and everybody if you need help… Raleigh, Cary, Morrisville, who ever. I don't feel that every fire in the county needs Raleigh to respond. I will agree that if we should call Raleigh for help, should they not call us for help.

One more thing, I again say we need to use our resources, no matter who it is, however, leaving 28 in service gave the ability for that engine to cover that area, city or county… also getting use to the station being there, and being able to use it, may take some time… shouldn't but reality is some things you don't think of new resources.

Mike, I am not trying to argue with you on this issue, please don't get me wrong. At Rolesville were are staffed 24 hour with career people, maybe if the county will fund things we can go to a 4 man company until then our hands are tied.

lee price...nh & rrfd - 06/03/07 - 13:36

Thanks for your comments Lee (as well as everyone else). To clarify my 12:44 comment, I have amended my comment to read "[the as-of-yet-dispatched department".

Legeros - 06/03/07 - 13:49

I promise you all it is not all that bad here, it could be worse as it is shown on this news story (follow the link), we can have that here
http://www.kpho.com/news/13397618/detail..#

Swiman - 06/03/07 - 20:24

As Harkey said, the request needs to be "send me another 2 engines" PERIOD. Not "send me an engine from New Hope and an engine from Wake Forest". When you need help, you need help right then. To heck with leaving an engine in place to handle what might happen, that's why you have "company move-ups". Tell the Comm. Center what resource you need, not agency specific. Then, they can handle moving units into place to cover the holes, much like EMS does and it seems to work just fine.

Silver - 06/03/07 - 20:43

silver, i agree with you on this I was just simply saying and playing the "other side" that 28 could have covered the area….I agree use the resources that you have close. Also I think that even when we requested wake forest, if we would have said send me another engine, wake forest would have been the next engine to come..
Yes, move-ups, yes, use resources, and yes tell the com center what you need not who….

lp - 06/03/07 - 21:12

oops, that was me who sent that, forgot to put my name

lp - 06/03/07 - 21:26

Silver, one more thing… Not trying to open up a can of worms, but one downfall about "send me another 2 engines" is if your department or the department going automatic aid (which would or should be next closest) has rolled its trucks, cad will recommend units that are sitting in station, not staffed and in some cases not coming because the people who run the calls are responding on the first truck. Again I AGREE with the phrase "send me _____" however some times, in fact most times this only will get you another activation from your own department, or another activation from your neighboring department who is already coming. We at New Hope have been marking units that are not staffed, out of service during the daytime hours. We also changed our run order to include 1 engine, 2 PA'S, (mutual aid engines for anyone who does not know what a PA is). This will dispatch our engine and an engine from 2 different departments. This should give you 3 staffed engines to a fire call.

So far it works. I don't want to come across as crossing words with you silver, I think we have mostly the same point of view pertaining to this…staffing would help this issue, We just need to keep working together and be hopeful that it all works out.

lp - 06/03/07 - 21:28

Glad you said something lp because I was just about to. In the perfect world you could request two additional units and be fine with it, but in this world CAD recommends the next closest unit even if the unit is sitting in a station that has already been dispatched and hasn't rolled yet.

Roger - 06/04/07 - 00:45

That is 100 percent not true. A unit will not be recommended if it is in a dispatch status.

Raleigh 911 - 06/04/07 - 03:45

Say, for example, a Station has more than one engine. If "____ Engine 1" has already been dispatched (but hasn't rolled out the door yet), and command on scene asks for the next closest engine, would CAD not recommend "____ Engine 2" if it is, in fact, the next closest engine?

If the first Engine didn't have enough staffing to get out the door initially, how long will it take to get that second truck out the door?

Luke - 06/04/07 - 07:06

Sorry, don't know why the text showed up like that.

Luke - 06/04/07 - 07:07

If there is a second engine at the station that is in service and not dispatched initially it could be recommended and dispatched with the request for more apparatus. We try to not let the happen should we see that is the case, however, we have no idea what staffing levels at the station are at any given time. This is why some have suggested that departments only keep in service in CAD whatever apparatus they are able to staff during any shift. For example, if you have 5 engines in the station and only have enough personnel to get 2 of them out the door, then put the other three out of service in CAD and the next true 10-8 unit will be recommended. If extra staff arrives at the station then you mark the next piece in service ready for the next call. Not a perfect solution but it might eliminate this problem on most occasions.

Raleigh 911 - 06/04/07 - 07:22

lp, this is a whole different topic that we spoke about a few weeks ago, showing units as "in service" but not being staffed and having them dispatched to calls. My brother from the MD (Anne Arundel I believe) area who frequents this blog has a great concept that I think would work. Care to comment on that again? It all, as a whole, needs to be looked at for the system to run a little better….

Silver - 06/04/07 - 08:07

Raleigh 911:

I would like to take you up on the invitation to visit the 911 Center. It's been two years or so since I've been down, with tons of changes since.

What people need to realize is that Wake County has one of (if not THE) most sophisticated 911 operations in the state. Not sure, but they may be processing more fire-rescue calls than Mecklenburg County now (Meck is two centers…. one county, one city).

It's been quite a feat to go from a few VHF channels to Locution, new-CAD and Viper in such a short time.

Please contact me at newsdesk at firenews.net

Thanks!

harkey ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 06/04/07 - 08:33

Raleigh911, Perhaps you can recommend to your boss that the staffing issue should be looked into to enhance the operation of our CAD

system. A lot of good ideas have been brought forth on this blog, and this issue of showing unstaffed units in service has been an issue before in counties in Maryland and No. Virginia. There are a few contributors on this blog that can provide some valuable insight and quite possibly a solution to this issue.
Silver - 06/04/07 - 08:35

silver, I agree…what needs to be done is the system as a whole looked at and the best…(even if it is not the favorite) way to provide staffed units to a call.
lp - 06/04/07 - 12:46

lp- When you mark unstaffed units out of service do you mark the brush trucks, tankers, or spec. trucks out of service and if so how does that affect your department being dispatched to calls these trucks would goto?
[Engine1B] - 06/04/07 - 17:13

All, The mindset has to change. No longer will it be running back and forth to the station in POV's to get a truck. That's where the county should step in and switch to a county fire department, implementing duty crews that are on duty at the station, staffing various units.

One proposal was brought forth the other week, by someone from Anne Arundel County, Maryland and how they used the DEK boxes. I sure wish he'd speak up, or if Mike could re-post "how they did it". It seems the way he described would work for Wake County. I think it was DJ?
Silver - 06/04/07 - 18:49

Engine1b, at station one, we mark one engine out, the tanker, and the first responder truck. At station 2, we mark to of the three tankers, and one engine. we leave the brush and rescue because we have people to run these trucks.

silver, have to disagree on this one….if the county tried to take over, 1. they don't own the stations or most of the equipment. 2. the volly's would say ok we will go home. then the county has to provide staffing and equipment. I understand that if the whole county had paid staffing, and the county owned all the equipment, perfect world. In a real world, this wont happen. the county does not have the money or the backbone to force the county departments to do any thing close to this. Not arguing on this point, but having lived here all my life and been in the county fire service for 18 years, I know what the real county world is. Not saying you don't, but politics wont allow your suggestion.

Please understand, I don't want to argue on this point, I understand your point of view…I just am speaking mine
lp - 06/04/07 - 19:28

No arguing here…..opinions are like "you know-whats", we all have one and they usually stink. Something has to be done though. It's getting a little silly to be quite honest…..
Silver - 06/04/07 - 20:21

IT was me…Anne Arundel County, MD (AACOFD) has the staffing status logged into CAD. If it ain't staffed, it ain't dispatched. Not so say that volunteer or off-duty personnel can't come up and put a unit available if needed. If I can find the other post I'll repost it, if ofr no other reason than to take up bandwidth.
DJ ([Email](#)) - 06/04/07 - 23:17

Cant' find it, so short version-

Units are listed in CAD based upon their staffing "in the station".
STATUS 1- Dependant staffing, meaining the staffing is shared with other units in the station, i.e. brush trucks, tankers, light wagons, etc.
STATUS 2- Dedicated staffing, meaning that no matter what, that unit has a dedicated staff.

So,using my old station, #28/Odenton-
ENGINE 281- S2
ENGINE 282- S1
ENGINE 283- S1
TRUCK 28 (ladder)- S2
BRUSH 28- S1
AMBULANCE 28 (BLS)- S1 daytime

At any time, if enough personnel are present, a unit can be put into S2. If ENGINE 281 and TRUCK 28 are dispatched on a call, then everything

else reverts to S3 (out of service).

It worked then (in 1991) and it still works. And AACO is a lot like Wake (urban/suburban/rural).
DJ ([Email](mailto:)) - 06/04/07 - 23:30

There are a lot of assumptions being made that county units responded with little or no staffing. I can attest to the units from my dept. There was more staffing on our units then any 1 Raleigh Eng. I am not arguing that Sta 28 is not closer then others, however if they don't know how to get there 1 mile doesn't make a big difference. I have witnessed them sitting on there apron for 2 mins trying to figure out how to get to calls in the own area. I am not picking on Sta 28 specifically, but .2 miles or .3 miles is a difference of what 10 sec. How many calls have you been on where 10 sec made a difference. And hate to break it to you if the roofs burn off the bulldozers are coming either way
deh4908 ([Email](mailto:)) - 06/04/07 - 23:50

Until the Good Old Boy Club (aka Fire Commission) is comprised of taxpayers concerned with improving the fire service and not concerned with building multi-million dollar stations to fill with $80,000 brush trucks, you guys are barking up the wrong tree. The County and the 911 Center act upon the wishes of the Fire Commission and the local fire chiefs. Sure, in MD they have a system that works and that could be adopted to meet the situation in Wake County. But they are also the ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT – from their website… "Prior to the establishment of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, fire protection in Anne Arundel County was provided by individual community volunteer fire departments… In 1965, county charter government was established and the present-day Anne Arundel County Fire Department was formed. Harry W. Klasmeier was appointed the first Fire Chief and served until 1983." They enjoy having 1 FIRE CHIEF and 1 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE. Therefore, they have 1 source for configuration of their CAD system – and not the multiple local little plans you hear on the radio in Wake County. A few weeks ago, there was a thread here along the lines of "how to get involved in change". Go back and read what some folks posted. If you want to see things change, and you are sure that you can live what what you ask for – go for it. Taxpayers can't support this clusterf*&k forever. And yes, I've emailed my elected officials with excerpts from this and other blogs to illustrate just how screwed up the current County fire situation is.
Concerned Taxpayer - 06/05/07 - 07:09

Concerned Taxpayer, you have posted on this site don't know if any others, you say that you have e-mailed your elected officials with excerpts from this blog, all I can say is thanks.

Thank you for doing that, We are on this blog to discuss and sometimes vent our feelings, most of us know who the others are because we don't hide behind ID names that don't say who we are. We try to interact and make things better, not just put them down. Like I said in other blogs' get involved and get the whole story.

Again I say thanks, for helping us in our fight by e-mailing your elected officials. We too have e-mailed them, in fact talked to them in person.

Your opinion of the county fire situation being screwed up… do something to fix it, not just talk about it and cuss at it.
lp - 06/05/07 - 07:55

Hey deh4908, not sure what part of the county you're from. But, I can say your comment isn't necessarily true. In Apex a few years ago we had a lightning strike that burned part of the roof off of a house. However, because of aggressive INTERIOR firefighting the house was remodeled and still stands today. Check out apexvfd.org and look up the Fairfax Woods Dr. fire a few years ago.
Silver - 06/05/07 - 10:35

One question. I understand it as that each individual department owns the trucks and building. But who owns the fire department the citizens correct? Then if the county takes over all fire districts, that means they are now citizens of the county fire district and the trucks and buildings they already own get turned over to the county right? Just a question trying to figure things out.
Adam Brown - 06/05/07 - 12:58

Concerning AACOFD… yes, there is a county fire department. They staff numerous stations in the county. However, there are numerous volunteer companies as well. I worked out of two of them, Orchard Beach #11 and Odenton #28. Having the county fire department command structure certainly helped that situation. There were county employed battalion chiefs who were the ICs, unless the local volunteer chief was on scene and it was their first due area.

Now, one other thing about AACO- you just did not elect anyone to a position. At #11 and #28, we were limited to electing officers who met the county's qualifications. When I was there I was a certified FF III, EMT-P, D/O (heavy and tiller), RT, and met certain officer qualifications. I met the requirements for Lt or Capt (I was a lieutenant). You did not get on a fire truck unless you were certified FF I and FR, and that was

limited to a brush truck only. To ride the engine it was FF II, EMT-B, HM Ops.

It was very structured and took some getting used to. Would it work here? Sure. But it would take some changes on the part of EVERYONE (top to bottom).

Now, having been born and raised in Raleigh, and having spent the first 12 years of my emergency career here, do I see it happening?

That depends. I'm one. One or two cannot do it. It will take a lot of people standing up, being counted, and dealing with the potential consequences (good or bad).

DJ (Email) - 06/05/07 - 23:48

I think working towards placing unstaffed units out of service is where we need to start, a county fire chief would be nice also...see thread on the watch desk a few weeks ago.

Roger - 06/06/07 - 02:07

Hello guys! I just could not pass this one by. Jeff, nothing against you brother, but I cannot agree with your concept of the incident commander not having the ability to request specific departments. The IC is the one standing in the front yard looking at the objective. Since the inception of the command structure the IC has made the calls. It all boils down to competence and confidence. How competent is the IC managing the incident? Has he/she been there and done that? And knowing that fact will determine how confident one feels about oneself when they are managing an incident. I wouldn't won't to rely on a telecommunicator to pick my companies unless they were fire service specific personnel. I know that many of you have listened to the FDNY dispatchers. Those men and women are the bomb! They seem to know just as much if not more than the fire ground personnel. Why? Because most of them were firefighters. They are solely dedicated to being fire dispatchers. 24/7, 365.

I have no problem managing a fire incident, regardless of type or severity. The larger and more complex the incident, the better I can function. I have managed several structural fires in the almost year that I have been here. The one lesson that I have learned is do not rely on the dispatcher to make the correct calls for you. There are too few of them on duty at one time to have one dedicated for solely fire incidents. During the period of time that a fire is occurring they are having to manage other agencies needs also. So, when I pick up the radio and say give me two additional departments, I usually get two of the same departments that have already been committed to the incident. Is it the dispatchers fault? No! Is it the computers fault? No! The automated system is spitting out what has been programmed into it. That is why it is best to request specific departments. I have not had a problem with any incident since I started utilizing that method.

Let's talk about the closest unit response thing! Once the initial companies are transmitted to operate at an incident, the IC should think about stretching out and picking up mutual aid from other departments. Don't strip the area that is immediately surrounding your response area. There may come a time that it may be feasible to omit Engine 28 from a box to ensure that adequate coverage is available for another incident in the area. And it just isn't Engine 28 that I am referring to. It could be any firehouse. We need to be thinking about what we have available to us at certain times of the day. Let's take the Rolesville fire. At the time it was transmitted it was time for most day time working volunteers to be off or getting off. During the Rolesville fire we committed an Engine of 4, a Ladder of 4, the Air Unit with 2, Car-1 and 2 additional volunteer chief officers. We still had an Engine of 4 available at both firehouses, a Rescue Truck of 4 volunteers, an acting Battalion Chief, a volunteer chief officer and a medical response unit of 2. So it may have been feasible at that time to skip over specific firehouses to ensure adequate coverage within the areas that were already stripped out. Had this incident occurred in the early daylight hours the response to this incident would have been quite different.

Another issue to juggle is the competency level of the personnel responding. Just because you are closer doesn't mean that you are better choice. Since my time here I have witnessed personnel from other organizations showing up wearing full beards and wearing an SCBA on their backs. Is that acceptable in these days and times? No! I have also seen personnel assigned tasks during incidents that were never completed because they didn't know how. Are these bad people? No, but the individual organizations need to start being held accountable for their actions and ensure that discipline is instilled in their departments. Not the punishment discipline, but the type that ensures competency on the fireground. I have said it before and I will say it again; before you start making decisions for others to follow you need to fix the real problems first. Without addressing the real issue, the others have already failed. Instead of beating each other up and attempting to close firehouses, we need to be fighting to ensure that everyone knows their job before we stand downtown Raleigh and hand their family a flag topped with a rose. Well, I'm through. Take Care guys and be safe.

chief swift (Email) - 06/06/07 - 21:00

Chief:

Great points. I completely understand the concerns in reference to requesting resources and having to worry about how qualified those resources showing up will be.

In terms of not stripping areas, I think the county could make better use of resources by moving companies around more often (coverage). That decision should be able to be made at the dispatch center, but too often it falls back on the chiefs in the field.

At one point quite a few years ago, the Raleigh CAD specifically pulled third alarm units from across town for this very reason. At the time, only two engines were on each alarm. So when the IC asked for a third alarm at Cameron Village, he got Engine 12!

When you ask for a third alarm, odds are, you really don't want to be waiting for those guys to drive across town.

Staying with Raleigh for a minute, it seems when they have a working fire now, which commits four engines from one area, a minimum of TWO engines should be moved in to cover those firehouses. The first place to look for those companies is at double houses (1, 11, 16, 20, 22, 23, 26). Split those companies, and move two engines into the open territories. I would also advocate making sure one of the engines specifically cover the firehouse who is first due on the fire. That way, if additional resources are required on the fire, you can be assured that you will have at least one company relatively close.

I believe these decisions are currently made by the Battalion or Division Chief.

On a side note, I have an appointment tomorrow afternoon to go down to the basement at 911 and see some of the recent improvements in person.

Everyone be safe.
harkey ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 06/07/07 - 09:48

EMS already does this (when certain EMS trucks are out of service CAD moves units to fill the holes). Back fill and move up procedures on the fire side are way behind hopefully that will be addressed sometime.
wcff - 06/07/07 - 11:33

EMS utilizes CAD's ability to assign units to "key station coverage" in order to distribute remaining resources. For various areas, conditions are defined. For example, Wake Forest Main (EMS) station is a key station, and Rolesville Main is a "conditional" station for EMS 10. If either of those stations has a unit in it, no problem. If both of them are not covered, then CAD will assign a unit to "move up" to cover.

It's not perfect, but it works pretty well. As an IC, the last thing I need to be worrying about is the state of the county or some part of it – I need to be paying attention to the incident and the safety of my people. Let someone in a nice cool room look at the map and keep the geography covered.

One other thing we do when there are extraordinary demands on the system. We send a senior EMS officer to RWECC to assist with managing deployment issues. This person can look beyond key station coverage and talk about next-county units, etc.

I do have concerns about judging the "competency" of other responders. Unless I personally know the people on the other responding units, and I have examined them in their professional qualifications, I can't really make an informed judgment about their expertise. Otherwise, I'm just going on reputation or gossip or whathaveyou about their organization. So when it's me in the hot seat, I'm going to have faith that my fellow chiefs have trained their people well and that they are competent to do their jobs. If the arrive (soon, I hope) and prove themselves incapable or incompetent, I'll send them off the incident and get someone else. In this county, with all the part time work, the staff on your neighboring responders' vehicles is likely to be your own (or someone else's good) staff moonlighting.

It remains true….the citizens in their time of need do not care a whit about whose name is on the side of the responding unit.

Skip
Skip Kirkwood ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 06/07/07 - 13:10

Harkey, I've been saying that for years. When you call for help, you want them ASAP. Unless, you make a special call for a relief unit, during the heat of battle you need units right away. Then, have move-ups to cover the open spaces. Other "big city" dept.'s have been doing this for

ages, imagine that.
Silver - 06/07/07 - 13:50

Most days when I can, I also listen to Charlotte and Mecklenburg County from here (because there is just NEVER enough NOISE in my office), and Charlotte Fire Alarm regularly moves their units around. Again, it's done by the Fire Alarm Dispatchers, because they can see the "Big Picture" about on-going incidents and coverage problems.

They also have had the advantage of AVLs on their trucks for a few years, and dispatching resources based on actual vehicle locations significantly changes response patterns. (They can also tell a unit when they missed a turn, tell a Chief who their next due company is, etc)

Skip:

What locations have been designated as Key Coverage stations?

I'm guessing by what I hear everyday it's EMS-8, Six Forks Main, Garner Main, and some others.
harkey (Email) (Web Site) - 06/07/07 - 14:42

I will refrain from using my name, because some people who used to be my professional colleagues decided to take things I said on this blog and use them for their personal gain. However, I am a part of this entire system.

Key stations:

NC State – old EMS 8
Six Forks Main
Garner Main
Martin Center – Wendell Blvd. & Eagle Rock Rd.
Knightdale West – I 540 & Knightdale Blvd.
Wake Forest Main
Fuquay Main
Cary West – WakeMed Cary
And of course, Downtown (in some portion)
Guest3222 - 06/07/07 - 18:34

I don't think downtown is a key station. I have seen units moved out to EMS 7 and EMS 8 and leave the downtown station empty. That is why I think EMS 7 is one of the key stations.
Guest 1000 - 06/07/07 - 20:33

Harkey –

You are correct, there is a move-up policy (SOG) in place for CFD. Generally, Alarm will handle any move-ups during 'emergency' incidents and the Battalion Chief will take care of any move-ups during 'nonemergency' incidents (training, truck maintenance, etc.). This policy has recently been revised and has proved very successful. Most all of our outlying stations are 'automatic moveup' stations and (for obvious reasons) move-ups are selected from 2 piece stations. We have also started to post trucks in between two (or three) districts for coverage during major incidents when move-ups become more difficult and until the move-up companies can get in place. During multi-alarm incidents, one Battalion Chief responds to Alarm to assist in city-wide coverage and move-up assignments. I think station move-ups should be the last thing on an IC's mind while they are managing an incident.
Luke - 06/07/07 - 23:22

Luke, is there a protocol that the BC posted at Alarm uses to determine move-up assignments, or is it generally left at his/her discretion? I ask because I know sometimes companies from county stations (with appropriate staffing, of course) are moved into CFD stations, and sometimes the city seems to utilize only city companies. Is there a process that the county stations should use in order to make themselves available to Alarm?
If so, perhaps Raleigh & Wake County could work out a similar setup and thus make the coverage matter an easier task to handle.
bombero.loco - 06/08/07 - 02:21

Bombero –

The SOG (301.03) "Fire Company Move-up Policy" is what is followed for all company move-ups. Although the BC would have some more flexibility to do what he sees fit for adequate city wide coverage. It is a great asset to have a BC in Alarm with us, not only can he assist with move-ups, but it give him the chance to "sit back" and try to 'see' the big picture from Alarm. He is also able to coordinate directly with IC to make any special arrangements regarding additional resources, fire watch companies, etc.

About moving County companies in for coverage… Per the policy, in great times of need, the Mecklenburg County units would be used to staff the outlying stations. We use our trucks for all the inner city units. So, in turn, this could create a double move-up.. being that an outlying station moves in to provide coverage at an "inner" city station, then move a county unit to that outlying station. The last time I remember having several County units providing coverage was for FF Kent Long's funeral. With that, we had several Mecklenburg County units as well as Cabarrus County trucks.

Personally, I think our relationship with the county is good, but it could always get better. Generally our "rule of thumb" is that if we request a county unit to respond into the city, keep our city truck going until the IC determines it is no longer needed. For example, say there is a 10-50 Pin in, in South/Southwest Charlotte. Depending on where the Rescues are, that could be quite a haul for them. If we were to request a Rescue from the County, we'd keep ours going until the IC determines he can handle with what he has on scene. Same holds true for requesting Brush Trucks, Tankers, Engines, etc. etc. We know what the county has, as far as apparatus, so we generally make specific requests from specific departments. Same holds true when we request move-up companies from the county. I think it helps that some county FFs also work in Alarm. They are very good about staying on top of the available resources and who would be closer.

I think it is great that Wake County is going to the closest station response, that is great for the Firefighters and citizen alike! I too wondered about the move-up policy between Wake Co Departments and Raleigh. I believe I posed my question in the other blog about "CAD."
Luke - 06/08/07 - 12:28

Excellent post Luke, Raleigh and Wake County could learn a lot from a dispatch center like Charlotte, primarily because that's all you guys do, dispatch the f.d.
Silver - 06/08/07 - 13:03

Is this the longest blog yet?
Silver - 06/08/07 - 13:04

Longest blogs:

65 – WCFC Meeting News – 9/22/06
60 – This Afternoon's Fire – 6/1/07
54 – Mutual Aid to Clayton – 11/5/06
etc.
Legeros - 06/08/07 - 17:00

Name: (real name preferred)

E-mail: (optional)

Web Site: (optional)

Remember personal info?

Yes

No

Comment: / **Textile**

Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.