

## Answering Outside Fire Calls, 1944

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For your Friday enjoyment, here's a nifty excerpt from a report published by the North Carolina League of Municipalities in 1946. Below is a list of all municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 in January, 1944, and how their fire department handles calls outside the town or city limits. The intention of the report was to provide municipalities with a perspective on answering "outside calls." The report also includes answers to legal questions about authority, rights, and liabilities of municipal fire departments responding to calls outside their jurisdictions.

### **ANSWERING OUTSIDE FIRE CALLS (POLICIES OF NORTH CAROLINA CITIES OVER 10,000 POPULATION)**

January, 1944

**ASHEVILLE** (Pop. 51,310). Answers outside calls within radius of 10 miles as an accommodation. Fee of \$50 per call is imposed though seldom collected. No county appropriation. No agreements with property owners executed. Fire Chief has authority for answering these calls. No special equipment available.

**BURLINGTON** (Pop. 12,198). Answers outside calls within radius of approximately one mile. No fee imposed. Estimated cost of each trip to the city is \$40. No agreements with property holders. An effort has been made to obtain insurance riders on insurance policies of outside residents, but only three have complied. No effort made to obtain county appropriation. Fire Chief or Mayor has authority to release equipment for these calls. No special equipment available.\*

\*Since these data were compiled, Burlington has adopted the City Manager form of government, and a new policy may have been inaugurated.

**CHARLOTTE** (Pop. 100,899). Answers outside calls. County pays city a standby charge of \$2,500 per year. In addition, the county pays city \$25 for each fire call beyond city limits.

**DURHAM** (Pop. 60,195). Answers outside fire calls. No agreement with county or individual residents beyond city limits.

**ELIZABETH CITY** (Pop. 11,564). Answers outside fire calls in entire Albemarle region. No fee imposed for the service, but county appropriates \$500 per year for benefit of City Fire Department. Calls answered only upon permission of Fire Chief, his assistant or members of Fire Commission. No special equipment purchased.

**FAYETTEVILLE** (Pop. 17,428). Answers outside calls. County appropriates \$150 per month for this service. No fee imposed. No agreement with individual property holders. Operates under State Volunteer Firemen's Association Act. No special equipment purchased.

**GASTONIA** (Pop. 21,213). Answers outside calls within radius of 4 miles. Special fee of \$100 per call is imposed. Approximately 95% of these fees have been collected. Campaign to require outside residents to obtain Fire Department Service Rider is primarily responsible for this high percentage of collection. Nearly 90% of residents in area serviced have obtained riders. City ordinance requires that arrangements be made in advance before service can be extended. Effort to obtain county appropriation was unsuccessful. Permission to answer calls may be granted by Fire Chief or his assistant.

**GOLDSBORO** (Pop. 17,374). Answers outside calls adjacent to corporate limits when it is felt assistance can be given. Assume no responsibility answering outside calls. No fee imposed. No county appropriation. City Manager or Fire Chief has authority to grant permission for outside calls.

**GREENSBORO** (Pop. 59,319). Answers calls when contract for services has been executed in advance. Department is prohibited from answering calls unless this is done. Fee based upon assessed valuation of property by city's rule for fire protection plus 50%. Fees required monthly in advance. No appropriation from county. No special equipment purchased.

**GREENVILLE** (Pop. 12,674). Answers calls when requested within radius of approximately 10 miles. No fee imposed. No county appropriation. Mayor is authorized to grant permission to answer outside calls.

**HICKORY** (Pop. 13,487). Under contract with county to answer calls within area of approximately 5 miles beyond city limits. Receives \$75 for each call from county, and \$55 for each call answered within corporate limits of nearby Town of Longview. This appropriation is by authority of State Volunteer Firemen's Association Act. Fire Chief may grant permission to answer outside calls. No special or additional equipment

purchased.

**HIGH POINT:** (Pop. 38,495). Answers outside calls upon contract with property owners located not more than 500 feet from a fire hydrant. Fees based on assessed value of property as follows: (1) On property immediately outside city limits and assessed for county taxes in one assessment together with property located within city and at least 90% of which is within the city subject to city taxation 3/10 of 1%; (2) On property located outside city limits from a designated point as follows: Within 2 miles, 35/100 of 1%; From 2 to 3 miles, 4/10 of 1%; From 3 to 4 miles, 5/10 of 1%; Over 4 miles, 6/10 of 1%. Fire Chief also authorized to render fire service without contract to churches, schools, and other public buildings which may be located more than 1,200 feet from corporate limits of city.

**KINSTON** (Pop. 15,388). Under contract with county to answer outside calls anywhere in county under following terms: for equipment and men \$15 per hour, minimum of \$15 per call. All state and federal buildings exempt from provisions of contract. Mayor, Fire Commissioner, Fire Chief, and Assistant have authority to permit apparatus to go beyond city limits. County is billed monthly for service.

**LEXINGTON** (Pop. 10,550). Answers calls within area of approximately 10 miles. Fee of \$25 per call imposed. High rate of collection (100%) is probably result of widespread adoption of Fire Department Service Riders on fire insurance policies. City bills property owners and attaches memo for him to forward to his Insurance Company. No county appropriation. Fire Chief or Captain of Fire Department has authority to permit answering of outside calls. No additional or special equipment purchased for this service.

**NEW BERN** (Pop. 11,815). Answers calls anywhere within the county and in Bayboro, Oriental, and surrounding areas. No fee imposed. No county appropriation. Mayor and Fire Chief have authority to grant permission to answer calls.

**RALEIGH** (Pop. 46,695). Answers outside calls within a radius of 30 miles, "If it is thought there is any chance of saving life or property". No fee imposed. No county appropriation. Fire Chief or Commissioner of Public Safety has authority to grant permission for equipment to leave the city.

**REIDSVILLE** (Pop. 10,387). Answers outside calls within a reasonable distance of city limits. A fee of \$50 per call is imposed. 95% of fees have been collected. City attempts to get commitment in advance from property owner. An attempt to obtain a county appropriation was unsuccessful. City Manager or Mayor has authority to permit the answering of calls.

**ROCKY MOUNT** (Pop. 25,568). Answers all calls upon request within one or 2 miles of city limits. No fee imposed. City has not attempted to obtain contracts or insurance riders as it would not like to be under obligation. No county appropriation.

**SALISBURY:** (Pop. 19,037). Answers outside calls to industrial plants, and to residences only when it is thought such fires may jeopardize city property. Minimum fee of \$50 is imposed for this service to industrial plants.

**SHELBY** (Pop. 14,037). Answers outside calls if property owner has posted \$50 with the city, or has obtained Fire Department Service Clause from Insurance Company.

**STATESVILLE** (Pop. 11,440). Answers outside calls. They are handled by one paid fireman with especially built truck for rural area calls and volunteer firemen who are paid \$1 per man per call by the county. Truck has booster tank, capacity of 400 gallons, and other regular equipment [and] was purchased by county and built to town specifications. Area serviced is approximately 10 to 15 miles. No fee imposed for this service. Only the especially built truck answers the outside calls.

**THOMASVILLE** (Pop. 11,041). Answers calls when \$50 has been deposited by property owners with the city. Fee of \$50 per fire or \$15 per call resulting in fire. Area serviced is approximately one mile. 20% of outside residents have obtained insurance rider. No attempt made to obtain county appropriation. Mayor, City Manager, or Fire Chief has authority to grant permission to answer calls.

**WILMINGTON** (Pop. 33,407). Answers outside calls under following policy established by City Council: (1) Answers calls where it is known that life is in danger and to fires in schools, hospitals, and County Home; (2) Answers calls within 2 miles of city limits for fire in industrial plants; (3) May answer any other calls to not more than 12 miles from city limits, but only upon agreement with a responsible person that a fee of \$100 will be paid for the service. This is not applicable in case of Housing Authority projects where the federal government has assumed responsibility for payment of same. No obligation is assumed to answer any call outside unless the equipment can be spared from the city. All calls are to be reported to the City Manager, but he need not be contacted before answering the call. County recently made a proposal to guarantee the \$100 fee imposed.

**WILSON** (Pop. 19,234). Answers calls, but has no prescribed policy. No county appropriation. Fire Chief or City Manager has the authority to permit answering of calls.

**WINSTON-SALEM** (Pop. 79,815). Answers calls when the property has city fire hydrants available. If, however, two or more companies are [not?] in service at time outside call is received, it is not answered. No fee imposed. County considering fire department. Fire Chief has authority to permit answering of calls.

Excepted from *Municipal Fire Department Service to Areas Outside Corporate Limits* by George C. Franklin, Director Municipal Information Service, and James E. Tucker, Asst. Attorney General of North Carolina, Report No. 54 published by the North Carolina League of Municipalities in February, 1946.

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