

**Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois
Communications – Interoperability with Chicago Fire Department**

Index # C-01-01.06

Adopted: 11/30/2007

Revised:

Page 1 of 5



Subject: INTEROPERABILITY WITH CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Functional Area: Communications

Category: Guideline

Approved By: MABAS-IL Communications Committee

Purpose:

To provide MABAS member departments and MABAS dispatch centers with operational guidelines for interoperability with Chicago Fire Department during:

1. MABAS responses into the City of Chicago for response to an incident scene.
2. MABAS responses into the City of Chicago to provide Change of Quarters units.
3. MABAS responses where the Chicago Fire Department responds outside of Chicago.

The following is a general guideline that may be modified by Chicago Fire Department Command Staff (CFD), Chicago Office of Emergency Management & Communications (OEMC) and, for incidents outside of the City of Chicago, the Incident Commander.

Responsibility:

This policy applies to all MABAS member agencies and dispatch centers, especially those in the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. However, during a major disaster, under the IEMA/MABAS Statewide Response Plan, fire departments from all areas of Illinois may be tasked with response to Chicago. Therefore, all MABAS fire departments and dispatch centers should be familiar with this Guideline.

Accountability:

Accountability for this specific guideline rests initially with the Co-Chairs of the MABAS Telecommunications, Communications & Dispatch (TCD) Committee, then the MABAS CEO, followed by the MABAS President, 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President.

Reporting Requirement:

There is no routine reporting requirement for this policy. However, the MABAS Committee, CFD and OEMC should conduct a post event debriefing following any drill or MABAS activation that requires the implementation of this Guideline.

Background:

CFD has activated the MABAS system on several occasions in the recent past. Due to the size of Chicago, and the associated complexity of fire, EMS and dispatch operations, routine CFD and MABAS procedures require modification when suburban fire departments have been dispatched into Chicago as the result of a serious incident or other event. This Guideline has been developed to assist both CFD and other MABAS fire departments with planning, preparation, training for, and operating at major incidents as it relates to dispatch, response and communications procedures.

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Communications – Interoperability with Chicago Fire Department			
Index # C-01-01.06	Adopted: 11/30/2007	Revised:	Page 2 of 5

Guideline:

The MABAS Telecommunications, Communications and Dispatch Committee has established the following guideline:

1. Radio Interoperability

Generally, Chicago and suburban fire departments will utilize the MABAS VHF Radio Interoperability Plan as found in MABAS policy C.01.01-01 *Communications – VHF Interoperability* for interoperable communications between fire departments at incidents within the City of Chicago or surrounding areas.

2. Suburban Response to Chicago – Non-Disaster Declaration

Chicago Fire Department command staff will determine the need for additional fire and/or EMS resources as the result of a specific incident, series of incidents, or other unusual event. Incidents could include fires, mass-casualty, technical rescue and/or hazardous materials incidents. Activation of a CFD MABAS response will usually be the first level of response into Chicago, pre-declaration of a disaster. The following process will generally be followed (except for incidents at O'Hare International Airport that are addressed under a separate policy):

- A. MABAS Division 9 (OEMC) will activate the MABAS alerting tones on the IFERN frequency following normal MABAS Box Alarm dispatch procedures. The CFD MABAS Box Alarm Number, Alarm Level, Staging Area, MABAS Divisions and Unit Types due will be broadcast over IFERN after the MABAS Alerting Tones. Division 9 will be the primary dispatch for these MABAS alarms. In the event Division 9 is unable to dispatch a CFD MABAS alarm, then RED Center will be the primary back-up and Orland Central will be the secondary back-up MABAS Dispatch Center for Division 9.
- B. Upon receipt of a MABAS Alarm for Chicago, suburban MABAS Division Dispatch Centers should review the appropriate Chicago MABAS Box Alarm Card(s) activated, and determine if any resources from their Division are due. **MABAS DIVISIONS MUST PRE-DETERMINE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY UNITS AND CHIEFS FOR ASSIGNMENT TO CHICAGO, SIMILAR TO UNITS ASSIGNED TO AN INTERDIVISIONAL REQUEST. IN ADDITION, CHIEF OFFICERS ASSIGNED SHALL BE FULL (5-BUGLED) CHIEFS, PREQUALIFIED AND CREDENTIALLED BY MABAS AND CFD.** Chiefs will also be assigned to respond to the CFD command post. If the City of Chicago activates the Joint Operations Center (JOC), a second MABAS Chief will be dispatched to OEMC to represent MABAS in the JOC.
- C. Suburban MABAS Dispatch Centers that have units due to a Chicago incident should acknowledge receipt of Chicago's dispatch with a **brief** transmission on the IFERN frequency. For example: "*Division 9, Division 1 acknowledges your MABAS request.*"
- D. Affected suburban MABAS Divisions Dispatch Centers must contact the appropriate departments to determine resource status. **CFD MABAS ALARMS SHALL NOT BE REBROADCAST ON IFERN BY SUBURBAN MABAS DIVISIONS.** Suburban MABAS Divisions must establish procedures for notifying their departments without the use of IFERN, similar to an activation of the statewide response plan. These methods could include telephone, EMnet, LEADS, or other radio/data system.

**Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois
Communications – Interoperability with Chicago Fire Department**

Index # C-01-01.06	Adopted: 11/30/2007	Revised:	Page 3 of 5
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- E. Units responding to Chicago will report, via IFERN, directly to Division 9 that they are responding. This initial check in message should include only the responding department's MABAS Division number, department name, apparatus type, and location of staging area enroute to. Suburban MABAS Division Dispatch Centers should continue to monitor the status of their units on IFERN, but, in an effort to reduce unnecessary radio traffic, should not acknowledge their Division's units on IFERN.
- F. Suburban units responding into Chicago for an ongoing or escalating event should, unless directed otherwise, respond to the assigned staging area using warning lights and siren, traveling with due regard for other motorists and pedestrians. Units reporting to Chicago for a pre-planned event should not travel using warning lights and sirens,
- G. Suburban units must continuously monitor IFERN from their apparatus radio. **UNITS RESPONDING TO CHICAGO MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH A VHF MOBILE RADIO.** Division 9 may redirect inbound units to other incidents, staging areas, or for change of quarters to CFD stations.
- H. CFD and/or OEMC will maintain a cache of CFD portable radios for use by Suburban companies. Once a suburban company has received a CFD portable radio, dispatching for that unit will be switched to CFD dispatch frequencies as follows:

Fire Units – Cermak Road and North	CFD MAIN Fire Frequency
Fire Units – South of Cermak Road	CFD ENGLEWOOD Fire Frequency
EMS Units – Cermak Road and North	CFD AMBULANCE NORTH Frequency
EMS Units – South of Cermak Road	CFD AMBULANCE SOUTH Frequency

Note: Cermak Road is also known as 22nd Street.

Suburban units should continue to monitor IFERN on their apparatus radios, as IFERN will be used as a back-up for the CFD dispatch frequencies listed above.

- I. Incident scene tactical as well as command and control communications will be conducted on the six (6) MABAS fireground frequencies (RED, WHITE, BLUE, GOLD, BLACK & GRAY). Suburban units responding into Chicago must be equipped with one or more VHF portable radios that have IFERN, IFERN2 and the six MABAS fireground channels pre-programmed.

3. CFD Response to Suburban Incidents

- A. CFD has/will develop internal policies that regulate or determine a response from Chicago to a suburban MABAS incident.
- B. CFD units responding to a suburban incident will communicate with the appropriate suburban MABAS Division Dispatch Center using the IFERN frequency. CFD units must continuously monitor IFERN from their apparatus radio.
- C. CFD units responding to an ongoing or escalating MABAS incident should, unless directed otherwise, respond to the assigned staging area using warning lights and siren, traveling with due regard for other motorists and pedestrians. Chicago units reporting to a suburban area for a pre-planned event should not travel using warning lights and sirens,

**Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois
Communications – Interoperability with Chicago Fire Department**

Index # C-01-01.06

Adopted: 11/30/2007

Revised:

Page 4 of 5

- D. Incident scene tactical as well as command and control communications will be conducted on the six (6) MABAS fireground frequencies (RED, WHITE, BLUE, GOLD, BLACK & GRAY). CFD units responding to a MABAS incident must be equipped with one or more VHF portable radios that have IFERN, IFERN2 and the six MABAS fireground channels pre-programmed.

4. Map Systems & Locations

- A. MABAS has prepared and distributed detailed maps of the City of Chicago to all Illinois MABAS Divisions. These maps include the locations of all City of Chicago fire stations, police stations, hospitals and fire department support facilities. Suburban MABAS Divisions, Divisions 1 through 27 (except Division 25), will be receiving one (1) map book for each fire station within the Division, in addition to several spare map books. **UNITS RESPONDING TO CHICAGO SHOULD HAVE A MABAS-CHICAGO MAP BOOK IN EACH RESPONDING VEHICLE.**
- B. CFD will provide a GPS based mapping system to suburban units at the same time that portable radios are distributed. These GPS based maps have preloaded points including CFD fire stations and hospital emergency rooms.
- C. CFD will be installing MABAS storage boxes at each fire station near the communications area (joker stand). These boxes will be secured with a MABAS padlock that can be opened with the MABAS Change-of-Quarters Knox Key.
- D. CFD will provide still district maps, alarm box keys, Marshal Line (telephone) instructions and other information for use by change-of-quarters units. All supplies removed from the CFD storage boxes must be returned and re-secured before the unit returns from Chicago.
- E. CFD & MABAS will develop/provide regional maps for the Chicago suburban area. CFD will maintain these maps at pre-determined locations for rapid deployment when CFD units are deployed outside of the City of Chicago.

5. CFD Hose Fitting Adapters

- A. MABAS has provided suburban MABAS Divisions with hose fitting adapters to adapt National Standard Fire Service Thread (NST) used by suburban departments to Iron Pipe Thread (IPT) used by CFD. **ALL SUBURBAN DEPARTMENTS RESPONDING TO CHICAGO SHOULD BE IN POSSESSION OF THE CFD HOSE FITTING ADAPTERS.**
- B. MABAS has provided CFD with hose fitting adapters to adapt National Standard Fire Service Thread (NST) used by suburban departments to Iron Pipe Thread (IPT) used by CFD. These adapters have been strategically pre-positioned by CFD. **ALL CFD UNITS RESPONDING OUTSIDE OF CHICAGO SHOULD BE IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBURBAN (NST) HOSE FITTING ADAPTERS.**

6. Response to Chicago – Disaster Declaration

Disaster declarations are coordinated by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). In the event IEMA declares a disaster requiring response of MABAS assets to Chicago, MABAS resources dispatched to Chicago will be conducted in accordance with the IEMA/MABAS Disaster Response Agreement and the MABAS Statewide Response Plan will be implemented. RED Center will be the primary MABAS coordination center for response under the statewide response plan, with Orland Central serving as the back-up MABAS coordination center.

**Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois
Communications – Interoperability with Chicago Fire Department**

Index # C-01-01.06

Adopted: 11/30/2007

Revised:

Page 5 of 5

The MABAS Statewide Response Plan will be followed for a response following a disaster declaration, including the use of convoys, passwords, and reception centers.

7. CFD Response – Disaster Declaration

CFD will follow the Statewide Response Plan for all responses outside of Chicago that originate as the result of said plan.

8. Training

To maintain a high level of readiness, training by CFD, OEMC and suburban fire departments and dispatch centers is necessary concerning this guideline. The MABAS TCD will coordinate with CFD and OEMC various training opportunities for both CFD and suburban departments. It is encouraged that affected MABAS Divisions, dispatch centers and fire departments utilize the provided training opportunities at least on an annual basis.

9. Acronyms

CFD	Chicago Fire Department
EMnet	Emergency Management Network
IEMA	Illinois Emergency Management Agency
IPT	Iron Pipe Thread
IFERN	Interagency Fire Emergency Radio Network Dispatch Frequency
IFERN2	Interagency Fire Emergency Radio Network Alternate Dispatch Frequency
ITTF	Illinois Terrorism Task Force
JOC	Joint Operations Center
MABAS	Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
NST	National Standard Fire Hose Thread
OEMC	Chicago Office of Emergency Management & Communications
TCD	MABAS Telecommunications, Communications & Dispatch Committee

10. Conclusion

Interoperable communications between MABAS departments and Chicago Fire Department are essential for effective mutual aid command, controls and communications. All affected fire departments and MABAS Division dispatch centers should become familiar with EMnet and use it appropriately.