



Orange County Fire Authority Mutual Aid Agreement

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Mutual Aid?

Mutual Aid is a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit. In Mutual Aid, the fire departments have basically agreed to give each other assistance across jurisdictional boundaries during incidents where the local department's resources are insufficient. This occurs only if the requested agencies have enough resources to help others when needed. Mutual Aid is voluntary and may not occur if the requested agencies are dealing with incidents of their own and/or do not have enough equipment or firefighters to share at the time. Fire agencies can charge other jurisdictions its actual costs for the provision of Mutual Aid. Requests for mutual aid can be made by telephone, intercom, or CAD-to-CAD (if applicable).

What is an Automatic Aid?

Automatic Aid is a form of Mutual Aid, usually between contiguous border agencies that have agreed to send pre-identified resources. It is a standing agreement for cooperative emergency management on a continuing basis, generally ensuring that resources are always dispatched from the nearest fire station, regardless of which side of the jurisdictional boundary the incident is on. Requests for Automatic Aid can be made by telephone, intercom, or CAD-to-CAD (if applicable).

Is resource exchange delayed if assistance is provided via mutual aid and not provided via automatic aid?

No. The provision of mutual aid is not a lesser, nor is it a slower level of service than automatic aid.

Are CAD-to-CAD capabilities required to exchange resources via automatic or mutual aid?

No. There is no correlation between the type of aid provided and the agencies that exchange resources between computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems. Some agencies have agreed to "*automated*" automatic aid. Automated automatic aid removes human intervention from the resource deployment decision-making. This lack of human intervention can cause an entire neighboring jurisdiction to be stripped of its resources leaving the assisting jurisdiction exposed if an emergency were to occur within its own city. Resource exchange via CAD-to-CAD requests that are not "*automated*" are also common. This allows the receiving communications center to quickly receive and then quickly decide which resources to assign to assist the requesting agency without negatively affecting a contiguous border jurisdiction. Automated CAD-to-CAD dispatching is not demonstrably faster than direct requests for assistance made via CAD-to-CAD. The third and most common method in California and the U.S. is communications centers calling one another by phone when mutual or automatic aid is necessary to mitigate an emergency.

Is Automatic Aid possible between OCFA and the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department (PFLSD)?

Automatic Aid is not possible. Placentia's Fire and EMS delivery model(s) is a lesser level of service and Placentia will not be able to provide the number or type of reciprocal (like services) resources as OCFA. Absent resource reciprocity, OCFA can only provide assistance via mutual aid.

What is meant by “reciprocity”?

In the context of mutual or automatic aid, reciprocity of resource exchange is the basis for determining which type of aid may be voluntarily provided to a requestor. Reciprocity has nothing to do with equity or balance in the number of incident resource exchange between jurisdictions. Emergency aid that is not reciprocal either due to the **type** or **number** of resources being requested, or the type of resource needs the requesting agency is unable to reciprocally provide (i.e. helicopters, handcrews, bulldozers, etc.) the assisting agency, is considered Mutual Aid.

For example, beginning July 1, Placentia will not have the number of resources or firefighters available on duty each day to safely respond to and suppress a residential room and contents, single-family dwelling (less than 2,000 sq. ft.) structure fire without needing significant resource assistance from contiguous border jurisdictions. The neighboring jurisdictions (not only contiguous border agencies) will have to subsidize the Placentia FLSD with resources that Placentia FLSD will not be able to provide (reciprocate) in return. Beginning July 1, Placentia FLSD will be the only fire agency in Orange County that cannot reciprocate type and number of resources necessary to be considered reciprocal as understood by fire agencies statewide.

Concerning emergency medical response, the City of Placentia has hired a private for-profit ambulance company to provide non-fire-based advanced life support (ALS) services within its city. They have determined that they cannot afford to provide their citizens the higher level of ALS services that OCFA currently provides. The City of Placentia’s decision to deliver to its citizens a lesser level of ALS services than anywhere else in Orange County is their choice. However, as a result, Placentia’s ALS services cannot be considered “reciprocal”. The capabilities and staffing of a fire-based ALS paramedic response significantly exceeds that of a two single-role private paramedic ambulance response.

What if the Placentia FLSD is unwilling to be signatory to a Mutual Aid Agreement with OCFA?

If Placentia FLSD does not agree to a Mutual Aid Agreement with OCFA, the OCFA will be compelled to provide written notice to the Placentia FLSD on the terms and conditions of OCFA resource exchange. There is no legal requirement that the two agencies must have an aid agreement in place to provide mutual aid to one another. Mutual Aid Agreements are always voluntary.

Why are mutual aid services only available on a case-by-case basis?

An agency may elect not to respond to a request for Mutual Aid assistance if a response may negatively affect the jurisdiction’s ability to provide adequate fire, EMS, or all-hazards emergency protection to their service area(s).

What are “all-hazards” services?

These are emergency services beyond the provision of just fire suppression and emergency medical services (EMS) delivery. An “All Hazards” fire department represents every level of a hazard response whether it is trench rescue, hazardous materials, confined space, building collapse, rope rescue, fire extinguishment, dive rescue, swift water, vehicle extraction, etc.

What is Assistance-by-Hire (ABH)?

There are an array of agreements at various levels of government and between agencies that allow for and provide assistance during times of emergencies. These agreements may provide assistance in the

form of Mutual Aid, where assistance will be paid for (reimbursed) by the user. Fire agencies in California are able to charge one another for actual cost for the provision of Mutual Aid.”

Placentia is not the only city in California that must rely upon its neighboring jurisdictions to provide emergency services that they themselves have chosen to no longer provide. It is expected that OCFA and other fire agencies’ engine and truck companies will be less available to serve their own communities due to now having to respond to emergencies in Placentia at a far greater rate than ever before.

When neighboring jurisdictions have to subsidize a city that by choice has reduced service levels, then emergency services provided by these jurisdictions come at a cost. Usually, that cost is in the form of an annual flat fee or in the form of an “assistance-by-hire” (ABH) rate. Neighboring jurisdictions must recoup the actual cost of their taxpayer funded resources that were used to subsidize a city needing emergency services they were unable to provide themselves. It is not a fair expectation that neighboring jurisdictions’ taxpayers should shoulder the costs of providing services that the requesting city once provided for themselves but have chosen to reduce.

What are the ABH rates?

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) coordinates the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System Operating Plan which outlines the methodologies and formulas participating agencies (including OCFA) are required to use when developing cost reimbursement rates (also known as ABH rates). These ABH rates are used when OCFA resources are ordered by various federal and state agencies. These reimbursement rates are designed to only reimburse OCFA for the marginal cost of providing the resources and are calculated in three separate components, the indirect (overhead) cost rate, personnel rate, and equipment rate.

Additionally, OCFA adopts the Cal OES California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved equipment rates to seek reimbursements for equipment use.

ABH rates are reviewed and approved annually by the OCFA Board of Directors. OCFA plans to use these Board-approved ABH rates to seek reimbursement for mutual aid services requested by Placentia and provided by OCFA.

Why is ABH necessary?

Placentia FLSD will not be delivering reciprocal or like services.

Do any other California fire departments charge another fire department as a result of an agency not being able to afford the level of service desired?

Yes. As an example, the County of Monterey provides and charges for fire and EMS services to the City of Salinas. The same occurs between the City of Oakland and the City of Emeryville. Both the City of Salinas and the City of Emeryville have chosen to pay for the other fire agency services on an annual flat fee basis.

By way of background, there are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service response times and outcomes. The level of service and resultant costs is a local community choice in the United States. The body of regulations on the fire service provides that *if fire services are provided, they must be done with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind*. There is a constructive tension between the desired level of fire services and the level that can actually be funded. Thus, some

communities like Placentia elect to fund other priorities at the expense of the level of fire and EMS services they may desire.

What is the HAMER county island?

The Hamer island is an Orange County unincorporated island of approximately 76 acres contained within the sphere of influence of the City of Placentia. The island includes approximately 326 single-family detached units, 20 other dwellings and an estimated 1,045 residents. The island is located to the north of east Palm Drive and west of Rose Drive. The island currently receives fire protection and prevention services from the Orange County Fire Authority.

What is a Direct Protection Area (DPA)?

Basically, Direct Protection Area (DPA) is described as an area delineated by boundaries regardless of statutory responsibility and the protection is assumed by the agency with the direct protection responsibility, known as the Protecting Agency.

What type of emergency incidents is OCFA willing to respond into Placentia?

- a. Structure Fire Responses
- b. Traffic Collision Responses
- c. Hazmat Responses
- d. Vegetation Fire Responses
- e. Medical Responses
 - i. ALS
- f. Specialty Responses
- g. Rescue Responses

What is an "AHJ"?

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) means such county and municipal entities and officers who are charged with the enforcement of state and municipal laws.

Why will OCFA continue to provide emergency services to the County of Orange island known as the "Hamer" island?

To ensure the citizens living within the County island continue to receive the high level of emergency services they are currently provided. Placentia's EMS delivery model is considered a lesser level of service.

When will Placentia FLSD be requested by OCFA to respond to the "Hamer" island?

Although the level of EMS services that the Placentia FLSD has chosen to deliver beginning July 1 is a lesser level of service than the current OCFA fire-based EMS services, it is possible that one of Placentia's two private for-profit contract paramedic ambulances may be geographically closer to the Hamer County Island when OCFA receives a 911 call for service from a resident of this island. On these occasions, the OCFA will contact Placentia Police Dispatch Center and request a location of their closest ambulance. If closer than the responding OCFA resources, a mutual aid response from Placentia PFLD will be requested. OCFA fire and fire-based ALS resources will also be responding to incidents within the Hamer county island and will assume command upon arrival and turnover with Placentia FLSD units so that their units are made available to respond to other emergencies.

What is the difference between fire-based EMS and contract ambulance provided Advanced Life Support emergency services?

There are significant differences between the two ALS service delivery models. Fire-based advanced life support (ALS or paramedic) care is delivered via fire engines, ladder trucks, and a few squads. By County policy, each fire-based apparatus is staffed with a minimum of two paramedics. Placentia will be contracting a private for-profit paramedic ambulance company to provide paramedic services. The ambulance(s) will be staffed with two (2) single role paramedics.

Another significant difference is that private company paramedics employed by for-profit businesses have a very limited operational scope and even more limited skills capacity. Firefighter EMS personnel are comprehensive emergency responders who are not only highly educated and trained medical professionals, but they are also cross-trained, certified, and legally authorized, equipped, and prepared to function in all hazardous environments and to perform myriad types of rescue operations including, but not limited to, fire suppression and rescue, vehicle extrication/heavy rescue, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, high/low-angle rescue, air operations, arson response and investigation, hazardous materials response, high-rise building rescue, tactical EMS response, etc.

The differences between these two types of paramedics are significant in their ability to work in, and around, complex and dangerous emergency scenes. Dual-function, firefighter/paramedics spend countless hours training to handle a multitude of emergency scenes. The start of their career, including a 16-week academy, involves training in all-hazard, all-risk environments. Firefighters, after years of developing experience in the field, then go to paramedic school to expand on the emergency medical aspect of their training. Paramedic school is a natural transition and expansion to the medical training of firefighters who are already trained to work in and around hazardous environments.

Additionally, fire service agencies in Orange County and California do not have recruitment or retention problems or challenges. In the private sector, especially with single-function paramedics, there is steady turnover and attrition. This is especially true in the "for-profit" environment because of the constant battle with the bottom line. Private companies are forced to maintain low-pay, low-benefits, and maintain very slim management. There simply are not broad personnel development growth opportunities for such a job which is so demanding and stressful at the entry level. The following links are to EMS industry news articles that provide insight into the challenges of retaining private for-profit ambulance company single-role paramedics:

<https://www.jems.com/articles/2018/11/recruitment-and-retention-a-perennial-problem-in-ems.html>

<https://www.ems1.com/2018-ems-trend-report/articles/solutions-for-ems-recruitment-and-retention-are-hiding-in-plain-sight-oqhCYvVYmZsBh5ul/>

<https://www.ems1.com/paramedic-chief/articles/how-to-recruit-engage-and-retain-emts-and-paramedics-JrR3e7xuYlcRMci6/>

There are significant differences in the physical number of personnel responding to an emergency medical services (EMS) response. In 2010, the National Institute for Standards & Technology (NIST) studied for the first time the effects of varying crew configurations for first responders, the apparatus assignment of ALS personnel, and the number of ALS personnel on scene and on the task completion times for ALS level incidents.

The results and conclusions directly informed the NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720 Technical Committees, who are responsible for developing industry operational and deployment standards. Report results quantify the effectiveness of crew size, ALS configuration, and the number of ALS personnel on the start, duration, and completion time of all tasks delineated. Conclusions are drawn from statistically significant results.

The results establish a technical basis for the effectiveness of first responder crews and ALS configuration with ALS level providers on first responder crews. When assessing crews for their ability to increase on-scene operational efficiency by completing tasks simultaneously, crews with an ALS provider on the engine and one ALS provider on the ambulance completed all required tasks 45 seconds faster than crews with a BLS engine and two ALS providers on the ambulance.

Regardless of ALS configuration, crews responding with four first responders completed all cardiac tasks from the 'at patient time' to completion of packaging 2 minutes and 40 seconds faster than ambulance crews with two persons. Additionally, after the patient arrested, an assessment of time to complete remaining tasks revealed that first responders with four-person crews completed all required tasks 50 seconds faster than three-person crews and 1.4 minutes (1 minute 25 seconds) faster than two-person crews.

Since 1970, the residents of Orange County have enjoyed the expert protection and compassionate care of a highly effective and efficient Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system led by the various public safety, not-for-profit, Fire Service agencies. The men and women who comprise the Orange County Fire Service provide both Basic Life Support (BLS) level emergency medical care by Firefighter EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians), and Advanced Life Support (ALS) level emergency medical care by dual-role Firefighter Paramedics. The following videos provide historical perspective on the evolution of paramedic services becoming fire based, and how our firefighters are trained for all-hazards.

<https://vimeo.com/17772333>

<https://vimeo.com/42160158>

The provision of both BLS and ALS level care by fire-based EMS agencies, following the same internal Standard Operating Procedures, overseen by the same command staff / management team, that uses the same quality assurance and improvement mechanisms, and that utilizes the same standardized EMS equipment and supplies by the same highly trained medical professionals, substantially enhances operational efficiency (i.e., command, control, coordination, communication) and ensures the strongest possible quality and **continuum of patient care** that is absolutely imperative to achieve optimal patient outcome.

Long before the California EMS Authority (CA EMSA) or local EMS agencies like the County of Orange Health Care Agency's (HCA) EMS Division even existed, the California Fire Service led the way in providing emergency medical care for the sick and injured in the prehospital setting and, to this day, the Fire Service continues to be the primary provider of prehospital EMS throughout the State of California.

What is the percentage of emergency incidents that a private paramedic crew would not be able to take initial action in comparison to a firefighter/paramedic crew?

Frequently, calls for service involve multiple hazards that create medical emergencies and add to the complexity of a routine medical call. The economy and utility of using dual-function, firefighter / paramedics is clear on every emergency incident but is vividly illustrated during calls of this complexity and type.

These emergency incidents include rescuing victims from traffic accidents where patients need to be extricated using various mechanical devices (Jaws-of-life), structural collapses, trenches which have collapsed, low-angle and high-angle rescues using ropes and rappelling gear, OSHA regulated confined spaces, and OSHA regulated IDLH (immediately dangerous to life and health) environments including burning buildings. Many of these situations require firefighter/paramedics to begin assessing and treating the patient long before the patient is removed to a safe location where single-function, private paramedics, would be able to begin treatment. This includes high visibility emergencies such as Active Shooter Incidents, where firefighter/paramedics are trained as part of incident command and control to enter hostile environments and immediately begin treatment for patients, who will perish without immediate lifesaving interventions such as tourniquets, pressure dressings, and hemorrhage control measures.

One of the most important processes in arriving on scene of an emergency is assessing the situation for safety to the responders and the public. This includes the ability to rapidly render the scene safe. Firefighter/paramedics arriving on any emergency scene in a fire engine or truck as members of an intimately trained crew of professionals, medical in nature or otherwise, are vastly better prepared to operate safely than single-function private paramedics. The analogy of the Swiss army knife for the firefighter/paramedic is apropos compared to the single blade of a private paramedic.

Historical data demonstrates that a large percentage of emergency calls in Placentia required the immediate intervention of the fire department to effectively initiate scene safety, stabilization, and mitigate risks. These types of incidents include traffic accidents, assaults, children locked in vehicles, gunshot wounds, car crashes with fire, animal attacks/bites, psychiatric emergencies, water rescues, car accidents into buildings, etc. These and similar calls for service requiring the command and control of the fire department account for approximately 18% of the medical aids in Placentia and 26% of all calls could not be handled by private paramedics without the assistance of fire department personnel.

Representatives from the City of Placentia and their private for-profit contract ambulance provider have publicly claimed that the model of EMS service delivery to be delivered in Placentia is the predominant model in 56 of 58 California counties. Is this factually accurate?

No. Nearly every county in California utilizes a fire-based EMS system that requires the fire agencies to be the critical provider, if not the lead provider, in the delivery of first response in their jurisdictions, including ALS Level Services. There are very few county EMS systems in California that are managed solely by a private provider.

Why is Los Angeles and Orange County the only two in California that do not utilize private contract paramedic ambulances for 911 ALS emergency response?

These counties make up 33.60% of the state population, so a full 1/3 of the state population have been receiving this higher level of care for many years. It is likely cost prohibitive for other counties to provide this same level of service. When compared to the other California counties, Orange and Los Angeles County fire agencies provide the highest level of EMS services in California.

County	Total	
Los Angeles	10,172,951	
Orange	3,194,332	
Combined	13,367,283	33.60%
California	39,782,870	

Is the use of private for-profit contract paramedic ambulances something new?

No. Private for-profit contract paramedics have been a part of the EMS system throughout the country and in California for many years. However, changes over the last decade have made the use of private paramedics costlier than in the past, and the use of private paramedics has limited the ability of the cities, counties, and protection districts (through the fire departments) to recover the cost of providing EMS first response to their jurisdictions.

Over the last decade, two major international companies have emerged and now operate in most of the market. These companies have bought and consolidated most of the small companies in the country and California. As these international companies bid on providing ambulance service (BLS & ALS) included in their cost proposals is the shareholder profit margin that have made their pricing the same, if not more, than that of fire service agencies that manage and deliver fire-based EMS services.

Are there emergency incident types that dual-role firefighter/paramedics can respond and operate and where private for-profit contract paramedic ambulances cannot?

Yes. The below incidents require trained and experienced firefighter paramedics to respond. Private for-profit contract paramedics cannot deliver services until rendered safe by on-scene firefighters.

There are some very basic differences between fire-based EMS and private EMS. First is the fact that most fire-based systems are ‘all-hazard’ and categorized as public safety employees. Public safety agencies are able to render aid and treat patients in immediate danger to life and health (IDLH) environments. Private contract paramedics are not trained thus not permitted to operate in IDLH atmospheres.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT
Extrication Required
MCI-Medical Group Sup, Treatment Unit Leader
MCI-Triage, treat, transport
Trauma victims-care
Fuel Spill
Other Emergencies with Medical Component
Swift Water Rescue
Water Rescue
Cliff Rescue/Backcountry

Ocean Rescue
Hi Angle/Low Angle Rescue
Fireline or Tactical Medical
Confined Space
Off Road, Over Edge TC
Helicopter Hoist
Active Shooter
Trench Rescue
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS with Medical Component
IDLH Conditions
Gas / Chemical Leak or Spill
Electrical Hazard
Radiation Hazard
CBRNE Event/Decon
FIRE (ALL CIRCUMSTANCES)
All fire types
Rehab

Why does Placentia FLSD have to order mutual aid resources from the Orange County Operational Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator (Op Area) Command Center?

It is standard procedure for all agencies needing mutual aid assistance to request through their Cal OES Fire & Rescue Operational Area.

Why does the Op Area need to assess and then prioritize mutual aid resource requests made by the Placentia FLSD?

The Operational Area needs to determine that the resources the Op Area provides will not negatively affect the assisting jurisdiction’s ability to provide adequate fire, EMS or all-hazards emergency protection within their own jurisdiction.

Why would OCFA need to make mutual aid resource requests with the Placentia Police Department Dispatch Center?

When a non-Placentia fire agency has a need for Placentia FLSD services, requests are made to the assisting agency(s). In this case, the Operational Area Command Center will request Placentia FLSD resources through the Placentia Police Department Dispatch Center when a need exists.

What is “NFPA”?

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. In 2018, the NFPA claims to have 50,000 members and 9,000 volunteers working with the organization through its 250 technical committees.

NFPA® codes, standards, recommended practices, and guides (“NFPA Standards”), are developed through a consensus standards development process approved by the American National Standards Institute. This

process brings together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve consensus on fire and other safety issues. While the NFPA administers the process and establishes rules to promote fairness in the development of consensus, it does not independently test, evaluate, or verify the accuracy of any information or the soundness of any judgments contained in NFPA Standards.

Is NFPA compliance a requirement?

NFPA is widely known as a codes and standards organization. The NFPA is not a regulatory agency, but their best practice standards are utilized by most fire service agencies.

The NFPA has no power, nor does it undertake, to police or enforce compliance with the contents of NFPA Standards. Nor does the NFPA list, certify, test, or inspect products, designs, or installations for compliance.

Why is OCFA requiring that Placentia FLSD Dispatch Center order the applicable initial full alarm assignments to structure fires identified in Section 5.2.4 (Deployment), in the 2020 edition of NFPA 1710?

Firefighter safety. The quantity of staffing and the arrival time frame can be critical in a serious fire. Fires in older and/or multiple-story buildings could well require the initial firefighters needing to rescue trapped or immobile occupants. If a lightly staffed force arrives, it cannot simultaneously conduct rescue and firefighting operations.

If fewer firefighters arrive, most likely the search team would be delayed, as would ventilation. The attack lines would only consist of two firefighters, which does not allow for rapid movement above the first-floor deployment. Rescue is conducted with only two-person teams; thus, when rescue is essential, other tasks are not completed in a simultaneous, timely manner. Effective deployment is about the **speed** (*travel time*) and the **weight** (*firefighters*) of the attack.

For a typical house fire, minimum best practices recommend a force of 16 (17 with aerial device) or more firefighters, with at least one Chief Officer for command/safety functions. However, the Orange County Fire Service serves a metropolitan area consisting of many diverse risk types. A typical Effective Response Force (ERF) for a building fire is four engines, two ladder trucks, and two Battalion Chiefs for an ERF total of **26 personnel**. The following table shows what a force of 26 can accomplish. The larger the force (weight of attack), the faster the tasks are completed.

Company Level Tasks
First Arriving Engine and Ladder
1. Stretch the 200-foot, 1¾-inch hose line to the point of access for search and rescue.
2. Operate the pump to supply water and attach hydrant supply line.
3. Assume command of initial operations.
4. Conduct search and rescue.
Second Arriving Engine
1. If necessary, lay in a hydrant supply line.
2. Stretch a second 200-foot hose line as a back-up line and for fire attack.
3. Establish two-in/two-out safety team
Third Arriving Engine, Second Ladder
1. Forcible entry if needed, primary rescue search if needed
2. Ladder the building.
3. Ventilation of the structure.

Fourth Arriving Engine
1. Assist with rescue as/if needed. Secure utilities.
2. Staff the Rapid Intervention Crew
3. Remove any obstructions or debris that would hinder fire ground operations.
First Arriving Battalion Chief
1. Establish exterior command and initial scene safety.
Second Arriving Battalion Chief
1. Scene Safety Officer or Division Group Supervisor.

Grouped together, these duties form an Effective Response Force (ERF) or First Alarm Assignment. These tasks must be performed simultaneously and effectively to achieve the desired outcome; arriving on-scene does not stop the escalation of the emergency. While firefighters accomplish these tasks, the incident progression clock keeps running.

Fire spread in a structure can double in size during its *free-burn* period before firefighting starts. Many studies have shown that a small fire can spread to engulf an entire room in less than 6:00 to 8:00 minutes after free burning has started. Once the room is completely superheated and involved in fire (known as flashover), the fire will spread quickly throughout the structure and into the attic and walls. For this reason, it is imperative that fire attack and search commence before the flashover point occurs if the outcome goal is to keep the fire damage in or near the room of origin. In addition, flashover presents a serious danger to both firefighters and any occupants of the building.

Fires and complex medical incidents require that the other units arrive in time to complete an effective intervention. Time is one factor that comes from *proper station placement*. Good performance also comes from *adequate staffing* and training. In the critical tasks identified previously, OCFA can perform well in terms of staffing.

Previous critical task studies conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and NFPA Standard 1710 find that all units must arrive with 15 or more firefighters within 11:30 minutes from the time of call at a room-and-contents structure fire to be able to *simultaneously and effectively* perform the tasks of rescue, fire attack, and ventilation. This cannot be done without neighboring jurisdictions subsidizing the City of Placentia for the resources it chose to no longer fund.

Why doesn't the Placentia FLSD Department meet the definition of a "career" fire department as described in the 2020 NFPA 1710 Standard?

The total seven (7) Placentia career (FTE) firefighters on duty each day does not comprise the 50 percent of an initial full alarm assignment. Thus, Placentia must rely on its neighboring jurisdictions to subsidize the emergency services that the City of Placentia has chosen to reduce in order to meet the below definition of an initial full alarm assignment:

NFPA 1710 Section 3.3.40 defines an "Initial Full Alarm Assignment" as "*those personnel, equipment, and resources ordinarily dispatched upon notification of a structure fire.*" Per NFPA 1710 Section 5.2.4.1.1, the initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 2000 ft² (186 m²), two-story single-family dwelling without basement and with no exposures shall provide for the following:

- At a minimum, an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC) assembled (2) from the initial attack crew and, as the initial alarm response arrives, a full and sustained rapid intervention crew (RIC) established (4)
- Total effective response force with a minimum of 16 (17 if an aerial device is used)

Why is it important that when deploying resources, only “career” (FTE) firefighters be included in the structure fire response head count?

Firefighter safety. When deploying resources, including only career (FTE) firefighters ensures that enough full-time trained and experienced firefighters are requested to meet the NFPA 1710 applicable initial full alarm assignment requirement by the OCFCA.

Anything can occur at any time on the fireground especially when it involves offensive interior firefighting. The survivability profile of a Mayday or multiple Maydays requires practiced action plans that have been trained on. All fires progress in different ways in a fast-paced dynamic environment which lead to many kinds of possible events from just simple disorientation to structural collapse entrapping firefighters. These events also apply to those who are rescuing their fellow firefighters. Therefore, it is important to have adequate resources and staffing on the scene at any given fire fight whether offensive or defensive.

What is the City of Placentia’s firefighter to citizen per capita assuming a daily staffing of seven (7) career firefighters?

According to the State of California Department of Finance website, the City of Placentia’s population is estimated at 51,494 as of January 2020. Given that Placentia will have a daily staffing of seven* career firefighters as of July 1, 2020, the daily staffing firefighter per capita for Placentia will be 1.36 per every 10,000 residents. Comparable Orange County cities of similar population size with a city Fire Department have a daily staffing firefighter per capita ranging from 2.33 to 3.29.

*Per the June 4, 2019, Placentia City Council Agenda Report.

Firefighter Per Capita for Orange County Non-OCFA Jurisdictions

City/County	No. of Stations	Population*	Daily Staffing**	Firefighter Per 10,000
Placentia	2	51,494	7	1.36
Anaheim	11	357,325	60	1.68
Fullerton	6	141,863	24	1.69
Huntington Beach	8	201,281	41	2.04
Costa Mesa	6	114,778	24	2.09
Fountain Valley	2	55,878	13	2.33
La Habra***	4	63,371	15	2.37
Orange	8	140,065	35	2.50
Brea	4	45,629	15	3.29
Newport Beach	8	85,780	36	4.20
Laguna Beach	4	22,343	12	5.37

* Population figures based on State of California Department of Finance website as of May 2020

** Daily staffing figures based on city websites, annual plans, statistical information, staff reports, and budget documents

*** Fire Services provided by Los Angeles County Fire

Is there any known lower firefighter to citizen per capita for a local government fire service agency in California?

No. Placentia has the lowest firefighter to citizen per capita in California.

Why does the OCFA Mutual Aid Agreement require that Placentia FLSD ensure that dedicated crew(s) of at least one career (FTE) officer and three career (FTE) members are positioned outside the IDLH, trained and equipped as specified in NFPA 1407, and who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue lost or trapped members?

Firefighter safety. When Maydays occur requiring deployments of rapid intervention operations, all fire department resources, communication systems and training will be challenged determining the saving of a lost, trapped, or distressed firefighter and possibly incidents involving multiple firefighters.

While the standards of such documents like NFPA 1407 provide insight to qualified personnel to perform such rescues, the techniques and the maneuvers themselves, of which are many, are not truly identifiable in such a document. What it does require is that every department provides a standard operating guideline that includes the presence of a rapid intervention crew at all fireground operations, while also entailing deployments of a rapid intervention crew at incidents and a rapid intervention crew's ability to establish an action plan from the beginning of an incident through its termination.

NFPA 1407 establishes many guidelines in attempting to provide to departments a base for success at these incidents as well as providing just some proactive behaviors in avoiding them. Departments need to start with a sound and comprehensive training program providing objectives and hands-on skills that may be needed for several different presenting situations regarding firefighters in distress and their rescues. This entails an incredible amount of proven and practiced techniques and maneuvers to all involved on the fireground. Firefighters throughout all ranks including chief officers should have a thorough understanding of rapid intervention and all that it entails. This may seem like an extreme burden for everyone, but it is the only way the OCFA can ensure increased safety, proactive behaviors, and reactive actions that bring our members home alive after each structural fire event.

NFPA 1407, is the *Standard for Training Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews*. It was developed to provide a standard for highly disciplined operational capability to rescue firefighters who become lost, injured, trapped, incapacitated, or disoriented in the course of an emergency scene or training operation.

Requirements are consistent with NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*; NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*; and NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*.

What is the difference between a “career” firefighter and “reserve” or “part-time firefighters?

A career firefighter is an individual that is a full-time equivalent (FTE) employee of a fire service agency and that meets and/or exceeds all training and experience requirements for the position. The hour and experience requirements of a career firefighter significantly exceed those of a reserve or part-time firefighter. For example, in order for Placentia FLSD firefighters to meet the State Fire Marshal's Office requirements for Firefighter II certification, it requires 344 hours of training. Professional career firefighters are put through 2-3 times as many initial training hours to achieve a Firefighter II certification. Reserve and part-time firefighters lack the education, training and experience necessary to operate safely on the fireground independently. They cannot be included in the NFPA 1710 head count or as members of an Initial Rapid Intervention Crew (IRIC) or Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) team(s).

Reserve and part-time firefighters provide a valuable service to their communities and in a supporting role, assist career firefighters at a variety of emergencies. Most reserve and part-time firefighters are aspiring to become full-time career firefighters.

Why is it imperative that a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) compatible coupling be included in an agency's Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) equipment?

A universally standard coupling compatible across all new and existing SCBA gear ensures firefighters will not have to remove their facepiece during an air supply malfunction or failure. Plus, fire departments and personnel can become thoroughly familiar with one standardized system and how it works. This ensures connectability of all air-line couplings that may need to be connected or disconnected in the event of an emergency.

SCBA is a critical component in the personal protective equipment (PPE) used by firefighters and emergency personnel. Regardless of rank and tenure, firefighters can encounter a problem with their gear. When seconds matter most, emergency procedures such as the buddy breather has significant influence on firefighter safety. And with a universal coupling system, the chance of survival only increases for firefighters.

What is a MAYDAY?

Webster's Dictionary defines MAYDAY as "an international radiotelephone signal word used as a distress call, to introduce a distress message, or by distress traffic." Some fire departments concisely define when to transmit a MAYDAY. These definitions include "indication of imminent collapse; structural collapse has occurred; unconscious firefighter; life-threatening injuries or even missing members" as the *FDNY Communications Manual* states.

There is the potential for a MAYDAY anytime and anywhere personnel operate. Local conditions and level of service provided by fire departments will determine the potential risk that members are exposed to on any given day. The availability of on-scene resources will govern the need for additional help.

There is no other call more challenging to fireground operations than a Mayday call — the unthinkable moment when a firefighter's personal safety is in imminent danger. Firefighter fatality data compiled by the United States Fire Administration have shown that firefighters "becoming trapped and disoriented represent the largest portion of structural fire ground fatalities." The incidents in which firefighters have lost their lives, or lived to tell about it, have a consistent theme — inadequate situational awareness put them at risk.

Firefighters don't plan to be lost, disoriented, injured or trapped during a structure fire or emergency incident. But fires are unpredictable, volatile and ruthless – and they will not go according to your plans. What a firefighter knows about a fire before entering a blazing building may radically change within minutes once inside the structure. Smoke, low visibility, lack of oxygen, structural instability, and an unpredictable fireground can cause even the most seasoned firefighter to be overwhelmed in an instant. It's not a matter of IF the Mayday happens, it's WHEN.

Why does the OCFA Mutual Aid Agreement require that Placentia FLSD demonstrates its dispatch center is staffed appropriately and has trained its dispatchers to a level of competence for MAYDAY situations?

Firefighter safety. Placentia should have a well-written training program and well-written policies regarding action plans that are not only reactive but proactive in place before OCFA and other Orange

County fire agencies permit their firefighters to enter IDLH atmospheres. . Without such training, dispatchers do not have the practiced skills to rely on IF and WHEN a firefighter gets into trouble. It is imperative that all dispatchers be prepared if the unfortunate happens.

This is important to ensure that training for Mayday prevention and Mayday operations are consistent between all firefighters, company officers, chief officers, and dispatchers. Everyone must be trained to perform potentially life-saving actions if a firefighter(s) becomes lost, disoriented, injured, low on air or trapped.

What will it take to resolve the many OCFA firefighter safety concerns?

Placentia participating in joint training and their having experience in actual fireground operations with other Orange County Operational Area fire agencies.

If this occurs and the OCFA is no longer concerned with firefighter safety, will this change the aid agreement(s) from “mutual” to “automatic” aid?

No. The issue of reciprocity in the context of mutual/automatic aid will not change.

Why is it important that the Senior Officer of the fire department requesting aid assume full charge of a cross-boundary operation (i.e., Incident Commander)?

The Senior Officer of the fire department of the agency requesting aid represents the jurisdiction as the “authority-having-jurisdiction” (AHJ).

Why is it important that the Operational Area assign non-Placentia FLSD Operational Area Chief Officer(s) to all Placentia FLSD requests for Mutual Aid?

Firefighter safety. Commanding complex incidents requires considerable training and experience and until this has been demonstrated by way of actual fireground operations with Operational Area fire agencies, the OCFCA members will continue to have firefighter safety concerns.

Why would Placentia FLSD want to assign a Placentia FLSD Chief Officer(s) to all Mutual Aid requests for Placentia FLSD resources?

This would be “mutual” in terms of agreements and will allow for more opportunities to work with Placentia FLSD chief officers to build the confidence necessary before non-Placentia Operational Area Chief Officers are no longer automatically responding to emergency incidents in Placentia.

Why won't non-Placentia FLSD Operational Area Chief Officer(s) be downgraded or cancelled by Placentia FLSD when non-Placentia FLSD mutual aid resources are assigned and/or responding to an incident?

Firefighter safety. Commanding complex incidents requires considerable training and experience and until this has been demonstrated by way of actual fireground operations with Operational Area fire agencies, the OCFCA members will continue to have firefighter safety concerns.

Why is it important that both Operational Area and Placentia FLSD participate in annual joint training exercises?

Firefighter safety. To build the confidence necessary between Placentia and the other Operational Area fire agencies. Until this has been demonstrated by way of training and actual fireground operations with Operational Area fire agencies, the OCFCA members will continue to have firefighter safety concerns.