



# HAMILTON COUNTY *Fire Chiefs Association*

<b>Effective Date:</b>	5/17/2023	<b>Chair Person:</b>	Chief Scott Souders
<b>Updated Version:</b>		<b>Eastside:</b>	
<b>Revised Date:</b>		<b>Midwest:</b>	
		<b>Northeast:</b>	
		<b>South:</b>	
		<b>Valley:</b>	
		<b>West:</b>	

## HCCC Storm Plan SOG

### PURPOSE

When severe weather conditions cause, or are expected to cause the fire and EMS workload to exceed a reasonable level, the Communication's Supervisor may initiate the HCCC Storm Plan. This alternate method of dispatching allows lower priority storm-related incidents to be dispatched directly to a department's MDC or on a separate talk group, which will free up valuable air time on FD EAST and/or FD WEST for higher priority incidents.

### SCOPE

This guideline applies to all Hamilton County fire departments operating during severe/inclement weather conditions throughout Hamilton County.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

When the Storm Plan is activated by HCCC, the following notifications will occur:

- RAVE Alert Page/HC Fire Chief's Notification
- All-County Alpha Page (APA)/Active 911 Notification
- A radio message will be broadcasted on FD EAST and FD WEST
- Locution Notification

These notifications will be sent to all departments alerting them of the storm plan activation. Additionally, there may be times when the plan does not need to be activated for all agencies – rather only for a small portion of the county or individual communities. This will be determined by the Communication's Supervisor in concert with representatives from the respective communities.

### GUIDELINES

Early identification of severe weather approaching Hamilton County will greatly aid in the ultimate processing of emergency details. HCCC will work in conjunction with the Regional Operations Center (ROC) to identify threatening weather patterns. When severe weather is expected in our region, HCCC will implement the storm plan (1) hour prior to the estimated severe weather arrival.

This will give sufficient notice to all emergency responders, especially those on the perimeter of Hamilton County, allowing them ample time to call in additional resources as needed. Once the Storm Plan is activated, the following radio talk groups will be utilized:



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- STORM EAST – (east agencies of Hamilton County)
- STORM WEST – (west agencies of Hamilton County)
- NOTIFY (utility notification requests - discretion of Communication's Supervisor)

STORM EAST and STORM WEST will be used strictly for dispatching pending storm-related incidents. There will be no notification tones, status changes or utility notifications on these radio talk groups.

In the event of a smaller scale STORM PLAN operation where only one jurisdiction is affected, a talk group other than those listed above may be utilized, this will be at the discretion of the Communication's Supervisor. Similarly, if a larger scale STORM PLAN operation is in effect, talk groups beyond those listed above may be added as needed.

### **MDC USAGE**

The most efficient way for HCCC to send storm related details is via an MDC. Each agency shall sign on to their respective STORM talk group and notify the dispatcher which MDC will receive storm related incidents for their community. Utilizing MDC's will significantly reduce the radio traffic on these talk groups.

For example, "Car 9002's MDC will receive all storm-related details for Springdale." This unit now becomes "Springdale Area Command" (community name + "area command"). It will be each department's responsibility to coordinate a response for all their storm-related incidents (self-dispatching units within their jurisdiction).

Additionally, fire departments can pre-designate an MDC for their community to be utilized when the Storm Plan is implemented. This is a very valuable, timesaving step.

### **DISPATCHING**

Storm related incidents will be sent to each department's MDC and placed in the "Pending Calls" section. They will remain in this section until a unit "self-assigns" to the incident and closes the call.

Once an incident is assigned via MDC or a radio, it is the responsibility of the respective area commander to dispatch the appropriate resources for the incident. **Status changes will not be kept by HCCC for storm related incidents assigned utilizing these methods.** Utilizing this self-dispatching system keeps a unit's status as "available/in quarters," which allows it to be recommended for more serious calls such as; EMS, MVC's, structure fire, etc. Coordination between a unit and their area commander is critical in determining their ability to "break away" for additional/more serious incidents.

In the event an agency fails to monitor STORM EAST or STORM WEST following the Storm Plan implementation, all incidents will continue to be dispatched via FD EAST or FD WEST. However, upon receipt and acknowledgement of their first dispatched run, that agency will be asked to have someone monitor their respective STORM talk group for future details.



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A period of radio silence may be declared at the discretion of the Communication's Supervisor. When such a declaration is in effect, field units ***not operating at a major/life threatening emergency scene*** are prohibited from transmitting on FD EAST/FD WEST/STORM EAST/STORM WEST, or any other talk group assigned for dispatching incidents.

The activation of the Storm Plan may result in the suspension of automatic fire ground talk group assignments, reserving such assignments for units involved in major emergencies such as; structure fires or mass casualty incidents. ***The 800 MHz radio system has a maximum capacity of nineteen (19) simultaneous users.*** Use of "city band" talk groups will occupy resources on the 800 MHz radio system in the same manner as other talk groups.

In an effort to reduce low priority usage on the 800 system during the Storm Plan, field units may consider the use of 8 TAC 91 or 8 TAC 92 (radio-to-radio), runners, cell phones, or other communication methods.

In the event of a malfunction with the CAD during the storm plan, MDC's may not be operational – meaning all dispatching would be performed via radio. If this occurs, the Communication's Supervisor will announce such, and a greater level of patience will be needed as adjustments are being made. The Communication's Supervisor will routinely monitor the status of the Storm Plan and will determine when the plan should be discontinued. This may involve a portion of the plan being closed while others maintain a presence. County-wide alpha pages will be sent, and broadcasts will be made on all appropriate talk groups declaring a change or discontinuation of the Storm Plan.

### **CALL TYPES**

The following call types will NOT be dispatched per normal procedure and will be sent to the department's assigned MDC when the Storm Plan has been implemented.

- Brush/Mulch Field Fire
- A/A- Building Struck
- A/A- Fire / Fuel Leak
- CO Alarms (No Illness)
- Elevator Alarm/Rescue
- Emergency to Property
- Fire Alarms
- Fuel Spill
- General Responses
- Odor of Natural Gas- Outdoors
- Pole/Transformer Fire
- Recorded Elevator Alarm
- Recorded Fire Alarms
- Smoke/Odor Outdoors
- Water Flow Alarms
- Wires Down/Arcing/Fire

All EMS incidents, structure fires, or any incident involving the rescue of persons trapped or appearing to be a threat to life will be dispatched per normal procedure over FD WEST or FD EAST. When a structure fire is dispatched, HCCC will follow the recommended CAD assignment for the respective agency instead of trying to substitute units on the fly. Adjustments in response can be made on the back end of a structure fire dispatch by the respective agency.



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Additionally, if a field unit is tied up on a long-term storm incident, and it is anticipated they will be unable to break away, they should self-assign to the incident via MDC, thus preventing them from being dispatched by the CAD system for more serious incidents.

### **NOTIFICATIONS**

If HCCC staffing permits, utility requests may be redirected to the "NOTIFY" talk group. When field units make requests over this talk group, the following information is needed:

- Utility company requested (Duke/Spectrum/Alta Fiber)
- Pole Number (if possible)
- Pole-to-pole versus pole-to-house
- Most accurate address possible (avoid using intersections)