



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 600.02

On-Call Fire Marshal Program

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Issue Date: June 21, 2005

Revision Date: September 22, 2018

1 APPLICABILITY

2 All operational career and volunteer members

3 POLICY

4 Title 17 of the Howard County Code charges the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue
5 Services (Department) with the enforcement of the Howard County Fire Prevention Code as
6 well as with the investigation of fires, explosives and suspicious packages within the County.
7 Within the Department, these responsibilities are delegated to personnel assigned to the Office
8 of the Fire Marshal (OFM).

9
10 While many of these actions can occur during normal business hours, OFM recognizes the need
11 for response or consultation to be available at any time of the day or night. To accomplish this,
12 the bureau has established an On-Call Fire Marshal (OCFM) program.

13 DEFINITIONS

14 ➤ **Fire Watch** – A temporary measure where identified personnel will check all areas of the
15 building on a regular basis to detect fire/life safety emergencies and then alert the
16 occupants to take appropriate action as early as possible.

17
18 ➤ **OFM Helpdesk** – System used for notification to OFM personnel for any Fire Code
19 related issue that does not require an OCFM response. The Helpdesk can be utilized for:
20 protective systems out of service in unoccupied buildings, notification of multiple false
21 alarms, non-emergent Knox box issues, non-emergent Fire Code issues discovered
22 during preplan activities, to request “after the fire packets” or building posting signs,
23 etc.

24 PROCEDURES

25 Response time expectations for the OCFM when a response is warranted shall be within five (5)
26 minutes of alert. The OCFM is automatically dispatched on:

- 27 • Task Force, and greater alarm incidents
- 28 • Malicious burns



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- 29 • Potential arson fires, based on Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) call-taker
30 information
- 31 • Suspicious packages
- 32 • Explosive devices
- 33 • Motor vehicle crashes with reported fire
- 34 • Non-EMS incidents at County public schools during normal school hours **when school is**
35 **in session.**
- 36 • Active assailant incidents

37
38 Reaction time expectations for requests for consultation shall be within three (3) minutes of
39 alert. Consultation may occur via the tactical operations channel (or alternate) on the radio
40 system, or via cell phone communications. Personnel shall notify the OCFM, through the PSAP,
41 of situations that include, but are not limited to:

- 42 • Fires that are intentionally set, suspicious in nature, or the cause cannot be determined;
43 ○ There will be circumstances where statements made by subjects on the scene
44 lead the responding members to believe a fire to be suspicious or intentionally
45 set. There may also be circumstances where items on the scene lead the
46 responding members to believe the fire has been intentionally set. Examples
47 include, but are not limited to:
 - 48 ▪ Separate and unconnected fires
 - 49 ▪ Lack of accidental causes
 - 50 ▪ Unidentifiable point of origin
 - 51 ▪ Unusual burn patterns
 - 52 ▪ Missing inventory
 - 53 ▪ Evidence of forced entry
 - 54 ▪ Missing personal items
 - 55 ▪ Presence of ignitable liquids
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- 57 • Fires or malicious alarm activations involving a juvenile;
- 58 • Vehicle fires where the scene does not match the operator's account of how the fire
59 started, or the vehicle is unattended;
- 60 • Any burn injury or smoke inhalation patient that requires transport to a hospital;
 - 61 ○ The State of Maryland has strict requirements for mandatory reporting of flame-
62 induced burn injuries.
 - 63 ○ Personnel shall notify the OCFM whenever a **flame induced** burned patient is
64 encountered. The following information shall be provided:
 - 65 ▪ Description of burn injury
 - 66 ▪ Cause of the burn injury
 - 67 ▪ Prognosis
 - 68 ▪ What hospital the patient is going to be transported to
 - 69 ○ Some burn injuries will not require that the OCFM respond to the scene. The
70 OCFM will make that determination based on consult information provided by
71 the Incident Commander (IC). If the IC requires assistance with the origin and
72 cause of the fire, the OCFM shall be requested to respond to the scene.



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- Should field personnel contact a patient who has suffered smoke inhalation as a result of a fire, treat them the same way you do burn injuries and ensure contact is made with the OCFM.
 - The OCFM may wish to come to the scene for patients who are transported to a local facility but require no advanced interventions. Unless assistance is required for determining the origin and cause, a scene response for this type of event is at the OCFM's discretion.
 - For smoke inhalation that requires pre-hospital airway stabilization (to include RSI), transport to the local facility to secure the airway or transport to a regional hyperbaric medicine center, the OCFM shall be notified to respond to the scene.
 - Any fire that is controlled or extinguished by a sprinkler system;
 - Any fire that occurs in a commercial kitchen;
 - Fires in institutional occupancies, e.g., hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, detention facilities, etc.;
 - Any incident involving fireworks or explosives, or if a citizen drops off fireworks or ammunition at a fire station;
 - Illegal outside fires where the responsible party is uncooperative, or if there is a history of illegal fires at the location;
 - Impaired suppression and early warning (fire alarm) systems in occupied structures;
 - Personnel will frequently encounter systems that are out-of-service. When this occurs in an occupied structure, the OCFM shall be notified and be provided the following information:
 - Address and type of occupancy
 - Type of system – includes, but not limited to: fire alarm, sprinkler system, commercial hood system
 - Name and contact information of building or property manager
 - Anticipated downtime
 - When an out-of-service system is found in an unoccupied structure, personnel should obtain the above information and submit an OFM Help Desk.
 - Should the system not be restored in the time established by the Fire Prevention Code, or an immediate need exists, the OCFM will place the affected area(s) on Fire Watch.
 - Blocked or locked exits or egress paths that cannot be mitigated by on-scene units;
 - Personnel should work with the occupants and property managers to move obstructions from marked exit doors. Notification should be made to the OCFM of the occurrence and a scene response may not be necessary unless there is a lack of cooperation. An online OFM Help Desk should be completed by the field unit.



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- 117 • Suspected overcrowding in a public assembly;
- 118 ○ Many public assemblies in Howard County have a capacity sign that identifies
- 119 how many people may be in a certain space. Some signs are specific to certain
- 120 configurations. The Fire Prevention Code requires that an accurate head count
- 121 be kept by facility staff. Should the staff not know how many people are in the
- 122 space, or you believe that a space is overcrowded, the OCFM should be notified.

REFERENCES

- 124 • Current Version – Howard County Fire Prevention Code

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

- 126 Revised and reformatted to current template.
- 127 Updated method of reporting through OFM Helpdesk

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- 129 • None

APPROVED

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