

	<b>TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5</b> <b>MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE</b>  <b>Department Best Practices</b>	<b>A801</b>
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	<b>Effective:</b> 2/12/2018 <b>Rescinds:</b> <b>Reference:</b> AFD A801 <b>Application:</b> Shift Personnel
<b>Staging for Law Enforcement</b>		

## I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for use by MFR companies responding to incidents where staging for law enforcement has been recommended by Fire Dispatch.

## II. Background

MFR responds to incidents that by their nature may pose a threat to responding crews. Staging for law enforcement refers to waiting for law enforcement officers to secure a scene prior to MFR and EMS making entry. ATCEMS automatically stages on assaults in progress and on all shootings and stabbings. Fire and/or EMS Dispatch will advise MFR Companies when staging is recommended.

*This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on Staging for Law Enforcement. It has been adopted by Manchaca Fire Rescue as an Auto Aid partner to maximize standardization between partner agencies. Variations and additions to the language from the parent AFD document will be signified by text in italics. Generic changes that do not affect content such as formatting and changing “AFD” to “MFR” will not be noted.*

## III. Policy

- A. **Staging.** When advised to stage by Fire Dispatch, MFR Companies will stage at a safe distance until it is determined the scene is safe to enter

## IV. Best Practices

**The following best practices should be followed at all firefighting and emergency scene operations, except where deviation can be justified by Fire Officers. Any significant deviation should be communicated to responding/on-scene units as soon as possible.**

- A. **Recommendation to stage.** ATCEMS or Law Enforcement will include in the text of their message to Fire Dispatchers (usually in the form of a Request Assist message) that staging is recommended. Fire and ATCEMS Dispatchers will act in an advisory capacity only. Dispatchers shall pass along all available

information about the particular call but it shall be incumbent upon the individual Fire and EMS crews to use that information in conjunction with information contained in this policy and their discretion to respond appropriately.

- B. **Assumption to stage.** MFR shall automatically assume staging protocols for any call type that is violent in nature and poses a danger to emergency responders. (Example: assaults in progress, shootings, stabbings, etc).
- C. **Code 1 response.** MFR shall respond Code 1 anytime they are notified to stage for law enforcement. The Company may upgrade to a Code 3 response if they are notified or determine that the scene is secured by law enforcement officers prior to their arrival and if warranted by patient condition.
- D. **Radio monitoring.** The MFR Company dispatched with ATCEMS will monitor the assigned radio channel. If staging has been recommended, the MFR Company and EMS Medic Unit will be updated on that channel with any information received, from law enforcement officers or the caller, as to the security of the scene.
- E. **Coordination of staging location.** The MFR Company and the ATCEMS Unit shall coordinate their staging location via the assigned radio channel. Once the units have arrived at the staging location, their location shall be announced to ATCEMS Communications so that they may pass this information on to law enforcement officers.
- F. **Monitoring of law enforcement radio channel.** In addition to the Med Com radio channel, the MFR Company will, when possible, monitor the law enforcement channel for the law enforcement sector into which they are responding. A portable radio should be used for this purpose. *An APD sector map can be viewed on the MDC info tab under the miscellaneous category. The TCSO sector for ESD5 is David, but they operate on the TCSO Baker radio channel.*
- G. **Staging distance.** MFR Companies and ATCEMS Units should stage in an area that is not in the line-of-site of the dispatched address. MFR Companies shall stage outside of the complex if the dispatched address is an apartment or similar type compound. The apron of a Fire or ATCEMS station may be used as a staging area if the dispatched address is within three to four blocks.
- H. **Clearance to enter the scene.** When staging has been recommended, the MFR Company and ATCEMS Unit should not enter the scene until one of the following occurs:
  - 1. **Notified by EMS dispatch.** The units are advised on the assigned radio channel by ATCEMS Dispatch that law enforcement has stated the scene may be entered.
  - 2. **Crew discretion.** The MFR and EMS crews ascertain that the scene can be entered. (This will involve experience and discretion.)

- a. **Mutually agreed.** This should be a mutual decision between the *Fire and EMS* crews. A MFR Officer who uses their good judgment in entering a scene in which the MFR Company has not been cleared to enter should document in the NFIRS report narrative exactly how this decision was reached. If a decision is made to enter before the arrival of law enforcement officers, it shall be announced on the assigned channel that the crews are entering the scene without law enforcement.
  - b. **No consensus.** If a consensus cannot be reached between the crews, the default shall be for both units to continue staging. However, there may be circumstances when one crew enters without the other. In these rare cases, a non-punitive call review will be initiated at the first supervisory level to determine reasoning. The results of the call review will be published to both organizations as a Lessons Learned.
3. **Direct clearance by law enforcement.** The Officer of the MFR Company is monitoring the law enforcement radio channel on which the incident is being worked, and he or she hears the on-scene law enforcement officer tell law enforcement Dispatch that the scene is clear for Fire and EMS to enter.
- a. **Clarity of information.** The Company Officer scanning a law enforcement Sector channel in a staging situation must ensure, prior to entering the scene that the information he or she has overheard pertains to the incident/address for which the MFR Company is staging.
  - b. **Confirmation of clearance.** The Company Officer will ensure the scene is safe to enter by communicating with an on scene law enforcement officer. The following format should be used:
    - 1) Law enforcement sector
    - 2) Address of scene
    - 3) Fire unit identification
    - 4) Confirmation of scene safe to enter for EMS (this includes both EMS and Fire personnel)
- Example: "Frank sector units at 123 Main St., this is Fire Engine 501, did you advise it is safe for EMS to enter?"
- c. **Notification of clearance.** After confirmation to enter from law enforcement, the Company Officer must notify EMS on the Med Com channel that law enforcement has determined the scene is safe to enter and that MFR is entering the scene.
  - d. **Law enforcement terminology.** Company Officers should also be aware of common law enforcement radio language and radio traffic procedures.
    - 1) **"Clear".** The word "clear" is used to indicate that the scene may be entered, such as "the scene is clear." Also, a law enforcement agency may say just "clear EMS" when the scene is

safe to enter. This is a different meaning than the MFR use of the word “clear” to indicate leaving the scene.

2) **“Code 4”**. The phrase “Code 4” is used to indicate that the situation is under control.

3) **“Hold”**. The word “hold” is used to request radio silence, such as “All Frank units hold the air.” When responding to violent incidents, law enforcement may request that the radio channel for that sector remain clear so that any emergency traffic radio transmissions will be heard. When responding to these types of incidents, MFR Companies should not communicate on the law enforcement radio channel until the situation is declared Code 4 or safe to enter by a law enforcement officer on scene.

I. **Lookout prior to scene secured.** The MFR Company Officer shall consider leaving at least one crewmember with the apparatus to act as a lookout and for radio communications. Only the minimum number of personnel necessary to treat the patient should enter the scene until it is secured by law enforcement.