



EDMONDS FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

Date: June 17, 2009
To: Edmonds Citizens
From: Thomas J. Tomberg, Fire Chief
Subject: RCW 35.103 Annual Compliance Report - 2008

On June 16, 2009 the Edmonds City Council approved the Fire Department RCW 35.103 Annual Compliance Report – 2008 as part of the Consent Agenda.

BACKGROUND

RCW 35.103, then known as Substitute House Bill 1756, passed the 2005 Washington Legislature, 92-2 in the House, and 36-10 in the Senate. RCW 35.103 is derived from and a modified version of National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 *Standards for the Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Departments*. Edmonds has not adopted NFPA 1710; however, it does remain a national standard against which emergency service delivery may be measured.

COMPLIANCE

Edmonds is a “code” city with a career Fire Department that provides fire protection services in a specified geographical area. Beginning in 2007, the City was required to comply with RCW 35.103 using policies and objectives adopted by the Council in 2006. The initial compliance report was published in 2007 from data compiled in 2006. The report below is the third annual compliance reported compiled from 2008 data.

INTENT

RCW 35.103 states, “The arrival of first responders with automatic external defibrillator capability before the onset of brain death, and the arrival of adequate fire suppression resources before flashover is a critical event during the mitigation of an emergency, and is in the public’s best interest.”

RCW 35.103 requires the Fire Department to extract response data and evaluate levels of service (LOS), service deployment methods, and performance measures that apply to response time objectives for certain major emergency services, and provide an annual report based on the evaluation to the City Council and the public.

The report is intended to describe how effectively the Department is meeting each Council-adopted “response time objective,” and “explain the predictable consequences of any deficiencies” in meeting the response time objectives, and “address steps necessary to achieve compliance” with adopted objectives.

Central to compliance, evaluating the data, and producing a report is Council adoption of policy statements and measurable service delivery objectives by resolution.

METHODOLOGY

To facilitate compliance, Fire Staff recommended to and were directed by the Public Safety Committee on September 12, 2006 to follow the implementation matrix developed by the Washington Fire Chiefs (WFC) and the Washington State Council of Firefighters (WSCFF) described below, and to submit the plan for review to an advisory group.

The implementation matrix, not the compliance plan itself, is divided into the following required sections:

- Section I. Policy Statements
- Section II. Adopted Standards
- Section III. Standards of Response Comparison (Standards of Cover)
- Section IV. Miscellaneous Items

Section I of the matrix requires the Council to formally adopt in written statement or policy form the:

1. Existence of a Fire Department
2. Services the Fire Department is required to provide
3. Basic organizational structure of the Fire Department
4. Expected number of Fire Department employees
5. Functions Fire Department employees are expected to perform.

The most substantive parts of the RCW 35.103 matrix are addressed in Sections II and III, which require measuring service delivery objectives in the context of the following response types:

1. All emergency incidents
2. Fire Suppression Incidents (three elements)
3. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Basic Life Support Incidents
4. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Advanced Life Support Incidents
5. Special Operations – Hazardous Materials and Technical Rescue (four elements)
6. Marine Rescue and Firefighting.

Response standards have been developed for the services above with the exception of Wildland Firefighting and Aircraft Rescue Firefighting, neither of which the Fire Department provides.

The response data used in the compliance plan is extracted from emergency response information entered into the Fire Department records management system by Department personnel using WebFIRS software.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The City is not required to adopt response standards that do not apply to the geographical area of the City, nor does RCW 35.103 require adoption of unrealistic or unattainable time objectives. The RCW states that the code “does not, and is not intended to, in any way modify or limit the authority of cities and towns to set levels of service.”

WORK GROUP AND REFERENCES

The initial RCW 35.103 Fire Department work group consisted of:

- Fire Chief Thomas J. Tomberg
- Assistant Chief Mark Correia
- Battalion Chief Doug Dahl
- Executive Assistant, Fire Services Jeanne Startzman

The initial advisory group consisted of:

- City Attorney Scott Snyder
- Mayor Gary Haakenson
- Southwest Snohomish County RCW 35.103 Work Group with representatives from Edmonds, Fire District #1, and Lynnwood Fire Departments
- SNOCOM Director Steve Perry
- Others

References include:

- Implementation Matrix, Washington Fire Chiefs (WFC) and the Washington State Council of Firefighters (WSCFF)
- Creating & Evaluating Standards of Response Cover for Fire Departments, Commission on Fire Accreditation International
- WCIA Risk Management Bulletin #29, July, 2006
- 2005 Legislative Summaries, Ogden Murphy Wallace
- Literature Review
- Best Practices
- Other

ADDITIONAL BENEFIT

Adoption of the RCW 35.103 Compliance Plan had the additional benefit of facilitating the delivery of two City of Edmonds Strategic Plan objectives adopted by the City Council on June 27, 2006. By adopting response standards and levels of service and staffing levels that comply with state statutes, and integrating them into the City Strategic Plan, two objectives under *II. Council Public Safety Policy Statement Objectives* were met:

B. Establish Fire Levels of service and staffing that provide for proactive responses and comply with state statutes.

C. Fire levels of service and staffing become part of the Strategic Plan.

PREVIOUS CITY COUNCIL ACTION

On November 28, 2006, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 1133 adopting the performance, policy, standards, and objectives outlined in the Washington Legislature RCW 35.103 as the Edmonds Fire Department emergency resource deployment and response time objectives.

RCW 35.103 ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT – 2008

BACKGROUND

On November 28, 2006, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 1133 adopting the performance, policy, standards, and objectives outlined in Washington Legislature Substitute House Bill 1756 as the Edmonds Fire Department emergency resource deployment and response time objectives. Since passage by the State Legislature, SHB 1756 has been codified as RCW 35.103. The new code title will be referenced where appropriate in the remainder of this document and in all future references.

RCW 35.103 requires the evaluation of the Council-adopted levels of service, deployment delivery methods, and response time objectives on an annual basis. The evaluations are based on data relating to the levels of service, deployment, and the achievement of each response time objective established by Council. The response time data is extracted from emergency information entered into the Fire Department records management system by Department personnel using WebFIRS software. The evaluation was initially delivered to the Council and the public beginning in 2008 with the comparison of 2006 data against the adopted standards. Below is the RCW 35.103 Annual Compliance Report for 2009 based on 2008 data. The heart of the report appears in Sections 3 and 4.

2008 COMPLIANCE REPORT CONTENTS

As required by RCW 35.103, the 2008 Compliance Report includes four Sections:

- Section 1: Council Resolution 1133
- Section 2: Five Policy Statements that prove the existence of the Fire Department, describes services the Department provides, the Department's organizational structure, the expected number of Department employees, and the functions those employees are expected to perform.
- Section 3: Comparison of 2008 response times to each adopted response standard.
- Section 4: An explanation of why Council-adopted standards are not met, the predictable consequences of failing to meet the adopted standards, the steps necessary to correct deficiencies in order to achieve compliance.

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SECTION 1

RESOLUTION NO. 1133

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EDMONDS, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING THE PERFORMANCE POLICY, STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1756 AS EDMONDS FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT AND RESPONSE TIME OBJECTIVES.

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department is legally established as a fire department through Ordinance No. 254 approved by the City of Edmonds City Council on October 16, 1912 to provide for the prevention of and protection from fire in the city and whose emergency services now include fire suppression, emergency medical services at the basic life support-defibrillator and advanced life support levels, hazardous materials response, technical rescue response, marine rescue and fire suppression, and disaster preparedness and response; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department has a mission statement and goals and objectives to guide the organization in providing emergency services that include fire suppression, emergency medical services at the basic life support-defibrillator and advanced life support levels, hazardous materials response, technical rescue response, marine rescue and fire suppression, and disaster preparedness and response; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department has a basic organizational structure which includes elected officials, Chief Fire Officers, Fire Officers, Firefighters, Firefighter/Paramedics and Firefighter/EMTs; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department has a certain number of

members now and in the future who perform the tasks required to accomplish the response objectives; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department is required by state law to establish turnout and response time goals for the emergency services it provides; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department has evaluated the elements identified in SHB 1756 and included those provisions deemed appropriate in the Department's emergency service delivery; and,

WHEREAS, the Edmonds Fire Department has developed written response coverage objectives required to comply with applicable provisions of SHB 1756; and,

WHEREAS, the response coverage document is in furtherance of the City of Edmonds duty to the public at large and does not create a specific duty to any individual in the event of an emergency response; and

WHEREAS, each emergency response occurs under a unique set of circumstances and competing emergency needs may impact response in any specific situation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Edmonds obligation to respond to emergency incidents consistent with the Fire Department emergency resource deployment and response time objectives may be impacted by circumstances and competing emergency needs, the City of Edmonds, its officers, agents and employees shall have no duty to respond according to any specific response standard, and shall incur no liability whatsoever for failing to do so; therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EDMONDS, WASHINGTON,
HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

The City Council of the City of Edmonds hereby adopts the response coverage document attached as Exhibit A as the Edmonds Fire Department's official policy for determining emergency medical, fire and rescue resource deployment; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The adopted response coverage document officially defines the Edmonds Fire Department's written policies and procedures that establish the distribution and concentration of fixed and mobile resources of the department; and, This resolution was adopted at a regularly scheduled public meeting of the Edmonds City Council for the Edmonds Fire Department on November 28, 2006.

RESOLVED this 28th day of November 2006.

APPROVED:

Gary Haakenson
MAYOR, GARY HAAKENSON

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:

Sandra S. Chase
CITY CLERK, SANDRA S. CHASE

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK: 11/28/06
PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL: 11/28/06
RESOLUTION NO. 1133

SECTION 2

POLICY STATEMENTS

The Fire Department maintains written policy statements that establishes the following:

1. The existence of the Fire Department is verified by Resolution No. 1133.

meets requirement does not meet

2. Services that the Fire Department is required to provide are addressed in Resolution No. 1133.

meets requirement does not meet

3. The basic organizational structure of the Fire Department is as depicted in the organizational chart adopted by Council as part of the 2008-08 biennial budget on November 15, 2005, and the 2008-2008 budget adopted by Council on November 21, 2006.

meets requirement does not meet

4. The expected number of Fire Department employees for 2008 is 54 as adopted by Council as part of the 2008 biennial budget on November 21, 2006. A breakdown by position appears in Appendix E (not shown).

meets requirement does not meet

5. The functions Fire Department employees are expected to perform are listed in Edmonds Fire Department SOP 501.01 Mission Statement.

meets requirement does not meet

SECTION 3

STANDARDS OF RESPONSE COMPARISON (STANDARD OF COVER)

To measure the ability to arrive and begin mitigation operations before the critical events of “brain death” or “flashover” occur, the Fire Department is required to establish response time objectives, and compare the actual department results on an annual basis against the established objectives. The comparison began in 2007 with a comparison of the established response objectives against actual 2006 response times for the levels of response. This year, actual 2008 response time data is compared against the originally established, Council-adopted 2006 standard. This section provides that comparison.

1. Turnout time for all emergency incidents

Turnout Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a turn out time standard of 2:45, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did meet the turn out time objective 90% of the time; 90% of the Fire Department incidents experienced a turn out time of 2:34 minutes/seconds.

2A. Response time off the first-arriving Engine Company to a fire suppression incident

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 6:30 for the arrival of the first engine company at a fire suppression incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did not meet the response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of fire suppression incidents had the first engine arrive at the scene within 6:41 minutes/seconds of response time.

2B. Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a residential fire suppression incident

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 7:45 for the arrival of the full complement of a first alarm response to a residential fire suppression incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time. The Fire Department has adopted a first alarm response of 15 firefighters.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did not meet the full deployment response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of fire suppression incidents had the full deployment of first alarm responding personnel and equipment arrive at the scene within 10:30 minutes/seconds of response time.

2C. Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a commercial fire suppression incident

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 9 minutes for the arrival of the full complement of a first alarm response to a commercial fire suppression incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time. The Fire Department has adopted a first alarm response of 18 firefighters.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did not meet the full deployment response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of fire suppression incidents had the full deployment of first alarm responding personnel and equipment arrive at the scene within 10:00 minutes/seconds of response time.

3. Response time of the first-arriving unit with a first responder (BLS) or higher level capability to an emergency medical incident

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 5:15 for the arrival of the first emergency medical unit with appropriately trained personnel on board (BLS) to an emergency medical incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did not meet the response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of emergency medical incidents had the first-arriving first responder (BLS) arrive at the scene within 5:35 minutes/seconds of response time.

4. Response time for the arrival of an advanced life support (two Paramedics) unit to an emergency medical incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 6:45 for the arrival of an advanced life support unit with appropriately trained personnel (two Paramedics) on board to an ALS emergency medical incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did not meet the response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of emergency medical incidents had the Advance Life Support (two Paramedics) unit arrive at the scene within 6:53 minutes/seconds of response time.

- 5A1. Response time of the first-arriving apparatus with appropriately trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Operations level personnel on board to a hazardous materials incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 6:30 for the arrival of the first unit with appropriately trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Operations level personnel on board to a hazardous materials incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did meet the response time objective 90% of the time. 90% of hazardous materials incidents had trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Operations level personnel arrive at the scene within 5:05 minutes/seconds of response time.

- 5A2. Response time of the first-arriving apparatus with appropriately trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Technician level personnel on board to a hazardous materials incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 12 minutes for the arrival of the first unit with appropriately trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Technician level personnel on board to a hazardous materials incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did meet the response time objective 90% of the time. 90% of hazardous materials incidents had trained and equipped Hazardous Materials Technician level personnel arrive at the scene within 6:48 minutes/seconds of response time.

- 5B1. Response time of the first-arriving apparatus with appropriately trained and equipped Technical Rescue Operations level personnel on board to a technical rescue incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 6:30 for the arrival of the first unit with appropriately trained and equipped Technical Rescue Operations level personnel on board to a technical rescue incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did meet the response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of technical rescue incidents had trained and equipped Technical Rescue Operations level personnel arrive at the scene within 5:10 minutes/seconds of response time.

- 5B2. Response time of the first-arriving apparatus with appropriately trained and equipped Technical Rescue Technician level personnel on board to a technical rescue incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 12 minutes for the arrival of the first unit with appropriately trained and equipped Technical Rescue Technician level personnel on board to a technical rescue incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: No reportable Incidents.

6. Response time of the first-arriving apparatus with appropriately trained and equipped Marine Rescue and Firefighting personnel on board to a marine incident.

Response Time Standard: The Fire Department has adopted a response/travel time standard of 6:30 for the arrival of the first unit with appropriately trained and equipped Marine Rescue and Firefighting personnel on board to a marine incident, which the department should meet 90% of the time.

Actual Department Comparison for the Year 2008: The Fire Department did meet the response time objective 90% of the time; 90% of Marine incidents had trained and equipped firefighting personnel arrived at the scene within 5:10 minutes/seconds of response time.

SECTION 4

COUNCIL-ADOPTED STANDARDS NOT MET

RCW 35.103 requires an explanation when Council-adopted standards are not met, the predictable consequences of failing to meet the adopted standards, the steps necessary to correct deficiencies in order to achieve compliance.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS NOT MET

Of 11 Council-adopted 2008 performance standards, five were met, five were not met, and one standard had no reportable incidents to evaluate. The five standards not met in 2008 are:

2A. Response time off the first-arriving Engine Company to a fire suppression incident

Established: 6:30 Minutes/Seconds

Actual: 6:41 Minutes/seconds

2B. Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a residential fire suppression incident

Established: 7:45 Minutes/Seconds

Actual: 10:30 Minutes/seconds

2C. Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a commercial fire suppression incident

Established: 9:00 Minutes/Seconds

Actual: 10:00 Minutes/seconds

3. Response time of the first-arriving unit with a first responder (BLS) or higher level capability to an emergency medical incident

Established: 5:15 Minutes/Seconds

Actual: 5:35 Minutes/Seconds

4. Response time for the arrival of an advanced life support (two Paramedics) unit to an emergency medical incident.

Established: 6:45 Minutes/Seconds

Actual: 6:53 Minutes/Seconds

PREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES

Predictable consequences for the deficient standards above include the potential for greater deterioration in the patient/victim's medical condition, death, and increased property loss. Although response times are measurable as a risk factor, other inherent

and varied risk factors that are less measurable also play a large role in outcomes, for example, time lapse between the onset of the emergency, discovery, and reporting; dispatch center processing; distance traveled; weather and road conditions; access; out-of-service / unavailable status of emergency units due to training, mechanical, or other emergencies; patients medical history and lifestyle; presence of bystanders able to assist; emergency devices that allow bystanders to assist; built-in fire detection and protection equipment; type of construction; and square footage. The list of variables that directly and indirectly influence the outcome of a specific emergency incident are not only numerous but come in various gradations and degrees.

Despite the various factors that affect outcomes that are outside the control of emergency responders, response times are one factor in the medical chain-of-survival and structure fire time-temperature curve that governments can affect.

Predictable consequences in three of five standards above are difficult to predict because the time differences between eight and 20 seconds constitute a deficiency spread that can be considered nebulous. Also, when working with a 90th percentile, only 10 percent of the emergency calls fail to meet the time standards. At best, a mild increase in property loss could occur on fire-related responses, and a delay in treatment for medically-related incidents may occur.

The 2B standard with the 2:45 minute deficiency – Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a residential fire suppression incident, and 2C Standard with the 1:00 Minute deficiency – Response time for the deployment of full first alarm assignment to a commercial fire suppression incident – is attributable to the arrival of automatic aid units and beyond practical control of the Edmonds Fire Department.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The following is a list of proposed actions currently being taken by the Fire Department and recommendations for City Council consideration to improve overall performance:

- Awareness and Training: Awareness and training will continue to maintain the current level of service. Training and awareness can be very effective in improving turnout time, which has improved by 11 seconds from 2007 to 2008. This improvement is likely attributed to using MDCs (Mobile Data Computers) creating a more accurate account of turnout time, and the adjustment to the paging notification system that provided a more expeditious dispatching system. Awareness and training is not as effective in the response time categories as station location/geography and call location dictates the successfulness of this standard.
- Partnerships/regionalization: As mentioned above, two of the five deficient areas are attributed to automatic and mutual aid resources which the Edmonds Fire Department does not control. Partnerships and/or regionalizing with other area departments will allow resources to be used more efficiently and effectively. These efficiencies could be realized through flexibility in emergency response resources. An example of this would be a dedicated resource that could transport patients to the hospital keeping other resources in-service, or a dedicated resource that would more likely be available locally for emergency

calls. These types of changes are more attainable when working in a larger geographical area.

Station Location: Geography and Station Location would be the most costly change for the City, but would provide the biggest response time benefit. Currently, all three of the fire stations are not placed in an optimal location. Site determination for a training tower with enough room for a new fire station would create a win-win for both Firefighter training and response location. Initial evaluation of the data suggests the most feasible location for a replacement Station 20, constructed in 1952, is a site near Highway 99 at 228th Street. The second replacement choice is to move Station 17 closer to 212th Street SW and 84th Ave.