PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFCA) to codify and formalize current operational practices within Williamson County as they relate to emergency fire response, on-site incident based communications and incident management in order to prevent a given area of the county from being depleted of emergency fire and rescue resources.

BACKGROUND

The Williamson County Fire Chief's Association and Williamson County Emergency Services have maintained the County Resource Coordination (CRC) program for several years. The program was created to prevent a given area of the county from being depleted of emergency fire and rescue resources by having fire officers respond to the communications center and assist in the coordination of fire resources. The fire officers assisted communications personnel in resource management and district coverage issues due to inadequate computer aided dispatch and radio communications technology.

The county has since replaced the legacy CAD system with a modern computer dispatching program that incorporates automatic vehicle locators (AVL based on GPS coordinates) and mobile data technology. The many disparate radio systems have also been replaced by a new 800MHz digital and fully interoperable regional radio system. Utilizing the new CAD and radio communications system, the WCEC is in a much better position to manage resources and provide an effective scene response all the while ensuring district coverage is adequate without the need for fire officers to respond to the communications center.

In addition to the implementation of new technologies eliminating the need for a fire officer at the communications center, the frequency of large and complex wild land-urban interface fire incidents have dramatically increased throughout the county. These continuing fire responses has required heavily staffed incident command posts with command and general staff positions being filled for multiple operational periods.

The Williamson County Fire Chief's Association in collaboration with Williamson County Emergency Services have amended and revised the original County Resource Coordination Program. This new program codifies and formalizes current operational practices within Williamson County as they relate to emergency fire response, on-site incident based communications and incident management.

INTRODUCTION

The Williamson County Fire Chief's Association in collaboration with Williamson County Emergency Services operates and maintains this County Resource Coordination System (CRC) to ensure adequate fire and rescue service resources are available to all areas of Williamson County; and that local Incident Commanders have trained personnel available to request for support of on-scene incident command organizations. The CRC Program provides for coordinating the response, re-location, staging, or positioning of fire and rescue apparatus and personnel to strategic areas of the county during periods of high call volume. In addition, the CRC Program facilitates and coordinates the request of fire and rescue assets from local, regional, state, or federal agencies when required through Williamson County Department of Emergency Management.

The original CRC duties of coordinating fire and rescue resources for area coverage will be performed by Williamson County Emergency Communications with the on duty Haz-Mat Chief (CRC Duty Officer) available for consultation and assistance to the WCEC Center. By activating CRC, an agency is in essence requesting Williamson County Emergency Communications to coordinate resources to the scene and prevent an area in the county from being depleted of emergency response capabilities.

The CRC Program does not relieve communities or jurisdictions of their responsibilities to provide adequate fire and rescue response for all local emergencies within their area. However, when a community or jurisdiction exhausts its resources; or the nature of an emergency may in all likelihood exceed the capacity or capabilities of a local community or jurisdiction; or the lack of additional resources may cause a delay in fire or rescue response and create an undue burden on the community or jurisdiction, the CRC system can be activated by the affected jurisdiction, Incident Commander, or Williamson County Emergency Services officials. The County Resource Coordination System (CRC) is comprised of various personnel from local and county public safety agencies as approved by the Williamson County Fire Chief's Association.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS
A. SITUATION
Williamson County is subject to a number of emergency or disaster scenarios that may occur locally or as part of a regional, state, or national crisis. Natural disasters such as large wildfires, tornadoes, floods, icing, and hurricanes as well as a number of man-made disasters, have the potential for generating fire and rescue resource demands that exceed local agency capacity or capabilities. A number of automatic aid, mutual aid, coverage agreements, cooperative assistance, and intergovernmental agreements exist between agencies within the County and among agencies both inside and outside the County. These agreements typically address resource sharing in both day-to-day and crisis operations. Widespread emergencies, may alter use of mutual aid agreements in order to facilitate resource allocation to the highest priority incidents by local and county incident managers.

Resource requests for fire and rescue assets, and coordination of area coverage, will be managed under normal dispatch procedures through the communications center. On-scene incident management support requested by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) Incident Commander will be provided through this CRC Program. To facilitate the on-scene incident management support required for large and complex incidents, a key component of this plan, is the implementation of Incident Based Resources and Communications. If requested the mobile command and communications assets staffed by communications and WCFCA personnel (and/or an Incident Management Team) to assist managing the emergency from an Incident Command Post (ICP).

Local fire and rescue agencies typically do not require personnel or equipment support for incident command organizations within their respective jurisdictions. However during large and complex emergencies or disasters, local agencies often require and request additional personnel and equipment in support of an on-scene incident command post or organization. These requests range from a few personnel performing specific command and general staff functions to a full incident management team as needed by the Incident Commander.

The state government code requires county government to be the focal point for disaster-related resource coordination within the unincorporated areas of the county; and city government performs the same functions within its jurisdiction. The County is expected to maximize use of its resources both in response to its own incidents and in support of local governments within the County. The County must also serve as the originator of all requests for state and federal resource support sent to the state with the exception of direct

fire resource support provided by the Texas Forest Service (TFS). Local jurisdictions may make direct requests to TFS for fire resources.

B. ASSUMPTIONS

Support from state and federal agencies may be available upon request once local resource capacity has been exceeded, when that capacity is near exhaustion, or when the scope and complexity of the emergency is expected to exceed local resource capabilities. The interval between request and arrival of state resources varies widely from 2-24 hours, and for federal resources, 12-96 hours.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A. REQUIREMENTS

The CRC Program is managed as a collaborative partnership between Williamson County and the Williamson County Fire Chief's Association (WCFCA). The WCFCA will appoint a CRC Committee Chair to coordinate the program.

1. The primary CRC Duty Officer will be designated as CRC1. In the event that multiple events are occurring within the County requiring additional duty officers, each additional duty officer shall be designated CRC2, CRC3, etc. Additional CRC officers will be activated as needed by emergency communications.

2. When on-call, the CRC Duty Officer must be available 24/7 via one of the following: alpha-pager, phone, and 800MHz radio. Personnel serving as CRC Officers shall be approved by the WCFCA with a simple majority vote of the CRC committee and meet minimum defined standards for the position as adopted by the WCFCA.

3. Upon request the CRC Duty Officers will coordinate activities at the direction of the on-scene Incident Commander to assist in providing ICS functions at the scene, EOC, etc., to include any or all command and general staff positions, with the exception of Incident Commander or Operations (unless part of standard mutual aid/auto aid).

4. The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) expressly understands that they may delegate authority to certain personnel. However, each AHJ expressly understands and agrees that said AHJ must retain all responsibility for the actions or inactions of any appointed command and or general staff positions at the scene of an incident or event.

B. CRC DUTY OFFICER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CRC Officers may assist on-scene Incident Commanders in command and general staff positions as directed to provide overhead incident management support. The CRC system is also designed to manage coordination of Williamson County resources responding to out-of-county requests for assistance. Finally, CRC Officers may provide guidance to emergency communications in maintaining minimal emergency response capabilities within a given jurisdiction.

Once the CRC system is activated, the CRC Duty Officers are responsible for supporting WCEC as needed. Those duties may include:

1. Designating and/or assembling a Division, Group, Task Force(s), Strike Team(s), or other resources to comply with resource requests from the Incident Commander.

2. Coordinating special resource requests as needed. This may require collaboration with Williamson County Emergency Management personnel to procure regional, state, or federal assets.

3. Collaborating with Williamson County Emergency Management personnel for the request of state or federal assets (resource requests may require local and/or county declarations, activation of emergency management plans, etc.).

4. Respond to the incident if requested by the Incident Commander to assist during large scale or complex events when the WCEC is not utilizing the resource.

C. CRC FIELD OFFICER
Upon request the CRC Field Officer is responsible for providing an on-scene response to provide support to the Incident Commander as directed. Those duties may include:

1. Functioning in various command and general staff positions such as Safety, PIO, Liaison, Plans, Logistics, and various branch director, division/group supervisor, or strike team and task force leader positions.

2. Coordinating resource requests between the Incident Commander or AHJ and county officials or emergency communications.

3. Assist the Incident Commander or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for any other types of assistance as requested.

4. Assist the Incident Commander in accountability, resource ordering, resource tracking, and amended alarm or response protocols as needed based on the incident or event.

D. CRC OFFICER MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
The minimum qualifications for personnel participating as a CRC Officer are:

1. ICS 100

2. ICS 200

3. ICS 300

4. ICS 700

5. ICS 800b

6. Recommendation of Fire Chief

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS
1. The CRC system does not replace mechanisms that currently provide automatic/mutual aid from one department to another. However, emergency communications at the request of the Incident Commander can be utilized to coordinate or manage automatic/mutual aid resources responding to or committed to an incident or "district" coverage.

2. CRC does not own or maintain any resources. CRC simply provides a mechanism in which to coordinate resources that voluntarily participate in the program.

3. There are periods when centralized tracking of resources becomes necessary. This occurs during periods of high fire danger, impending severe weather, or other emergent situations and is often associated with a high state of readiness in the county.

4. Emergency communications will notify CRC Officer(s) of any significant incident(s) that, although it may or may not require CRC assistance, may impact a jurisdiction's ability to respond to another incident should it occur.

5. The following are support functions that can be provided through the CRC Program:

   i. A single point-of-contact (emergency communications) for the Incident Commander, or designee, to communicate with in order to facilitate the request of additional resources to mitigate emergencies such as large fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials response, or other All-Hazards incidents.

   ii. Assistance in coordinating jurisdiction or "district" coverage with local in-county resources.

   iii. Assistance in coordinating jurisdiction or "district" coverage with non-local resources in the event local resources are otherwise unavailable due to other emergency incident(s).

   iv. Assistance and collaboration with county officials for regional, state, and federal resource requests such as the Texas Forest Service, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Military Forces, US Fish and Wildlife, FEMA, etc. (these resource requests may require local and/or County declarations and/or activation of emergency management plans).

   v. Assistance or coordination of on-scene incident management and or support at the request of the Incident Commander or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

   vi. Assistance with coordinating on-scene or remote (Emergency Operations Center–EOC) incident management and or support.

   vii. Mechanism for assembling Divisions, Groups, Task Force(s), Strike Team (ST), or other resources to comply with mutual aid requests originating from within or outside of the County.

6. CRC Field Officer Actions if Requested:

   i. Once CRC Field Officer has been requested, the CRC Field officer should respond to the on-scene Incident Command Post. If one is not established, the CRC Officer shall request that one be established or a location to establish one from the on-scene Incident Commander.

   ii. Additional Chief Officers, CRC Officers, or the Type 3 IMT can be requested by the Incident Commander or the affected jurisdiction if the incident requires additional incident management support. The notification and coordination of these resources will be performed by emergency communications.

iii. In certain events or incidents, the Williamson County Emergency Operations Center (WC EOC) may be activated. CRC Officer(s), or designee, may be requested to the EOC for the duration of the emergency or until relief is requested staffing various positions as directed. Historically, the WC EOC has provided many functions in support of Williamson County Fire Department's to include Area Command and Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC).

CRC ACTIVATION AND PROCEDURES

If additional CRC resources are needed to respond to an incident, this request will be made through the CRC Duty Officer.

It is important to note that the activation of CRC does NOT mean additional firefighting resources or apparatus are automatically dispatched to the scene. Fire apparatus, aircraft, or state and federal resources such as the Texas Forest Service or US Fish and Wildlife must be requested by number and resource type. If a Task Force is requested, the specific resource should be specified; wildland, structural, or manpower.

Resource requests should be specific and judicious. It is ultimately the responsibility of the AHJ Incident Commander for what resources are requested and how they are employed; regardless of who actually makes the request.

A. INITIAL INFORMATION

In the majority of cases, CRC activations will not occur until fire and rescue personnel are on scene, have established a command post, and are actively engaged in mitigating the emergency. However, in certain emergencies such as mass transit accidents (plane crashes, commuter rail), certain flooding or swift water rescue events, and hazardous materials incidents where the initial responding agency and/ or the AHJ may request CRC activation based on initial call and dispatch information.

Regardless of when CRC is activated, the minimum information should be given to emergency communications by the requesting agency/entity:

1. Description of the incident (scene size-up)

2. Command Post location

3. Staging Area location

4. Mission Tasking (overhead, staging, operations, planning, logistics, etc.)

5. Point of contact, radio channel, cell phone contact number, etc.

In certain incidents and when applicable, the following additional information should be provided:

1. Hazardous Materials Identification

2. Exclusion Zone Parameters (Hot, Warm, Cold zones)

3. Evacuation Criteria (shelter in place, evacuation, plume models, time frames)

4. Potential 30-minute impact (additional flooding, threatened structures/citizens, smoke, etc.)

5. Potential patient/casualty count and triage information

6. Threatened Structures, Citizens, Environmental Conditions

B. ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

Williamson County Emergency Communications is the Primary Warning Point for Williamson County. Upon notification or request by an Incident Commander, AHJ, Emergency Services or Standard Operating Procedures, emergency communications will activate the CRC System by:

1. Transmitting alerts via alpha page or other electronic systems.

2. Communications will provide basic emergency information and provide a CRC/Command channel assignment for the CRC Officer(s) to communicate directly with communications and the Incident Commander via 800MHz radio.

3. Departments dispatched by the county will be notified of response/resource request through traditional voice/tone paging and alpha-page/SMS messaging.

4. Non-WCEC Fire Departments will be provided a radio channel assignment upon initial dispatch. Once responding, these Fire Departments will contact communications on that assigned channel and report to the county as the primary emergency communications center until directed otherwise by the county, Incident Commander, CRC Duty Officer(s), or home agency Chief Officer.

5. Any units responding to an emergency after the initial alarm assignment is on scene will be assigned a secondary radio channel for the response and staging phases. Units will be advised to contact Staging/Command when nearing the incident or on scene.

6. Mutual/Automatic aid response within the County or with traditional inter-county requests (i.e. Jarrell to Salado, Florence to SW Bell, etc.) will be processed as single resource response requests unless a Task Force is specifically requested.

7. Resource requests for response outside of the traditional inter-county requests will be provided in the form of a Williamson County Task Force response. The Task Force (TF) response will consist of a Command Officer, mobile communications unit, and apparatus/equipment resource types based on the request and availability of assets.

8. Only respond apparatus or personnel that are requested. Do not self-dispatch any additional apparatus or personnel to an incident.

9. Apparatus and personnel responding to any incident will utilize their standard department name and type radio identifiers for the duration of the incident (Leander Engine 1, Florence Brush 71, etc.).

10. All personnel should respond to an incident in marked apparatus and not in privately owned vehicles unless specifically requested by the Incident Commander.

11. If an agency cannot respond (or declines) to a CRC resource request, that agency shall contact the CRC Duty Officer and advise that they are not responding. Emergency Communications and the CRC Duty Officer(s) will coordinate replacement resources if necessary.

COMMUNICATIONS

Williamson County is a member of the Greater Austin-Travis County Regional Radio System (GATRRS). As such, there are specific technical advantages and disadvantages for operations and interoperability. Emergency communications will provide appropriate apparatus, personnel, channel assignments, patches, and other communications related information to CRC and agencies as needed. Communications will be responsible for activating the CRC system once requested as follows:

A. IN COUNTY RESPONSE

1. CRC activations will occur via alpha-numeric and SMS text paging system or other electronic systems. Each individual or agency is responsible for appropriate pager and cellular phone programming.

2. The basic incident information will be transmitted along with an initial channel assignment for first due units. Additional CRC notifications may be sent advising incident status changes, resource updates, weather information, etc.

3. Communications will follow normal dispatch procedures for each agency managed by the county.

4. For agencies not managed by the county, the county will notify each respective communications center for resource requests.

5. All initial channel assignments for first due units managed by Emergency Communications will be traditional regional fire channels (W Fire 1, C Fire 1, E Fire 1, etc.). This is the initial response and operations channel. If more than one channel is needed and requested by the Incident Commander, communications will assign additional channels as needed. Note: WC Fire 1 remains reserved for CRC and on-scene Incident Command. All subsequent channel assignments will be in the WC Fire Zone.

6. All secondary units responding to resource requests will be assigned a county-wide fire channel (i.e. WC FIRE 2-15). The secondary channel assigned for RESPONSE/STAGING channel (WC Fire 2-15) will not be patched to the OPERATIONS channel (W Fire 1, C Fire 1, E Fire 1) unless requested by the Incident Commander.

7. The cities of Cedar Park, Round Rock and Georgetown use agency specific channels for initial response and operations.

8. All secondary units responding to additional resource requests will contact STAGING/COMMAND once near or on the scene for staging and operations instructions on the primary operations channel unless a STAGING channel has been pre-identified.

9. In cases where non-repeated or non-800MHz agencies are operating in Williamson County (i.e. Burnet County, TFS, USF&W, any aircraft), the county will deploy mobile communications resources and coordinate radio communications from the scene as an Incident Communications Center co-located with the Incident Command Post.

B. OUT OF COUNTY RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

When normal or simple mutual aid or automatic aid is implemented between a Williamson County agency and an outside requestor; emergency communications support will be reviewed on a case by case

basis and requested by the Williamson County responding units. In the event of a Task Force or Strike Team response to an out of county request, a mobile communications unit will be dispatched to assist in coordinating on-scene communications and interoperability. This same resource may also assist the CRC Officer responding on behalf of the Task Force or Strike Team.

C. AIRCRAFT COMMUNICATIONS

The use of aviation assets on complex incidents carries inherent risks; multiple aircraft on the same incident or multiple incidents in close proximity increases risk exponentially. When any aviation assets are requested for complex incidents (floods, rescues, wildfires, etc.), WCEC will dispatch a mobile communications unit and coordinate radio communications from the scene.

1. Aircraft coordination and communications should be kept restricted from ground resources, performed at the scene, and not patched with other radio channels or talk groups.

2. The Air Operations should be located at the Command Post and have direct communications with the Incident Commander and any Operations Section Chief if applicable who in turn has direct communications with Division/Group Supervisors and Strike Team/Task Force Leaders on the incident.

3. The Air Operations must maintain radio contact with all aircraft assigned to an incident and assist coordinating safety margins, airspace coordination to include Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) and NOTAMS (Notice to Airmen), and ground operations.

4. In scenarios involving multiple aircraft from separate agencies (Star Flight, DPS, TFS, USFS), it is critical to establish and maintain a common air-to-air/ground channel restricted to the Air Operations Branch and separate from ground resources. This typically requires specialized radio equipment and not available on traditional VHF or 800MHz radio resources.

5. The Air Operations must be experienced in airspace coordination and able to communicate with both aircraft and ground resources, the Texas Forest Service dispatch centers in Merkel, Abilene, and Granbury; and with the Federal Aviation Administration.

CRC OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS
A. STRIKE TEAM / TASK FORCE CONCEPT

To ensure the appropriate resources are managed, tracked, and dispatched as warranted the Williamson County Fire Chief's Association will use the following organizational elements for area coverage or response:

1. Wildland Fire Operations

    i. Wildland Strike Team

    ii. Wildland Task Force

2. Structural Fire Operations

    i. Structural Strike Team

    ii. Structural Task Force

3. Manpower Requests

    i. Manpower Task Force

Wildland Fire Operations

WILDLAND STRIKE TEAM	WILDLAND TASK FORCE
(3) TYPE 4, 5 OR 6 ENGINES	(4) TYPE 4, 5 OR 6 ENGINES
(1) STRIKE TEAM LEADER	(2) TENDERS
	(1) TASK FORCE LEADER

Structural Fire Operations

STRUCTURAL STRIKE TEAM	HEAVY STRUCTURAL TASK FORCE
(3) TYPE 1 ENGINES (1,000GPM)	(3) PUMPERS (1,000GPM)
(1) TASK FORCE LEADER	(1) TENDER
	(1) AERIAL APPARATUS
	(1) STRIKE TEAM LEADER

Manpower Task Force

PERSONNEL IN MARKED UNIT- with appropriate protective equipment
and hand tools based on call type.

Special Note: Strike Teams and/or Task Forces will be assembled at the time of the request based on closest appropriate and available resources by emergency communications. Agencies should identify resources within their departments that are available for CRC response to emergency communications when requested. Emergency Communications will assemble Task Force resources from the opposite side of the county from where the emergency is occurring. For example; a Leander fire would receive an East Side Task Force, and a Taylor fire would receive a West Side Task Force. Communications may also assemble and/or dispatch out of county resources when they provide the closest available and appropriate response. The assembling of a taskforce should not prevent the use of local and closer agencies being sent to the scene during rapidly escalating and emergent events.

An Incident Commander has the ability to request single or multiple resources, or to amend any Strike Team or Task Force compliment to an incident. However, when large resource requests are necessary the preferred method is to request the appropriate Strike Team or Task Force element based on incident type. All agencies understand that cancellation of some or all requested Strike Team or Task Force elements may occur.

B. CRC SPECIALTY RESOURCES

Williamson County emergency services organizations have a wide variety of specialized resources available for response and deployment upon request within or outside the County. The list below is not inclusive but representative of available resources:

1. Mobile Cascade Systems

2. Aerial Ladders (>75ft stick or platform)

3. Heavy Tenders

4. Hazardous Materials Response Equipment

5. Mobile Rehabilitation Units

6. Mobile Communications/Command Post Apparatus

7. Type 3 Regional Incident Management Team (IMT)

8. Technical Rescue Group

9. Swift-Water Rescue Group

10. Dive Recovery Group

11. Dozer Group(s)

CRC Committee

The CRC Committee is comprised of representatives from various organizations who participate in the CRC program. Committee membership is voluntary, and each member is appointed by Williamson County Fire Chief's Association President. There are no term limits.

A. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

1. Development and continuous review of the CRC Program Guidelines.

2. Provide training and education on the CRC Program.

3. Receive, review, and make recommendations on grievances related to CRC operations.

4. Emergency Communications will review activations for deficiencies and request the CRC Committee's review as needed. Individual requests for a CRC Committee review shall be submitted in writing to the President of the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFCA).

5. All grievances shall be submitted to the President of the Williams County Fire Chiefs Association or designee in writing or electronic communication.