

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois

Communications – Development and Use of Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards

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Subject: Development and Use of Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards
Functional Area: Operations
Category: Policy and Procedure
Approved By: MABAS Executive Board



PURPOSE

To provide guidance and direction to member divisions, departments and incident commanders with regards to development and utilization of Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards.

RESPONSABILITY

This policy applies to all MABAS Divisions and member Departments.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Enforcement of this specific policy rests initially with the Co-Chairs of the MABAS Telecommunications, Communications, and Dispatch Centers committee, then the MABAS CEO, followed by the MABAS President, 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

There is no routine reporting requirement for this policy.

BACKGROUND

MABAS has long recognized the need to mobilize large numbers of emergency response personnel for major incidents that will exceed the normal response characteristics of a single fire department and even a single MABAS division. Examples of these types of incidents include, but are not limited to, major fires, mass casualty incidents, tornadoes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, technical rescue events and hazardous materials incidents. MABAS allows for two primary mechanisms for organizing a major response to an incident; Interdivisional Responses and individual state responses through state Emergency Management or EMAC.

POLICY

The MABAS Telecommunications, Communications and Dispatch Committee hereby makes the following recommendations for both member and non-member fire departments:

1. Definitions:

INTERDIVISIONAL BOX ALARM

Interdivisional Box Alarms are an extension of a fire department's box alarm system for use at major incidents when all alarm levels on the box alarm card have been requested and additional manpower and/or equipment resources are needed. This type of response is requested from division to division and is generally used when speed of response is important and the event will usually be of a shorter duration (less than 12 hours). This may also be used for major incidents prior to activation of state resources when adjacent resources are needed immediately while state response assets are being mustered.

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STATE RESPONSE

Individual states may develop operational response plans for major emergencies and disasters. Generally, these response plans are not designed for speed of response, but quantity and sustainability of resources to a stricken area. These plans may also include responses under the state’s Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

ILLINOIS STATEWIDE RESPONSE FLOWPLAN

MABAS in conjunction with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) can mobilize numerous task forces and strike teams of fire, emergency medical, hazardous materials and technical rescue personnel and equipment to respond to a significant incident or disaster. These responses are authorized by IEMA and/or the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and are not designed for speed of response but quantity and sustainability of response to the stricken area. Generally, these responses will last between 72 hours and 10 days. Personnel and equipment responding under the Statewide Response Flowplan generally become assets of the State of Illinois with reimbursement of manpower and expenses and insurance becoming the responsibility of the State.

TASKFORCE

A MABAS taskforce is comprised of a number of different types of response apparatus and personnel organized to function as a complete response team. There are generally two (2) types of task force responses:

FIRE/DISASTER TASKFORCE

A fire/disaster taskforce is a self-contained response team capable of responding to routine fire and emergency medical related calls in a stricken area. The table below describes the equipment and manpower requirements for a normal Fire/Disaster Taskforce:

Resource Type	Quantity	Personnel / Unit
Chief with Aide	1	2
Engines	2	4
Trucks	1	4
Heavy Squad	1	4
Ambulances	3	2
Total Units & Personnel	8	28

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TASKFORCE:

A Hazardous Materials Task Force is a self-contained response team capable of responding to a Level “A” hazardous materials incident with little or no support from resources in the stricken area. The table below describes the equipment and manpower requirements for a normal Hazardous Materials Taskforce:

Resource Type	Quantity	Personnel / Unit
Chief with Aide	1	2
Engines	1	4
ALS Ambulance	1	2
Level A Haz-Mat Techs	1	10
Haz-Mat Equipment Unit	1	2
Total Units & Personnel	5	20

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STRIKE TEAM:

A strike team is defined as a fixed number of like units and personnel. Strike teams can be composed of engines, trucks, squads, tenders, ambulances, brush units, divers, hazardous materials or technical rescue.

The following table identifies the types of recognized strike teams for MABAS and the quantity of response units and/or technicians:

Type	Chiefs	Engine	Truck	Squads	Tenders	EMS	Brush	Divers	Haz-Mat	TRT
Engine	1	5								
Trucks	1		5							
Squads	1			5						
Tenders	1				5					
Ambulance	1					5				
Brush Unit	1						5			
Divers	1							10		
Haz-Mat	1								10	
TRT	1									10

The following table identifies the manpower (staffing) levels for all strike team unit types:

Resource Unit Type	Personnel / Unit
Chief with Aide	2
Engine	4
Truck	4
Squad	4
Tender	2
Ambulance	2
Brush Truck	2

2. INTERDIVISIONAL CARD DEVELOPMENT

MABAS Divisions are encouraged to examine available resources from their member departments and develop Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards for any and all resources determined to be available for speed of response deployments generally lasting less than twelve (12) hours. This card is to be developed for outbound resources responding to an incident in another MABAS Division.

2.1 INTERDIVISIONAL BOX ALARM TYPES

The following types of Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards may be developed:

- Fire/Disaster Taskforce
- Hazardous Materials Taskforce
- Technical Rescue Taskforce
- Dive Rescue Taskforce
- Engine Strike Team
- Truck Strike Team
- Squad Strike Team
- Tender Strike Team
- Brush Unit Strike Team

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2.2 SAMPLE INTERDIVISIONAL ALARM CARDS

Sample taskforce and strike team interdivisional box alarm cards are attached as appendix A.

2.3 CONSIDERATIONS

MABAS Divisions should take the following into consideration when developing Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards:

2.3.1 MABAS Divisions should be cautious about committing too many resources from their Division to an interdivisional response. For example, if a MABAS Division only has 2 truck companies, they should not develop a card for a truck strike team.

2.3.2 When determining which departments should be included on the interdivisional card, MABAS Divisions should take manpower availability into consideration, especially weekday manpower.

2.3.3 For geographically large or populated MABAS Divisions, multiple Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards may be desired based on different geographical areas.

2.3.4 MABAS Divisions should have two (2) levels for each Interdivisional Box Alarm Card, Primary and Secondary. Primary Units are first to be dispatched with Secondary Units used for fill-in when necessary.

3. REQUESTING AN INTERDIVISIONAL RESPONSE

Generally, the Incident Commander of a major incident will recognize the need for additional resources beyond the last alarm on their local box alarm cards. At that time, the Incident Commander will request interdivisional resources through their MABAS Division Dispatcher.

3.1 DETERMINING RESOURCE NEEDS

The Incident Commander must determine the type and quantity of resources needed at the incident. That determination may involve requesting a taskforce assignment or one or more strike teams.

Example 1: An IC at a major rural fire may require 10 additional tenders to shuttle water. The IC would request two (2) tender strike teams, one from each of two different MABAS Divisions.

Example 2: An IC at a mass casualty incident may need 20 additional ambulances. The IC would request four (4) ambulance strike teams, one from each of four different MABAS Divisions.

Example 3: A community is experiencing a rash of fire outbreaks caused by over pressurization of the natural gas distribution system. A senior command officer may request a fire taskforce assignment from one MABAS Division to help battle the fires.

3.2 REQUESTING RESOURCES

The IC must request the interdivisional assignment through their primary/back-up MABAS Division Dispatcher. The request should include type of interdivisional assets requested, number of taskforces or strike teams requested, and which MABAS Division(s) the resources are requested from.

4. DISPATCHING AN INTERDIVISIONAL RESPONSE

The MABAS Division Dispatcher may receive a request for interdivisional resources for an incident within their Division as well as another Division requesting resources be sent to them.

4.1 REQUEST FOR STRICKEN DIVISION TO RECEIVE AID

When the stricken MABAS Division Dispatcher receives a request for Interdivisional Mutual Aid from an Incident Commander at an active incident within their Division, the MABAS Dispatcher must copy the type(s) and quantities of resources requested. Based on the types quantities of units requested, the stricken MABAS Division Dispatcher will determine the number of Interdivisional Requests that are required.

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- 4.1.1 If the affected department has listed preferences for interdivisional requests on their Box Alarm cards, the stricken MABAS Dispatcher should contact the requested Division(s) in order of preference on the local card. This contact can be via radio (IFERN) or by telephone.
- 4.1.2 In the event that the active Box Alarm Card does not list preferred choices for interdivisional requests, then the local MABAS Dispatcher has the authority to select adjacent Divisions to request aid from. The stricken MABAS Dispatcher should take into account response time and whether or not resources from the neighboring Division(s) are already being utilized at the incident.
- 4.1.3 The stricken MABAS Division Dispatcher requesting interdivisional mutual aid must continue to monitor the IFERN frequency and account for the interdivisional mutual aid units as they acknowledge response and/or arrive on scene.
- 4.1.4 Each MABAS Division Dispatch Center should maintain a map showing the locations of MABAS Divisions along with telephone listings for each MABAS Division Dispatch Center. This information can be located at www.MABAS.org.

4.2 REQUEST FOR DIVISION TO SEND OUTBOUND AID

When the MABAS Division Dispatcher receives a request for outbound Interdivisional Mutual Aid from a stricken MABAS Division, the MABAS Dispatcher must copy the type(s) and quantities of resources requested, as well as the department requesting aid and the staging area. The MABAS Dispatcher should immediately determine whether or not their Division has appropriate Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards to match the type of response or units requested. If a requested taskforce or strike team card does not exist, the MABAS Dispatcher should immediately decline the request. If a card exists for the type of units or response requested then the following dispatch procedure should be followed:

- 4.2.1 The MABAS Dispatcher should locate and review the appropriate Taskforce or Strike Team Interdivisional Box Alarm Card for their Division that matches the resource type requested.
- 4.2.2 The MABAS Division Dispatcher sending aid should activate the MABAS Alerting Tones on IFERN in the same manner as routine Box Alarm dispatches, or follow other local Division dispatch procedures. When dispatching Interdivisional requests on IFERN, the MABAS Dispatcher must announce the type of interdivisional request, MABAS Division and Department requesting aid, location of the staging area and units due to respond.
For Example: "MABAS Division 1 to all locals, Division 101 is requesting an Interdivisional Box Alarm for an Ambulance Strike Team for the Kenosha Fire Department. Staging will be at Highway 50 and Green Bay Road. The following ambulances are due: Arlington Heights, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg, Wheeling and Palatine and a Chief from Prospect Heights. Responding units switch to IFERN and acknowledge Division 1." (Repeat the message)
- 4.2.3 When a MABAS Division is sending a complete Taskforce or Strike Team, all responding units are encouraged to muster at a designated Point of Departure and respond to the incident as a single resource. If a MABAS Division is requested to send less than a complete Taskforce or Strike Team, individual units may respond directly to the designated staging area.
- 4.2.4 The MABAS Division Dispatcher sending aid should monitor the IFERN frequency and acknowledge their units responding on the interdivisional request. Once all due units are responding, the MABAS Dispatcher sending aid should contact the MABAS Dispatcher requesting aid via telephone and advise that all requested units are responding and provide the names of the departments and unit types.

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- 4.2.5 In the event that a department due as a primary response unit is not available, the MABAS Dispatcher can fill in from the second level of the Interdivisional Box Alarm card.
- 4.2.6 A Division may request a total number of units less than a full Strike Team assignment. In that situation, the MABAS Dispatcher sending aid will limit the units assigned from the Interdivisional Card to match the number of units requested.

5. UNIT RESPONSE TO AN INTERDIVISIONAL REQUEST

Units dispatched on an Interdivisional Box Alarm assignment should follow local Division response policies.

- 5.1 The Taskforce/Strike Team Leader, unless individual units are requested, should notify their Division Dispatcher when the requested units are responding. The stricken Division Dispatcher should be notified when they arrive at the staging area.
- 5.2 When units are released, the Taskforce/Strike Team Leader, unless units are released individually, should notify the stricken MABAS Division Dispatcher. Taskforces, Strike Teams, or individual units should notify their own MABAS Division Dispatcher when they arrive back at their assigned quarters or point of departure.

CONCLUSION

This Advocacy Statement provides policy and direction for development and implementation of Interdivisional Box Alarm Cards.