



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

General Order Number: 13-01	Effective Date: January 2010
Division: Public Affairs	
Chapter: Assisting Displaced Families	
By Order of the Fire Chief: Marc S. Bashoor	Revision Date: N/A

POLICY

This General Order shall establish the procedure for assisting displaced families. The Incident Commander (IC) shall establish a Citizen Services Group on any incident where a need is identified to provide support or extended services to citizens during or after incident mitigation. Additionally, the guidelines herein shall also be utilized in situations that are not an emergency incident or event, but does result in displacement.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Emergency Incidents

When it has been determined that an emergency incident has displaced citizens from their place of residence, the Incident Commander will notify the Citizens Services Unit (CSU) and the Red Cross, via Public Safety Communications (PSC). When making this request, the following information shall be provided:

- Number of adults requiring shelter/assistance
- Number of children (under age 18)
- Exact location (rental office, a neighbor's home, etc.) where they can be found upon the arrival of the CSU/Red Cross representative

Under normal conditions, it will take approximately 45 minutes for the Red Cross representative to arrive on the scene. Therefore, the notification is to be made as early as possible to prevent an additional delay in the delivery of these services to the citizens.

It may be necessary for the representative of the CSU/Red Cross to complete a walk through of the emergency scene to assess the damage and resulting needs of the displaced residents. Every attempt is to be made to accommodate this need in a timely, with the safety of all concerned being the foremost consideration.

It may be necessary to assign groups within the incident command system to coordinate/assist CSU/Red Cross representatives in organizing and tracking residents who are in need of assistance.



The responsibilities of this group will include:

- Overall coordination of the relocation effort
- Provide blankets and a shelter where practical to do so (e.g., apparatus cab, neighbor's home, rental office, etc.) to get occupants out of the weather and gathered at a single location
- Provide an explanation of what is happening (e.g., what we are doing and why and how long we expect to take until the incident is under control)
- Obtain from occupant/responsible party any significant information regarding the structure and/or its contents that might assist the IC tactically with the operation and inform the IC of this information
- Encourage displaced citizens to contact their insurance carrier, restoration company, etc., ASAP
- Encourage displaced citizens to seek short term assistance from neighbors and family
- At multifamily structures, work with management to provide shelter to displaced citizens
- Notify the Red Cross or other necessary agencies and/or individuals as needed
- When necessary, identify an evacuation site and notify the IC of its establishment and location; this information shall be provided to Fire Inspection personnel, the Public Information Officer, other appropriate agency representative, and relatives
- Identify any special needs of citizens
- Facilitate reasonable related citizen requests via the IC
- Provide reasonable on-going service and support until the customer indicates our services are no longer needed

Each career and volunteer command officer in the Department is responsible to maintain a supply of Victim Assistance Information Packages (VAIP). These packages contain information concerning all services available, and are to be given to the affected occupants as soon as feasible in the incident recovery process. VAIPs are available from the Operations Center.

2. Non-Emergency Situations

In the event that non-emergency assistance/shelter is requested by a citizen, personnel shall contact CSU, or the Operations Center, to identify the current resources that are available through the County's Department of Social Services.

The County operates two shelters (one for men and one for women), as well as transitional housing units for displaced families. Additionally, during winter months (December - March) shelter is available each night through the "A Warm Nights Program," where area churches open their facilities to assist citizens in times of severe weather.

Access to all of the resources listed above may be obtained by calling the Prince George's County Homeless Hotline at 888-731-0999. All non-emergency assistance requests will be coordinated with the appropriate Duty Chief, Battalion Chief, CSU, or the Operations Center.



REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS / ATTACHMENTS

Assisting Displaced Families Phone List (English)

Assisting Displaced Families Phone List (Spanish)

Prince George's County Government Telephone Numbers

American Red Cross	301-559-8500
Animal Management Division	301-499-8300
Birth and Death Records	301-324-2940
Board of Education	301-952-6000
Elections Office	301-952-3270
PGFD, Office of Emergency Management	301-583-1899
PGFD, Fire Investigations	301-306-5685
PGFD, Information Management (to obtain a fire report)	301-883-7183
Health Department	301-883-7800
Housing	301-883-5531
Medical Assistance Information	301-856-9606
Prince George's County Crisis Response System – Hotline	301-429-2185
Prince George's County Crisis Response System - Administrative Office	301-429-2182
Prince George's County Police Department (to obtain a police report)	301-985-3638
Social Services	301-909-7010