


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Gregory B. Ward, Acting Chief of Fire Department <i>GBW</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Baltimore City Fire Department 401 E. Fayette Street - 21202		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 08-0011R – Resolution Investigative Hearing-Non-Emergency Response Policy		

DATE: March 5, 2008

TO

The Honorable President Stephanie Rawlings Blake, President
and Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 408

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to Madame President and the members of the City Council on the topic of exploring the feasibility of adopting a Non-Emergency Response Policy by the Baltimore City Fire Department as stated in the copy of the Resolution that was provided. We are aware that a number of modifications to traditional response policies have been explored by a number of fire departments across the country in recent years. Anne Arundel and Howard Counties have adopted response standards and have published them as operational policies. There are other fire departments in Maryland, such as Prince Georges County, who are studying the feasibility of incorporating similar policies in their departments. I have recently obtained information from other “big city” fire departments to get a sense of what is being done in this area. The responses from many of the bigger cities find little in the way of fundamental change in response policy.

The Baltimore City Fire Department has been using a non-emergency response as part of our dispatch procedures for more than 10 years. When comparing the various call types listed in Anne Arundel County’s list of “cold” or non-emergency responses to the call types we use in that category, we fall within approximately 50% of theirs. It is reasonable to expect that a comprehensive review of the fire department’s application of the non-emergency response could increase the number of call types in this category

The fire department does not currently utilize the “warm” response which is in essence a combination of multiple units responding to an incident; some responding with warning lights and sirens, and others proceeding without any warning devices. It is noted that several departments point out that emphasis on words in the dispatch message to units can also be important in distinguishing between emergency and non-emergency responses. “Respond” and “proceed” are two examples. The fire department will examine the feasibility of developing a “warm” response and report back to Madame President and the City Council.

We are currently looking at several areas where a reduction in the number of units responding to several targeted call types can expect to result in a reduction in the number of emergency responses or be incorporated into a “warm” response if we incorporate that response procedure. They include elevator emergencies and fire/smoke alarm system activations. As we move forward during our analysis in this area, our new fire chief will play a leading role in our final recommendation.

GBW/jb

Comments

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