



ALTON FIRE / RESCUE DEPARTMENT

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"Desire to Serve - Committed to Protect"

ALTON FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGIC FIVE YEAR PLAN - 2009

OVERVIEW

The Strategic Plan for the Alton Fire & Rescue Department (AFD) defines the structure, composition and operation of the Department spanning the next FIVE years, or to 2014.

OBJECTIVE areas to be considered include:

- Staffing and operation of each of the four facilities (stations).
- Mix of: call personnel, interns and full time personnel.
- Officer corps make-up and responsibilities.
- Training and standards necessary to reach vision goal(s).
- Lines of communications and coordination; "up and down".
- Other items deemed appropriate by the officers.
- To assume a reasonable population growth of 15% overall in 5 years to an approximate population of 5,875

This Strategic Plan organizes and presents information vital to the Department's function in service to the Citizens of the Town of Alton. This plan also affords the Department with the tools it will need to provide for an efficient, cost-effective and state-of-the-art service to the Town.

The underlying THEME of this plan is considered to be:

- Assuring that the fire and rescue service standards are maintained regarding every component of man-made and natural disaster readiness; and
- Retaining the confidence of the citizens of Alton and the general public for the fire services and the emergency medical services provided.

Staffing and operation of each of the four stations

What staffing patterns would be needed in each of the four stations in 5 years?

We foresee the presence of EMS/FIRE personnel assigned to each station or station district (except for the Bay Station) in the long term future. In addition, we project continuing summer season day coverage with 2 EMS staff members from Central Station. We project a fire intern presence in each station (except for the East Alton and the Bay Stations) during their academic year.

How would each station be staffed, if they were to be staffed?

We have embraced a Squad personnel structure with members assigned to a Lieutenant with a reasonable span of control. Lieutenants will manage the personnel aspects of their squad members to ensure each member's ongoing training and developing expertise.

Since AFD is primarily a Call Department, members from any Squad will respond to a station to man apparatus in Crews. A Crew may consist of members from a single Squad, or from multiple Squads with an Officer in Charge conforming to our current chain of command Standard Operating Guidelines.

Interns residing at a station would assemble a Crew regardless of their Squad assignment. The assembled Crew would respond as appropriate and as needed.

What types of accommodations would be needed in each station to enable the staffing pattern suggested?

We project the continuing need for adequate living quarters in Central and West Alton Stations. In the future, we would include similar plans for the East Alton Station as the need evolves and as funding becomes available. These living quarter plans are currently envisioned for the use of interns, but will have the flexibility for use by over-night staffing in the future, as necessary.

Mix of call personnel, students and full time personnel

What do you envision the composition of the Department to be in 5 years?

We project the mix to continue as it now is, a mixture of call and full-time personnel along with interns during the academic year. This mix and reliance on a primarily Call Membership provides for the most cost-effective means of serving the Citizens of Alton; and as long as we can maintain an adequate and responsive Call Membership we can forestall the need for full-time members.

Do you see other categories of members added to the mix (call, interns, full time) in 5 years? If so, what?

We plan the increase to our Call membership as the most cost-effective method of providing services. While recognizing an increase in training and personal protective equipment costs; we also recognize that overall personnel costs in a primarily call department will have an overwhelming savings over a full-time staffing pattern (which would still require a Call membership presence). We do project an increasing use of per diem coverage during periods of increase service demand (such as the summer season).

Do you see other methods of providing for adequate response beyond what is present today? If so, what?

We project an increase in dual certification EMS/FIRE and the addition of limited full time or per diem staffing. We also see the need of researching contract ambulance service to provide transport in support of a Fire Department EMS response service.

Officer corps make-up and responsibilities

What do you see as the make-up of the group of officers in 5 years?

We have embraced a personnel management structure (as opposed to an apparatus management structure). This does require a greater depth of junior (Lieutenant) officers to ensure a reasonable span of control over members assigned to Squads.

What officer positions do you see as needing to be added or subtracted from the current composition?

In developing a broad based Call Department, we project the need for an expanded junior officer base and possibly an expanded senior officer base (Captains, Deputy Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs). This is based on the concept of "many hands make light work," and utilizes the fractional time commitments available from Call Department members.

What duties do you see officers having in 5 years and how would they be different from what their duties are today?

We have defined officer duties in terms of personnel requirements. We project the development of Area Matter Experts in the officer corps to manage the multiple functions necessary to carry out the mission of the AFD in its day-to-day operations.

What level of qualification or certification do you see as being needed for an officer?

We project that officers will need to be certified and exhibit leadership and management skills as well as specific skills in EMS or FIRE duties. We project that officers will need to be active in Department operations.

Training and standards necessary to reach vision goals

What essential and basic level training and which standards would be needed to enter service as a:

Probationary Member: High School Diploma or GED, Driver's license, no criminal record, Age 18.

Firefighter: Designated rank after successful probationary period.

Certified Firefighter: State certification as a Fire Fighter, Level I or above.

Probationary EMS: Same criteria as Probationary member. Once enrolled in an EMS class, member would be able to ride along with 2 certified EMS members.

Certified EMS: EMS certification at any level.

What type of ongoing training would be necessary to maintain skill levels and proficiency?

What ongoing training would be necessary to maintain efficient teamwork at a:

Squad level: Specific management of personal goals and objectives for individual member education, training and personnel matters.

Crew level: Specific apparatus oriented training.

Department level: Crew training with all Department apparatus to develop teamwork.

Training Committee, training officer implementation:

We project a training officer with assistance from fellow officers to provide structured Departmental training for Crews, specific apparatus and as the Department as a whole. This is in tandem with ongoing "formal" training courses provide through the State Fire Academy as well as training courses provided at a Department level.

Lines of communications & coordination up and down the chain of command

What do you see that will be different in five years from what we have now?

We project a better defined and utilized Chain of Command with more effective communication of issues up and down that chain.

How do you see the Department communication information to the members and from the members to the Department?

We project a more effective use of the chain of command through the availability and supervisory oversight of the Officer Corp. We project an increasing use of electronic communications (email, text messaging etc)

How do you see the Department communicating to and from Town Hall?

We project utilization of the Chain of Command for this purpose. That is, all Departmental issues will be communicated to and from Town Hall through the Fire Chief. Exceptions will be facilitated through the Town Policy structure.

How do you see the Department communicating with the Citizens of Alton?

We project the use of a Liaison Officer for formal communications such as a regular article in a locally distributed newspaper. We also project the provision of community safety classes, the development of fire prevention awareness, and the ongoing communication of the benefits provided to the citizens of the Town by the Department.

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