



Area Contact Dispatchers Fire/Emergency Procedures

Updated May 2014

What should you do if you smell or see smoke/fire or someone calls and tells you there is a fire on or near Foothills Creek?

1st: If you see smoke or fire call 911 and report it then contact your FC Fire Manager who will instruct you on what to do next (write it down).

2nd: If the FC Fire Manager is not available then you become the interim Fire Manager or you can ask a more seasoned dispatcher to take over as the Fire Manager (must be decided quickly).

3rd: FC Fire Manager should call the ODF or the RRFD, if they have not contacted us and ask:

- ✓ Exact Location or closest address to fire.
- ✓ Size of the fire.
- ✓ Cause of the fire.
- ✓ Who is the Designated Fire Boss (ODF or RRFD)

4th: The FC Fire Manager will inform all the dispatchers of the situation and decide whether or not to activate the Phone Tree and whether or not to send a dispatcher to the fire scene.

5th: If the fire is heading to neighboring communities ie Birdseye Creek, use your Agency Contact List and call the Birdseye Creek Fire Plan Manager so he can activate his phone tree.

Who is contacted first when there is a fire on Foothills Creek:

- Ideally the Fire Chief or Fire Dept. Rep or ODF will contact one of the FC Dispatchers on their list to inform them of the fire.

If you are the Dispatcher contacted by the Agency or Fire Chief about a fire in our area you need to first tell the FC Fire Manager.

If you are within the fire area you need to determine if you can make your calls or if they need to be assigned to other area dispatchers to make for you. **If assigned to call another area remember: those in the fire area get called first before your own area.**

The FC Fire Manager or “interim Manager” will determine when to activate the Phone Tree:

- We only activate the phone tree when there is an actual fire or emergency that could affect residents.
- If you are the “interim” Fire Manager you should discuss this with another Area Dispatcher before activating the Phone Tree. All should agree to activate. This is a checks and balances system.
- Next, inform all other Dispatchers to let them know the Phone tree is activated and to start calling residents. Also give them the exact Fire information they need to pass on to residents – nothing more.
- Start calling those residents that match your name color in the phone tree. It’s a good idea to flip to their Fire Survey when you call, that way you can see what their situation is (example: medical issues).

Sending A Dispatcher to the fire scene:

If a serious fire erupts we will need to have a Dispatcher on scene to coordinate with ODF.

Only a Dispatchers who's area is farthest away from the fire should be sent to the fire scene.

The objective of having a FC Dispatcher at the fire scene is to get "current, up to date" information from the ODF On Site "Incident Commander" or his designated "Incident Information Officer" (I.I.O.) at regular intervals and relay it to the FC Fire Manager who will call the Dispatchers. Use your cell phone whenever possible if you get a signal. If using Walkie Talkie, remember that others are listening!

Take the following items with you to the fire scene.

- ✓ Walkie Talkie/Radio – **turn to channel 7.**
 - ✓ Cell Phone (use this before using radio if possible).
 - ✓ Dispatchers Fire Book (ODF may need your help on resources, fires survey data or medical issues).
 - ✓ ****Leave copy of the phone tree with your partner to continue making calls to residents.**
 - ✓ Pad of paper and pen.
 - ✓ Wear your watch or take a time piece.
- Be sure to set up reporting times with the FC Fire Manager BEFORE you go (example: every 20 minutes). Every 20 minutes call in whether or not anything has changed. This will allow the FC Fire Mgr. to make calls to residents up to the point where they know the Dispatcher will be checking in.
 - Accurate information is essential so only get updates from the Fire Boss and write down "all" the information provided to avoid missing any important details. **This is of key importance.**
 - Be sure to have good questions prepared for the Fire Boss on the scene & write down all info given:
 - a. Exact location of fire and closest address.
 - b. Current estimated size of fire – how many acres?
 - c. Have any structures been destroyed or are threatened?
 - d. Have they determined the cause of the fire?
 - e. Is Air Support in route?
 - f. Will power be shut off in the area or community?
 - g. Are they aware of any secondary fires and if so where?
 - h. Do they need any local resources? ie. equipment, pond locations. Use your book to let them know what is available as they may not have this information. Remember only emergency responder managers have this information and they might not be on site.
 - i. Can they tell you who is in charge of handling traffic control with the Fire Dept. or Sheriff?
 - j. Call it in to your partner dispatcher now. They will inform the other dispatchers.

Evacuation Procedures:

****If an evacuation is ordered the first person to know about it will likely be the Dispatcher at the fire scene. That Dispatcher must immediately inform the FC Fire Manager who will inform the other Dispatchers. It is important to find out quickly if it is a complete or site specific evacuation, example: Left Fork only or Right Fork Only or Total Community evacuation. Evacuation notice ranges from 15 to 30 minutes so be prepared.**

This will require quick reaction from ALL Dispatchers. Call everyone in your color and let them know about the evacuation even if it is only a partial evacuation (red stars * first). Be specific and clear and most importantly be calm. Let them know "uniformed" officers will be likely coming to their door to confirm this. If this is a total evacuation let them know this will be their last update as you will be evacuating too.

Those with Emergency Boxes must drop off those their boxes at the Safe Zone locations in a clear easy to find location before evacuating yourself. This is important and could save lives.

Calling your Phone Tree residents:

Keep calls brief. Dispatchers may be trying to reach you - 3 minutes maximum per call. The key is to sound calm, cool and informed even if you are tense or nervous.

- Calmly identify yourself as the FC F&E Dispatcher, let them know the type of emergency and that you will be updating them as information becomes available. Example: Closest address to fire, size of fire, ODF is on scene etc. Also tell them to check their email for possible updates.
- Give residents your home number so they can call you if they feel the need.
- Advise your area residents NOT to drive to the emergency/fire area and assure them that you are communicating with the official Agency Officers in Charge and will keep them updated. Updates will keep people from jumping to the wrong conclusions, driving to the fire and congesting roadways.
- Advise residents that updates via phone or email will be coming as we learn more. Email updates will depend on the Fire Managers availability. **Do not commit to a time for update call backs.**
- **IMPORTANT: only report fire or emergency information as it is reported to you – verbatim, do not elaborate.** Never tell residents to prepare to evacuate unless that information comes directly from the Fire Dept. Chief or ODF Incident Commander or Sheriff on the scene. All you do is inform residents of the factual situation, nothing more. What they choose to do or how they choose to interpret that information is up to the resident.

Updates During A Fire:

- The FC Fire Manager will call all the other dispatchers to let them know, verbatim, what the update is. The Fire Mgr. may ask for help in contacting all the other FC Dispatchers and task one of you to help.
- The FC Fire Manager will (if possible) send out fire updates via email to residents. Note that not all residents have email and those should be called with updates periodically as time allows. Check your phone tree list for those that do not have an “E” in far right hand column.

When A Fire Is In “Your” Phone Tree Area:

- First talk with your partner Dispatcher Team and determine if either of you can make your Phone Tree calls. If not then you need to immediately inform the FC Fire Manager who will assign them to other Dispatchers.
- A Dispatcher in the fire area should NOT be the one going to the fire scene but they can call their own area phone tree residents if they feel they can.

Identify residents with medical issues *:

- During a major fire or emergency identify any residents from your phone tree list that are close to the fire and check if any of them have a red “*” by their names – call those with red stars and closest to the fire first. they may need more time to evacuate or have medical conditions that could be exacerbated by smoke etc..

When to activate the Road Block Team:

- The Dispatcher at the fire scene should ask the On-site Incident Commander if a road block is needed due to road congestion. They should let the “Incident Commander” know that we have a barricade and a road block team ready to go if needed.
- The FC Fire Manager will contact Road Block volunteers to have them set up the road block at the church and to coordinate with the Sheriff or Agency Information Officer at that location. The Fire Manager may ask another dispatcher to make those calls.
- Verify the cell phone number/s of the Road Block persons going to the site so we can check in with them as needed (see Road Block Contact List).
- Traffic congestion develops fast and can delay fire fighting equipment from reaching a fire quickly.
- Currently Road Blocks, flags and vests are located behind Foots Creek Church under a tarp.
- Note: The road block requires a FC Dispatcher be present with the “Master” book to verify resident status and for those they may have called to help them evacuate early. This happens frequently with those that have to move a lot of animals or livestock animals as it takes time. Evacuations often only give you 20 minutes time.

ROAD BLOCK VOLUNTEER & DISPATCHERS PROCEDURES

The Fire Manager will designate one of the FC Dispatchers to pick up the Master Book and go to the Road Block area to help coordinate who is allowed into FC and who is not. If they are not on the Fire Plan list then they must show a current driver’s license with a Foots Creek Address – **no exceptions**.

Note: Many will leave before an official evacuation especially if they have a lot of animals or livestock to move as evacuations often only give you 15 – 30 minutes time.

There should always be two (2) Road Block Volunteers at all times on site at the church. All persons manning the road block must wear high visibility vests and stay behind the barricade on the side of the road at all times – including Dispatchers. Frantic people have been known to run barricades in fire situations.

Set up the barricade just south of the 2nd driveway at the church so that you can use both driveways to turn people around without creating congestion. Use your stop signs but do not stand in front of vehicles in the roadway.

Always keep the outgoing traffic lane open and have one of the road block volunteers on that side of the road with a SLOW/STOP sign to reduce their speed. Keep your eyes open at all times.

If someone runs the barricade DO NOT try to stop them. Write down the make & color of car and their license plate number and give it to the Sheriff.

If asked by a resident and if you have the time, a Dispatcher can call the Road Block Volunteer on their cell phone to coordinate possible incoming evacuation vehicles (horse and livestock trailers etc.).

Once the Road Block Team is at the location they need to verify that they have cell service by contacting the FC Fire Manager. Ideally they would also have Walkie Talkies for communication as an alternative.

FC Dispatchers who are contacted by residents wanting to bring in friends to help them evacuation are required to get the name, vehicle description, and license plate of incoming assistance. Only get this information from the evacuating resident who is on the Fire Plan (this insures thieves are not let in). The Dispatcher can then contact the Road Block Team and give them the information.

CLOSING NOTES

- Make certain all information you pass along is accurate. Rumors can cause emergency crews/firefighters to move equipment and manpower away from areas where it is really needed.
- Actions to be considered (Note that only the Fire Department or Sheriff has the authority to order an evacuation)
- Notify any of your family members not on the property, of potential hazard conditions.
- Keep track of what works and what does not so we can make changes in future. We want to be efficient, organized and effective when an emergency/fire strikes our neighborhood.

Remember we are a volunteer group of neighbors doing the best we can do. We are not professional fire fighters, or emergency personnel, we are here to help one another and to try to keep Foothills Creek a beautiful place to live by providing support to the emergency responders. Your efforts are appreciated by those of us working with you.

Thank you.