



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee
From: John McGowan
Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue

Date: April 24, 2009
File:

Re: Combined Events Dispatch Protocols

Staff Recommendations

That a letter be sent to E-Comm expressing support for the Greater Vancouver Fire Chiefs' request to change E-Comm's default policy of transferring motor vehicle incident calls only to BC Ambulance Service.

John McGowan
Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue
(604-303-2734)

Att. 1

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the March 10, 2009 Community Safety Committee, staff were requested to prepare a report that provides Committee with an overview on combined events protocols between BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) and E-Comm Fire Services prior to Ken Shymanski's, President of E-Comm, update scheduled for the June Community Safety Committee.

This report responds to Committee's request and provides information on concerns the Greater Vancouver Fire Chiefs Association (GVFCA) and Richmond Fire-Rescue has regarding combined events on the:

- Call Management Process - dispatching delays.
- Dispatch Protocols - Setting of Medical Priority Dispatch System Codes.

Findings of Fact

Many urban fire departments, including Richmond, deliver First Responder services to their City in partnership with BCAS as part of a pre-hospital care system. The delivery of these services has been a benefit to the citizens of Richmond and the lower mainland.

Analysis

Concerns with the current call management process and dispatch protocols are detailed below.

Call Management Process

The current call management process, outlined in Attachment 1, has persons calling 9-1-1 being redirected to BCAS call takers who run the caller through a medical priority dispatch system which can take up to 4 minutes. Other First Responder resources, such as RFR, are dispatched *only after* the completion of this interrogation / assessment.

The Cameron Report's Recommendation 12 states that BCAS should seek a solution to the problem of delay in notifying First Responder dispatch where caller interrogation is concluded before First Responder dispatch is alerted.

The GVFCA and Richmond Fire-Rescue share this same concern particularly when delays are created in the dispatching of First Responder services to motor vehicle incidents.

Richmond Fire-Rescue provides a critical role and service to Richmond in:

- Providing fast first responder medical services to injured individuals prior to BCAS arrival on-scene. This response is particularly critical when BCAS is delayed for any number of reasons including: proximity to location and call priority code.
- Traffic and scene management, protecting individuals involved from further injury or property damage.
- Maintaining scene integrity for police investigation purposes.
- Mitigating environmental damage from hazardous spills.

In March 2009, the GVFCFA requested that E-Comm provide an opportunity to discuss a change in its default policy of transferring motor vehicle incident calls to BCAS. The GVFCFA is currently preparing a detailed business case that will form the basis for policy change discussions with E-Comm. Although there is no formal request of Council's support from the GVFCFA, a letter to E-Comm from Council would be favourable.

Dispatch Protocols

In late 2008, BCAS and First Responder agencies met to review BCAS's June 2007 Rescue Allocation Plan. The outcome of this collaborative partnership saw dispatch protocols for First Responders updated and released in January 2009 closely aligning them with those originally introduced in 2004. This was an extremely positive step and collaborative effort for the betterment of delivery of effective First Responder services to the public.

It is paramount that BCAS and First Responders continue to work together in this symbiotic relationship. Should either party change their RAP in isolation, significant impacts can result in the effectiveness of service delivery to the public.

There were a number of significant junctures that have impacted the delivery of First Responder services including:

- In March 2007 Peter Cameron submitted a report to the Province entitled: "To provide a vision for first responders as an integrated part of a comprehensive system of patient-focused pre-hospital emergency care." The report's 30 recommendations, looked at ways to:
 - ✓ Strengthen the role of the Emergency Health Services Commission as the body ultimately responsible for all pre-hospital emergency care, including first response; and
 - ✓ Help resolve problems and improve service to the public.
- In June 2007 BCAS released their new Resource Allocation Plan, which was implemented into the Altaris CAD system in November 2007 and resulted in a

call volume decrease for First Responders of between 7-10%. This also resulted in an increase to the average call time duration for First Responder agencies spent at each event.

For RFR, from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007, the average call duration was 25.06 minutes. From October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008 the average call duration was 38.50 minutes. This is a 50% increase in the average time spent at any single event.

- In June 2008 BCAS implemented the new Intergraph CAD system with E-Comm Fire dispatch implemented in November 2008 improving the call dispatch process times.
- In January 2009 BCAS released further revisions to the Resource Allocation Plan, increasing emergency medical call volumes for First Responders back to their original service levels.

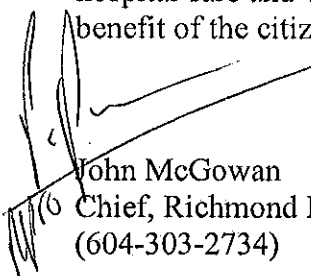
Fire-Rescue will report back to Committee on the progress with this issue at an appropriate point.

Financial Impact

Fire-Rescue's current budget is based on responding to all motor vehicle incidents where assistance has been sought from E-Comm. The recommendation would have no financial impact.

Conclusion

The fire service has over the past 30 years worked closely with BCAS to administer pre-hospital care and will continue to develop its working relationship in to the future for the benefit of the citizens of Richmond.



John McGowan
Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue
(604-303-2734)

Attachment 1 – Combined Events Call Management Process

