

NLC Participates in Fire and EMS Mobilization Study

By Cathy Spain

NLC is serving on a Project Technical Panel for a study that will examine call processing and turnout times by career fire departments. Funded by the Fire Protection Research Foundation, the project was recommended by a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) technical committee working on revisions to turnout time recommendations in the NFPA 1710 Standard- Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments.

The technical committee, which included representatives from NLC, concluded that comprehensive data were needed to provide the basis for further development of turnout times in the 1710 Standard.

The project will provide a quantitative evaluation of fire emergency mobilization times and identify key factors affecting fire departments' ability to get personnel and equipment to the scene of an emergency in a timely fashion. Mobilization time is the measurable time interval from call receipt at a public safety answering point until the first assigned emergency response unit is physically en route to the emergency.

Researchers from Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Fire Protection Engineering Department are undertaking the study, which will utilize available fire department information as well as a survey to ensure that data from a representative cross-section of emergency response organizations are evaluated. Collection of mobilization time data will provide insight into the importance of certain factors or combinations of factors on mobilization times.

Examples of these factors include combined versus distinct public safety answering points and communications centers, method of notification for emergency response facilities and units, type of emergency dispatched, response crew activity at the time of the response, emergency response facilities layout, crew travel in the station and crew proficiency in basic turnout tasks.

In addition to supporting the development of voluntary NFPA standards, the research results will contribute critical information for chiefs and city managers tasked with optimum deployment of emergency response facilities and units.

The study is scheduled for completion at the end of the year. For more information, contact Cathy Spain at spain@nlc.org or (202) 626-3123.

Revised NFPA1710 Standard in Effect

A revised NFPA 1710 Standard took effect on June 15. This standard replaces the 2004 version.

Several NLC-endorsed modifications were adopted. These include an increased turnout time objective for fire suppression and special operations (from 60 seconds to 80 seconds) and a new annex explaining a community-wide risk management model.

New language in several sections better explains the scope and application of the standard and how its response time and staffing objectives can be used as guidelines or benchmarks by communities. Changes were also made to the 1720 standard, which applies to voluntary fire departments. Copies of the new standards are available for purchase at www.nfpa.org.

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