



City of Charleston
South Carolina

JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.
MAYOR

BARBARA W. VAUGHN
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC INFORMATION

FOR RELEASE: August 17, 2007

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. announced today that the Fire Review Task Force of the Post Incident Assessment and Enhancement Review is offering initial recommendations for improvements to the Charleston Fire Department designed to enhance firefighter and community safety. Mayor Riley said, "These recommendations are a part of our commitment to the families of our fallen firefighters and to this community that we will learn everything possible we need to know about the fire of June 18 and to quickly implement any changes which will make this an even better fire department."

Mayor Riley was joined by members of the Task Force as well as Chief Rusty Thomas and Chief Greg Mullen.

The following recommendations are the preliminary findings of the Fire Review Task Force:

**FIRE REVIEW TASK FORCE
CITY OF CHARLESTON
IMMEDIATE IMPACT RECOMMENDATIONS
August 17, 2007**

After an initial review of Charleston Fire Department operations and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of nine Charleston firefighters on June 18, 2007, the Fire Review and Assessment Task Force makes the following recommendations for immediate implementation in the areas of personnel, command and on-scene accountability, firefighter safety, fire and rescue training, emergency response resources, standardized dispatch and communications, and water supply resources.

PERSONNEL

In order to improve communication and assist with implementation of recommendations - several key personnel positions are recommended. These positions will assist with a smooth transition and will provide immediate administrative and command support for Fire Chief.

- Establish Assistant to the Chief position
 - Fill with qualified officer on 6 month temporary assignment

- Establish Fire Department Safety Officer position
 - Fill with qualified officer on 6 month temporary assignment
- Public Information Officer

It is also recommended in order to increase the efficiency regarding the emergency dispatch of equipment and provide adequate on-scene operational safety and support for first responders that a -

Minimum of two (2) dispatchers on-duty at all times

In addition,

Maintain minimum staffing of three (3) on-duty firefighters at all times on all existing engine and ladder companies (staffing and overtime impacts)

- Incremental movement over two years to achieve four (4) on-duty firefighters on all fire companies (staffing and overtime impacts)

COMMAND and ON-SCENE ACCOUNTABILITY

Improve on-scene command and control and

- Apply incident command procedures on all incidents (ICS – NIMS procedures)
 - First arriving officer assumes command, performs size-up and provides direction for all others
 - First arriving chief establishes exterior Command Post and remains at Command Post
 - Safety Officer assigned for working fires and hazardous incidents
 - Rapidly implement city-wide personnel accountability system

FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

Enhance and improve firefighter safety and health and

- Reinforce appropriate use of personal protective clothing and SCBA
- Reinforce the use of seat belts and standard emergency response vehicular operations
- OSHA 2-in/2-out to be followed at all times
- Reinforce management procedure for off-duty firefighter response to emergencies

FIRE and RESCUE TRAINING

In an effort to improve career development and provide employees with the necessary training and experience to perform safely and efficiently

- Initiate and complete Incident Command and tactical operations training for all officers and additional training for all members
- Provide incident safety officer training for all command officers and health and safety officer training to selected personnel

- Assure that all new firefighters are trained and certified in accordance with South Carolina State standards/NFPA Firefighter II before assignment to emergency duty with initial support from the South Carolina Fire Academy support

RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS

To support firefighter safety while operating on the scene of emergencies and improve emergency and non-emergency communications

- Increase initial structure fire response to three (3) engines and one (1) ladder
- Utilize the third engine as the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)
- 'Working fire' – dispatch Assistant Chief, Second Battalion Chief, 4th engine company and an EMS unit
- Utilize the second-arriving Battalion Chief as the incident safety officer unless staff Safety Officer is on scene
- Communications changes including the elimination of 10 codes and the use of the tactical radio channel for responses

WATER SUPPLY

To increase the delivery of water to the scene of a fire emergency , while at the same minimize risks to firefighters while engaged in firefighting operations

- Changes in water supply standard operating procedures with near-term transition to large diameter supply hose
- Use of larger 1-1/2 inch hose, or bigger, for interior attack as well as vehicle fires (Significantly reduce the utilization of booster hoselines)

FOR MORE INFO:

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