



**COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS
FIRE SERVICE POLICY**

Policy No. 5705	Date Issued: June 1, 2003
Section: 5700 – Specific Procedures	Date Revised: February 12, 2024
SUBJECT: STORM MODE DISPATCH SYSTEM	
APPROVED: <signed copy on file>	_____
	Chairperson, Fire Service Users Subcommittee
APPROVED: <signed copy on file>	_____
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1.0 Policy

Typically, during major storm conditions there are numerous incidents involving wires down. Due to the sheer number of these incidents, there can be a significant impact to local jurisdictions’ ability to respond effectively to emergencies within their area. The phone and radio traffic levels can overwhelm the dispatchers’ ability to keep up with the increased workload. To help alleviate this problem and to keep the dispatch Net clear, any fire agency or NetCom can elect to activate their Storm Mode Dispatch System.

NetCom Storm Mode Dispatch System

When NetCom activates “Storm Conditions Dispatch” it is indicative that they will no longer be able to effectively accommodate less than emergency callout requests, such as downed phone lines and cable TV lines. Since these types of downed wires do not generally constitute a life-threatening emergency, NetCom dispatchers should prioritize these requests in conjunction with the current workload within the center, oftentimes being unable to complete these time-consuming phone calls. Fire personnel making such requests will be notified that NetCom is unable to process that request unless there are life threatening extenuating circumstances.

Fire Agency Storm Mode Dispatch System

The Fire Agency Storm Mode Dispatch System allows an agency to manage their “WIRES” calls locally. When the Storm Mode Dispatch System is activated, any “WIRES” calls within the effected jurisdiction are assigned to a pseudo unit. Local agencies handle these

details as they see fit. Units responding to “WIRES” details will remain “in service” in CAD and available for dispatch to other pending details. If, after arriving on scene, units determine they need additional resources, they will notify NetCom via the radio, remembering that NetCom will not be aware of the specifics of the “WIRES” details the units are handling.

2.0 Procedure

- 2.1 The Fire Agency pseudo unit is entered in CAD with the three-letter agency identifier followed by ‘WD#’. For example, Central Fire’s pseudo unit identifier is ‘CTLWD.’ Multiple WD units are available for each agency in case of multiple calls; ie CTLWD1, CTLWD2, etc.
- 2.2 Dispatchers will change the mode of the agency from normal (NORM) to STORM. After activation, ‘WD’ pseudo units will be recommended by CAD for “WIRES” details and assigned to those calls.
- 2.3 Once an agency has gone into STORM mode, the Zone Coordinator will be notified.
- 2.4 After NetCom dispatches ‘WD’ pseudo units, local Fire Agencies assume full responsibility for “WIRES” details. Fire Dispatchers will leave the unit on the call until the agency notes the call that they are managing the incident.
- 2.5 Local Fire Agencies will dispatch their “WIRES” details via some means other than the Fire Red Dispatch Net.
- 2.6 NetCom will not track resources dispatched by local Fire Agencies to “WIRES” calls and those resources will remain “in service” for CAD recommendations and assignments.
- 2.7 If non-NetCom dispatched units need additional resources, they will provide their unit ID and location information to NetCom.
- 2.8 If local Fire Agencies want NetCom to make the PG&E notifications, they need to make this request via radio.
- 2.9 Before assigning a “WIRES” call to a pseudo unit, the dispatcher will ensure there are no extenuating circumstances, like active fire or subjects trapped.