



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

24-01

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**Incident Response Policy Appendix T
After Action Reporting**

07/01/2017

Issued by: Fire Chief Scott Goldstein

Policy Number: 24-01

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-3 (b)

Supersedes: This is a new policy.

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

SECTION 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance for the general framework of After Action Reviews (AARs).

SECTION 2. Applicability:

All MCFRS personnel while participating in MCFRS activities and personnel from other organizations while operating in Montgomery County.

SECTION 3. Background:

The term AAR applies to the full range of post incident reviews beginning with the on-scene hotwash and extending to detailed written reports ordered by the Fire Chief.

POSITION STATEMENT

A properly conducted AAR can have a powerful influence on the climate of the organization. It is part of the communication process that educates and motivates people by allowing them to learn from the actions of others. AARs should focus on key aspects of incident operations with a focus on the effective distillation of lessons available for learning and recommendations for future improvement.

The AAR process begins with the hotwash. The hotwash is led by the Incident Commander and involves the key decision makers of the event. During the hotwash the primary objective is to respectfully and openly engage decision makers to describe what they saw, how they framed the situation, and how their individual actions helped or hindered the operation as a whole.

It is important for the hotwash to be non-judgmental, non-confrontational, and open. The point is for all participants to engage in candid discussion as equals. The next step after the hotwash is an Initial Written AAR. The Initial Written AAR captures the information from the hotwash, adds an analysis from the Incident Commander, and is shared throughout the organization.

Some incidents deserve a more comprehensive evaluation. The hotwash and the Initial Written AAR are completed quickly and are designed to quickly capture and disseminate lessons. For the more



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complex incidents the Fire Chief or his/her designee must determine the scope of the additional reporting.

SECTION 4. Definitions:

See Appendix Q.

SECTION 5. Policy:

- a. MCFRS recognizes four levels of AARs:
 1. The Hotwash;
 2. The Written AAR;
 3. The Enhanced AAR and;
 4. The Significant Incident Investigative Report.
- b. All Certified Chief Officers must have access to complete AARs.
- c. AARs must be published on a regular basis as determined by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- d. AARs are defined in scope, format, and content by the Fire Chief designee and may be changed at the Fire Chief's discretion.
- e. The Incident Commander must ensure that a hotwash and Initial Written AAR are completed for all events that meet the criteria outlined below.
 1. Any structure fire where the fire extended past the room/area of origin.
 2. Any collision with a complex or extended extrication.
 3. Any hazmat incident where suited-entry was required.
 4. Any incident where technical rescue assets were used.
 5. Any declared mass casualty incident.
 6. Any other call for which the Incident Commander believe lessons and/or recommendations should be shared.
- f. Hotwash Guidelines
 1. The hotwash must be focused on learning and improvement. The Incident Commander should lead the hotwash and must ensure that:
 - A. There are no personal attacks.
 - B. The hotwash is not a lecture or counseling session.
 - C. That all participants have an opportunity to speak.



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2. The hotwash should be limited both in scope and duration. The key questions to be answered are:
 - A. What was your mission for this incident?
 - B. What were your intended results?
 - C. What were your actual results?
 - D. What hurt or helped the execution of your mission?
 - E. How did your actions impact the overall mission?
 - F. What parts of the organization would benefit from the lessons you learned at this incident?
- g. In order to meet the objective of fast dissemination of lessons the Initial Written AAR will be completed and distributed using an electronic format approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- h. Initial Written AAR must include:
 1. How the Incident Commander developed situational awareness.
 2. What the incident objectives were.
 3. How ICS/NIMS was applied to support the incident objectives.
 4. How strategy and tactics influenced the attainment of those objectives.
 5. Recommendations for improvement.
 6. Lessons available for learning (including lessons discovered at the hotwash).
- i. Enhanced AAR
 1. This report can be ordered by the Duty Operations Chief, Operations Division Chief, or Fire Chief.
 2. The Enhanced AAR is electronic report, in a presentation format, designed for self-study and review that includes all elements of the initial written AAR along with media, site plans, etc., and additional details about operational aspects as determined by the requesting party.
- j. Significant Incident Investigative Report
 1. A more comprehensive report, generally produced by a panel appointed by the Fire Chief.
 2. The nature, structure and scope of the document will be determined by the Fire Chief.

SECTION 6. Responsibility:



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All personnel.

SECTION 7. Procedure:

- a. When an event meets the listed criteria, the Incident Commander must complete an AAR.
- b. After review of the AAR the Fire Chief, Operations Division Chief or Duty Operations Chief may order an Enhanced AAR to clarify specific issues or answer specific questions.
- c. The initial written AAR is completed for every incident meeting the criteria, even when an Enhanced AAR or Significant Incident Investigative Report is likely to be ordered.
- d. When a party orders an Enhanced AAR, they must provide written direction to the Incident Commander with reference to what additional details, outstanding questions, or themes must be discussed.
- e. When an Enhanced AAR is generated, the requesting party must review and approve it before it is shared.

SECTION 8. Cancellation:

This is a new policy.

SECTION 9. Attachments:

None.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Goldstein".

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

April 14, 2017