LORAIN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENTS
Standard Operating Guidelines

Mutual Aid Box Alarm (MABAS) and Automatic Mutual Aid (AMA) Procedures	SOG: 002 Effective Date: 06/25/2015 Supersedes: 12/01/2011 Approved: _____ President, Lorain County Fire Chiefs' Association Page 1 of 10

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To establish an orderly response of mutual aid to communities experiencing emergency incidents exceeding their response capabilities.

1.2 To provide a pre-planned response to the scene of a major emergency incident and to provide for backup apparatus/personnel in a stricken community's station(s) for a second incident.

1.3 To help coordinate the design of MABAS Box Alarm Cards for Lorain County using one standardized template containing all of the required information needed to dispatch a MABAS Box Alarm and for the MABAS Box Alarm to be easily understood by emergency responders and dispatchers.

2.0 DIVISIONS AFFECTED

2.1 All Fire Department personnel.
2.2 All Dispatch personnel.
2.3 Lorain County 911

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 All Officers are responsible to comply with and ensure that personnel under their command are adequately trained, fully understand, and comply with this guideline.

3.2 All members have the responsibility to learn and follow this guideline.

3.3 All Fire Dispatch personnel have the responsibility to learn and follow this guideline.

4.0 ORGANIZATION

4.1 The primary mutual aid dispatch center shall be the Lorain County 9-1-1 Communications Center.

4.2 Mutual aid shall be governed by a Mutual Aid Committee, appointed by the President of the Lorain County Fire Chiefs' Association and made up of a Chairman and four other participating Lorain County Fire Chiefs.

4.3 The Mutual Aid Committee recommends standards for use by participating departments.

4.4 The Lorain County Fire Chiefs shall adopt or reject guidelines/procedures.

4.5 The Mutual Aid Committee shall review all new/revised MABAS box alarms for content/format before implementation and shall critique all mutual aid calls to ensure guidelines/procedures are being followed, and to identify needed updates/revisions to the critique format.

5.0   The MABAS BOX ALARM SYSTEM

    5.1   Mutual Aid boxes are developed by each department based on the following information:

- Level of hazard (low, medium, high).
- Available water supply (from good to poor to none).
- Life hazard (nursing homes, hospitals, assembly).
- Proximity of mutual aid companies.
- Availability of manpower in adjacent mutual aid communities.

    5.2   For departments with large areas, boxes may be divided into zones to determine who is closest to that area, using the closest company first.

    5.3   Boxes can be developed for special hazards.

    5.4   The Mutual Aid Committee has developed a standard template that contains all of the required elements needed to be able to design a MABAS Card and to be able to dispatch MABAS resources easily by a primary or secondary dispatch center.

    5.5   Each box alarm card should include the following: The top section of the card is to include: "Department Name, Box Alarm Type, Effective Date, MABAS Division #, Box Alarm #, Location or Area of Alarm, and Authorized Signature."   Radio frequency and staging information shall not be listed on the box, but shall be provided to LC 911 upon request of a box alarm.

              There will be six (6) different box card formats - Structure Fire, Brush Fire, Hazmat, Life Safety(EMS), Technical Rescue, and Water Rescue. Each format is unique that it contains only the columns for equipment most appropriate to the type of emergency.

    5.6   The next section is the "Local Dispatch Area" and will be the responsibility of the local dispatch authority.   This is not a MABAS area and should include all 1st alarm assignment, such as: host department, automatic aid, general alarm, etc."

    5.7   "Change of Quarters" (COQ) may be filled in, left blank, or deleted. Some departments may assign COQ companies to their stations to handle other emergency calls. Others may bring COQ companies into their station and move them to the scene on the next alarm level for faster response.

    5.8   The Box Alarm Card is designed around a progressive structure. It is imperative that all initial alarm companies be dispatched prior to or simultaneously with the MABAS Box Alarm request. Since the initial response is considered the actual 1st alarm, MABAS alarms will begin with at the 2nd alarm level.

    5.9   The next section is the "MABAS BOX ALARM".   This is where MABAS dispatching starts. Column headings may include: "Alarm Level, Engines, Tankers, Trucks, Rescues, EMS, Chiefs, Special Equipment, Change of Quarters", or others for specialized cards and as standardized throughout a Division.

          A.   Department names are to be spelled out and are to be in at least 8-point, Arial font.

B.   Card is to be read left to right.   Departments will be sent to the scene unless listed in the "Change of Quarters" area.

C.   In "Change of Quarters", the department listed is to be sent to the fire station listed in parenthesis.   The addresses should be given in the information portion of the box alarm card, or on back of the card.

Example: Carlisle Township Tanker is responding to MABAS Box 3740 in Wellington but needs to have Columbia Tanker fill-in at their station. Change of Quarters entry would display:

"Columbia Tanker (Carlisle station)

Note: This section will also note change of quarters required for other responding companies, such as:

1)   Fill-in - placement of mutual aid apparatus into host department station for coverage.
2)   Move-up - placement of mutual aid apparatus into another responding department's station for coverage.
3)   Standby - notification of department to 'stand-by' in their station while surrounding departments are operating at emergency scene.

D.   In the "Special Equipment or Other" column, apparatus or equipment that does not fall into the primary categories can be listed. Examples: command post, air trailer.

E.   The number of alarm levels is left to the individual fire department to determine. MABAS starts at the "2^{nd}Alarm Level", proceeds to the "3^{rd}Alarm Level, 4^{th}Alarm Level, 5^{th}Alarm Level, 6^{th}Alarm Level", and may continue through any number of levels that are put on the cards.

5.10   The bottom of the card should be left for "Special Instructions or Information".   Included in the Special Instructions should be the addresses for the stations listed in the "Change of Quarters" and any other pertinent information.

5.11   Box Alarm Numbering Example

FD	FD	FD	ZONE	TYPE
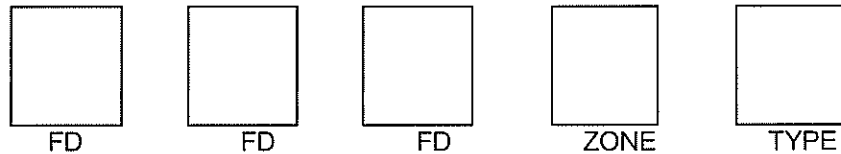
Type Codes: 0   Target
               1   Residential (low)
               2   Medium
               3   High
               4   HazMat
               5   Tanker
               6   Medical
               7   Technical Rescue

5.12   New box cards will be sent out to all of the departments on the cards for a minimum thirty (30) day review/approval process. The card shall be stamped "draft", not signed, and the effective date left blank. If there is no response from a department within the 30 day period, it will be assumed that the draft cards are acceptable. After the 30-day review/approval process, cards shall be formalized by the addition of the authorized signature (actual or electronic) and effective date on each card. Final cards shall then be sent out to each department in the county and all departments listed on the cards at least seven (7) days prior to the effective date. It is the responsibility of each department to notify and copy LC 911, the Mutual Aid committee, and their personnel.

6.0   APPARATUS DEFINITIONS/STAFFING LEVELS

6.1   Definitions

A.   **Engine (ENG):** Combination vehicle — pumper and hose/equipment meeting NFPA Standard 1901.

B.   **Engine/Squirt (SQT):** Same as above with the addition of a 50'+ boom/master stream.

C.   **Tanker/Tender (TNK):** The minimum size tanker is 1,500 gallons.

D.   **Truck (TRK):** Aerial ladder with equipment capable of salvage, rescue, ventilation, and water tower operation.

E.   **Tower (TWR):** Aerial ladder/platform with equipment capable of rescue, ventilation and elevated stream operation.

F.   **Snorkel (SNK):** Articulating boom aerial platform with equipment capable of rescue, ventilation and elevated stream operation.

G.   **Rescue (RES):** Vehicle equipped with rescue tools, air masks and spare tanks.

H.   **Squad (BLS):** Ambulance (EMS unit) capable of basic life support.

I.   **Medic (ALS):**   Ambulance (EMS unit) capable of advanced life support.

J.   **Special Equipment:**   i.e., lights, foam apparatus, heavy-earth-moving equipment, Salvation Army van, Red Cross Disaster Team, etc.

K.   **Special Trailer (TRL):**   i.e., hazmat trailer, technical rescue trailer, etc.

L.   **Manpower (MPR):**   Transport unit (truck, vehicle) with personnel equipped with personal protective equipment and SCBA.

6.2   Staffing recommendations.

Unit Type	Minimum Staffing	Maximum Staffing
Engine	3	7
Engine/squirt	3	7
Tanker/Tender	2	5
Truck	4	7
Tower	4	7
Snorkel	4	7
Rescue	3	7
Squad	2 EMTB	3
Medic	1 EMTP 1 EMTB	3
Manpower	3	5

6.3   In the event apparatus are responding with less than the recommended minimum staffing, the requesting department shall be notified of the apparatus staffing level(s).   Personnel will notify their own dispatch of the number of personnel on board.   The responding unit's dispatcher will notify Alarm caller of the number responding.

6.4   The minimum recommended response shall be accomplished by members responding from a fire station; not in personal vehicles.

7.0   HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

    7.1   Mutual aid will be requested by contacting LC 911 via either the county radio frequency or by phone.

    7.2   When the Incident Commander observes that the emergency will exceed the personnel and/or apparatus capabilities of the department, a Mutual Aid Box Alarm (MABAS) should be requested.

    7.3   The Incident Commander should notify the dispatcher of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm request and should provide the following information:

- Name of the requesting department
- Type of Alarm and Box Alarm Card Number
- Level of Alarm requested
- Nature and location of incident
- Location of the staging area or station to be filled.
- Radio frequency/channel to be used.

    7.4   MABAS Dispatch - LC 911

        A.   Upon receiving a request, the dispatcher shall turn to the appropriate page in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm book and check the request.

        B.   Requests shall be grouped and dispatched either by radio (fire department's tones on appropriate frequencies) or through station alert.   After the tones have cleared, the dispatcher shall announce the message in the following manner:

            "Dispatch is transmitting (name of community), MABAS Box (Box No.), (Level) alarm for a (incident type) at (incident location).

            Departments due to respond: (Dept)   (Equipment)

            Staging at (location). Scene operations on (frequency) channel. Please acknowledge."

        C.   Departments due to respond on the particular alarm shall acknowledge the LC 911 Center in the order as listed on the box alarm page. The Dispatcher will log the department's acknowledgment or their inability to respond.

NOTE: With the capability to actuate any fire department tones, individual departments need not issue a further alert to their respective personnel, thereby interfering with radio communications for enroute and on-scene units.

        D.   In the event that a requested department cannot respond, then the Dispatcher will call the next department listed in the next alarm level to provide the same type of equipment.

        E.   Departments will notify their respective dispatch center that they are responding and promptly switch to the assigned frequency.   They will notify Command of their

arrival at the staging area. This "on scene" notification will preferably be accomplished by verbal contact with the Level 2 Staging Officer.

NOTE: In the event no Staging Officer has been assigned, the first arriving unit's Officer shall assume the Staging Officer position and should notify Command of their status.

F.   Whenever the dispatcher has completed the Alarm assignment, the Incident Commander shall be notified that the "Box is complete".

G.   Dispatch will inform Command of any deviations in the box request, such as one department filling for another department or equipment responding with less than recommended manpower. Whenever possible, information shall be given to Command in a "one-time" broadcast.

H.   To reduce radio traffic, all responding departments should obtain directions before they leave quarters.

I.   If a company is unable to complete its assignment, the Department shall notify Dispatch. The Dispatcher will automatically call the next due company(s) to fill the vacancy.

7.5   Additional Dispatch

A.   Should LC 911 become inoperable, or if desired by the Incident Commander, Command may initiate the MABAS call-out procedure through one of the following methods:

1.   Their own fire dispatcher and/or a designated person on scene.
2.   Through another fire department dispatcher.

7.6   Multiple Alarms

A.   If a department is working a MABAS, and another incident happens in the same community requiring MABAS usage, the Incident Commander may have the dispatcher activate the next box alarm level to respond to the new incident location. If neighboring departments have already sent a unit to the scene of the original fire, the dispatcher will use greater alarm assignments to fill.

B.   If simultaneous MABAS calls occur in neighboring communities, dispatch can be directed to fill these using greater alarm assignments as necessary.

C.   Incident Commanders should use department and/or geographical locations to identify themselves.

EXAMPLE: "Elyria Second Street Command"
                        "Lorain Command"
                        "Kolbe Command"
                        "Oberlin Main Street Command"

    7.7   Multiple Alarm Levels

        A.   Alarms should be requested in numerical order; however, simultaneous alarm levels may be combined into a request. If a department requests simultaneous boxes or levels of response and a requested department is unable to fulfill the request, the decision on apparatus response will be passed through dispatcher to the Incident Commander.

        B.   Once the initial alarm(s) are requested, Incident Command should attempt to wait until the box is complete before requesting greater alarms.

        C.   If you want 1st alarm assignment and trucks from 2nd and 3rd alarms, state, "1st alarm assignment and trucks to the _____ alarm."

8.0   AUTOMATIC AID (AMA)

    8.1   Automatic Aid (AMA) is assistance dispatched automatically by contractual agreement between two communities or fire districts. That differs from mutual aid or assistance arranged case by case.

        The purpose of AMA is to dispatch all AMA resource required for an incident on the initial or 1st alarm, e.g. same time as the host department. The result should be the arrival of a larger response force, capable of effectively and safely initiating basic actions to mitigate the emergency.

    8.2   AMA differs from MABAS in the following manner:

- There are no multiple alarms. Additional assistance needed beyond AMA would require the activation of a MABAS box alarm.
- All AMA responding units will be dispatched immediately upon receipt of the emergency call at 911.

    8.3   All alarms dispatched are to be preceded with a preliminary alerts or pager tones (as predetermined by LC 911) to the affected department with following information:

- Department to be dispatched
- Requesting department
- Type of incident
- Location

    Example: "Dispatch to (host dept), you have a (incident type) at (location).
                  Department due to respond: (Dept)   (Equipment)
                  Staging at (location).   Scene operations on (channel)".

    8.3   During their response, all responding AMA resources will change to the host department's primary Ops channel and monitor for directions and/or assignments from IC.

    8.4   Upon arrival, AMA responding units are expected to follow Level 1 Staging procedures. Units arriving will report their identity and direction from the scene.

9.0   SCENE REQUIREMENTS

   9.1   The use of the Incident Command System (ICS) is required at all Mutual Aid Box Alarm
           incidents.   The Command vehicle shall display a flashing green light or a command post
           flag.

   9.2   Use of identification vests is required at all Mutual Aid incidents.

           Personnel who should be identified by vest include:

                   • Incident Command
                   • Safety Officer
                   • Staging Officer
                   • Water Supply Officer
                   • Medical Officer
                   • All other Groups/Divisions - as needed

   9.3   A Safety Officer shall be designated at all Mutual Aid Box Alarm incidents. The Safety
           Sector size will be determined by the size and scope of the emergency.

   9.4   A Personnel Accountability System shall be established and used at all Mutual Aid Box
           Alarm incidents. The standard Emergency Communications and Evacuation procedure
           adopted by the LC Fire Chiefs shall be used at all mutual aid incidents.

   9.5   If possible, mutual aid crews arriving at the scene should remain intact throughout the
           incident.

APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Accountability System - A procedural system designed to track and account for the assignment of personnel on the scene of an emergency incident.

Alarm Level - Refers to the Box Alarm, 2nd Alarm, 3rd Alarm, etc. to the ultimate level deemed appropriate by the department to handle the possible emergency situations.   Includes the names of the departments that are committed to provide this type of equipment at the alarm level designated.

Authorized Signature - Signature of the Fire Chief of the department issuing the card.

Automatic Aid - Contractual agreement between two or more departments to respond with specific equipment and personnel to a special area or building in that community on an initial alarm.

Box Alarm Number - Number for the card designated by the Fire Department.   The numbering system must be coordinated with the MABAS Division.

Box Alarm Type - The type of emergency situation covered by the card.

Box Card - Printed form containing details of departments, personnel and equipment to respond to a given geographic area, target hazard, or specialized response within a community.

Change of Quarters –Apparatus assigned physical location changes to be available for other emergency calls or move up to the scene on additional alarms.

Chiefs - Can include Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief or those staff officers acceptable to the members of the Division.

Department Name - Name of the Fire Department issuing the card.

Engines - See local designations.

Effective Date - Date the use of the card is authorized to begin by the issuing department.

Fireground Channel - Low power tactical frequencies used for on-scene communications between Incident Command and units working the incident.

Local Dispatch Area - This portion of the card is intended to show the response for any units prior to the Box Alarm level.   The primary responding units will be those of the local department and possibly outside departments generally using auto-aid agreements.

Location or Area - This can be a single location or building; a geographical portion of the departments area of response or the entire area of response.

MABAS Division - Lorain County

Primary (Ops) Channel - Frequency normally used for daily dispatch (base/mobile) of emergency calls and communications between Incident Command and dispatch.

Rescues - See local designations.

Special Equipment - Any ancillary units, individuals or specialized apparatus that would be beneficial for the type of alarm designated by the card.   These resources may or may not be owned and operated by the member departments.

Special Instructions - This area is reserved for any information that will allow the MABAS dispatcher handling the radio communications for the incident to have quick access to specific information to assist responding units.   Some of these could be the address of the change of quarter's stations, special contact numbers for key department members, and numbers for departments that are due to respond that may have special contact requirements.

Tactical (TAC) frequency - see Fireground Channel

Tankers - See local designations.

Trucks - See local designations.