

## **Category 5**

### **Criterion 5E: Fire Suppression Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe fire suppression program directed toward controlling and/or extinguishing fires to protect the community from injury or death, and reduce property loss. If identified risks are outside the scope of the agency's capabilities, Category 10 performance indicators should address the agency's ability to receive aid from partners in those areas. The agency should conduct a thorough risk assessment as part of activities in Category 2 to determine the need for a specific fire suppression program and support the overall risk reduction strategy.

#### **Summary:**

The Meridian Fire Department is a mission-driven and values-focused first response agency focused on protecting and enhancing the Meridian community through the guiding principles of professionalism and compassion. The department works to reduce loss of life and property, improve response outcomes, and increase public education around fire safety, in collaboration with IAFF Local 4627, elected officials, and the public. The department uses National Fire Protection Association 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments* as a guide and planning resource, and considers local area needs and capabilities. The department provides emergency fire response to a wide range of fire-suppression related incidents from small outdoor fires and dumpster fires to residential commercial, and industrial occupancy fires.

## **Performance Indicators:**

**CC 5E.1** Given the agency's community risk assessment/standards of cover and emergency performance statements, the agency meets its staffing, response time, station(s), pumping capacity, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of fire suppression incident(s).

### **Description**

The department currently operates six fire stations with two more under construction. The department maintains a constant staffing of 24 firefighters who staff five engine companies, two truck companies, a battalion chief, and cross staff two brush trucks and a water tender. Fire engines have a minimum staffing of three personnel and truck companies are staffed with a minimum of four. The city's response area is currently divided into 6 response zones based on current station location. Each fire engine can flow 250 gpm with a 1500 gpm pump capacity as an initial attack engine before establishing a continuous water supply. The department has established benchmark response times based on National Fire Protection Association 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, and modified to suit department need considering local risks and resources. The department's benchmark times are published in Administration Standard Operating Guidelines (ASOGs) for response times and outlier parameters, as well as in the *Meridian Fire Department Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover (CRA/SOC)*

### **Appraisal**

In 2022 the 90th percentile total response time for a first arriving unit to a moderate-risk fire (reported structure fire or isolated room and contents fire that can be handled without a greater alarm) was 9 minutes and 13 seconds, over the 8 minute benchmark time. One of the delays in total response time comes from Ada County Sheriff's Office 911 Emergency Dispatch Center (Dispatch)'s call processing time of 1 minute and 56 seconds, over the 1 minute and 30 second target time. For high-risk fire suppression (greater alarm fires and reported structure fires with victims) the total response time for the first unit on scene was

9 minutes and 20 seconds in 2022, compared to the 8-minute target time. Again, one of the greatest delays came from alarm handling times at Dispatch. Meridian Fire Department was given an ISO rating of 3 by the Idaho State Ratings Bureau (ISRB) in 2019. Travel time has also been a significant source of delay, with increasing traffic and outdated Opticom systems hampering responses. The department has seen a significant increase in call volume and population of the last few years and has been working to expand the size of the department to decrease response times and increase services.

### **Plan**

The department will conduct another analysis of response times and staffing following the completion of Stations 7 and 8 in late 2023. The department will create a performance improvement plan with Dispatch to reduce call processing times. Dispatchers are currently going through Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) training updates to help improve response times. In addition, the department will work on improving its travel times and turnout times through engineered improvements. The department will purchase station pre-alerting systems to install in all new stations within 6 months, and budget for a predictive Opticom system to be installed in the city in the next year.

### **References**

- Meridian Fire Department Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover (CRA/SOC), pg. 111-112, 126
- ISRB ISO Report 2019
- NFPA 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*
- ASOG – Response Time & Outlier Parameters

**CC 5E.2 The agency uses a standardized incident command/management system, which is supported by agency policy and training programs.**

### **Description**

The department follows the West Ada Emergency Operating Guidelines (EOGs) for establishing incident command and emergency scene management. The West EOGs were a cooperative collaboration between three other fire agencies to deliver a comprehensive set of operating guidelines that would follow a standardized incident management system. All EOGs are based on the national Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). All firefighting personnel are required to be certified in ICS 100, 200, and 700. Officers are required to complete ICS 800. Entry level academies provide comprehensive training on the incident management system. Company officers received more advanced training on incident management in the department's Officer Development Program (ODP). In addition, all company officers are Blue Card certified and required to recertify every three years.

### **Appraisal**

Incident command has been established at all multi-unit responses as required in the West Ada EOGs. All firefighting personnel have been certified to the required ICS/NIMS levels (ICS 100, 200, 700), and all company officers have maintained their Blue Card training certifications. All training and certifications have been logged in *Target Solutions*. The Blue Card program has established a consistent communications model between departments and has enhanced the West Ada EOGs and incident management system.

### **Plan**

The department will continue to follow the incident management system outlined in the West Ada EOGs. The department will continue to require ICS certifications for all firefighting personnel and continue to use the Blue Card training system for its company officers. The department will meet with other departments covered under the West Ada EOGs in 2024 to discuss any needed updates.

### **References**

- West Ada Emergency Operations Guidelines, pg. 1

- Captain of Suppression Job Description
- Blue Card Current Certification Report

**CC 5E.3 The agency conducts a formal and documented program appraisal, at least annually, to determine the impacts, outcomes, and effectiveness of the program, and to measure its performance towards meeting the agency's goals and objectives.**

### **Description**

The department has conducted informal appraisals for many years in the form of an annual report. Beginning with FY 2022, the department is conducting formalized annual program appraisals according to Administrative Standard Operating Guidelines. The formal appraisal of the fire suppression program examines budget, personnel, response times, equipment and apparatus, and community expectations. Response times are compared over a three-year period to determine trends in program outputs. In addition, station reliability is measured to determine how current practices such as staffing, concentration and distribution of resources effect the department's reliability to the community.

### **Appraisal**

In 2022 the department maintained a constant staffing of 19 firefighters who staffed five engine companies, one truck company, a battalion chief, and cross staffed two brush rigs and a water tender. The department began construction on two new fire stations and purchased a second truck to go into service in 2023. The department also began the hiring and onboarding of over 30 new firefighters to staff the new stations and apparatus. The department's turnout, travel, and total response times remained relatively steady from 2021 and 2020. Station reliability ranged from 77 percent to 85 percent.

### **Plan**

The department will open two new fire stations in 2023, train 30 new firefighters, and staff an additional 2 engine companies by the end of 2023. The department will budget for a new predictive Opticom system to replace aging technology and install new station pre-alerting systems into stations. Following these improvements, the department will then reassess call response times and apply for an updated ISO rating from the Idaho Survey and ratings Bureau with a goal of becomes a Class 2 department. The department will monitor station reliability following the addition of two stations with a goal of 85 percent for all stations. The department will continue to use the program appraisal process as outlined in administrative SOGs.

## **References**

- ASOG – Program Appraisals
- Annual Program Appraisal\_5E.3 Fire Suppression
- Response Reliability for Ada County Fire Apparatus