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EC1230 "Mutual Aid" A Fire Disaster Plan

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**"MUTUAL AID"
A FIRE DISASTER PLAN**

Joseph E. Range
Extension Forester

C. Y. THOMPSON
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Purpose

A Mutual Aid Plan is necessary to coordinate manpower, equipment and other resources to prevent or combat fires or other disasters which exceed (or threaten to exceed) the capabilities of a local fire suppression agency.

Disaster Situations 81-829 .06
.26
.19
.32

Interlocal Cooperation Act - 23-2201 through 23-2207.

Why

Fire departments are usually first to respond to natural or manmade disasters such as fires, floods, blizzards, etc. A local agency seldom has enough manpower or equipment to adequately handle a large disaster.

Operations

County Mutual Aid

A county mutual aid association should be governed by its own bylaws and all member departments should have written, formal agreements which specifically state terms and conditions of their participation.

General

Historically, communities and their immediate neighbors verbally agreed to help one another. One department might be knowledgeable of the resources and problems of its neighbor but not of a department farther away.

Plan of Operation

1. A County Mutual Aid Coordination Committee is formed.
2. Each party to the plan designates a representative to act as its member.
3. The Coordinating Committee develops an operational plan and provides leadership.
4. The committee designates a mutual aid coordinator who, under preselected conditions, exercises control of all mutual aid forces.
5. No party shall be required to deplete, unreasonably, its fire protection resources in furnishing mutual aid. Each party shall determine the amount and type of resources it shall furnish.
6. The local responsible fire suppression agency has authority to request mutual aid from any or all parties to this plan.
7. If a county mutual aid coordinator has been selected, the authority requesting mutual aid shall immediately notify the coordinator.
8. Each party to this plan retains command of its own forces.

A modern, practical arrangement is the county wide concept. All fire departments and rural fire protection districts within a county join as a countywide organization. Adjoining counties follow suit and are united into an area or regional mutual aid district. This serves as a step in a state mutual aid disaster plan, which provides the framework to cope with disasters which threaten more than one county.

Authority

**Reissue Revised Statutes from Laws
of the State of Nebraska**

Day to Day - 35-518
18-1706
18-1709
35-508

EC 73-1230

9. Although each department or district responding to mutual aid may dispatch only a portion of its total forces, its fire fighting capabilities nevertheless are reduced. To compensate for this, each such responding district or department will be protected by its neighbor on a move up and cover concept.

10. It is understood each party to this plan will bear its own costs.

11. Resource Inventory:

- a. Exchange inventories. List (and illustrate by map) all fire protection organization boundaries. Indicate responsible officials, alternates and supporting information for contact.
- b. Inventory of fire fighting equipment and apparatus.
- c. Inventory of other disaster equipment and service.
- d. Communication facilities including radio frequency and vehicle identification.
- e. Inventory of manpower and support transportation.
- f. Dispatching plans.
- g. Inventory of supporting resources such as aircraft, transports, construction equipment, etc., with whom supporting plans have been made.
- h. Static water supply.

Multi-County

A multi-county mutual aid plan is necessary for disasters of any major proportion. The multi-county or area fire disaster plan is based on the county fire disaster mutual aid plan.

A multi-county mutual aid district committee is composed of a representative from each of the county mutual aid committees.

Development of plans, predesignation of mutual aid coordinator and an inventory of resources are responsibilities of a multi-county committee.

For more information, example material or assistance contact:

Extension Forester-Fire Control
212 Miller Hall - East Campus
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68503

State Fire Marshal
Room 808
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Nebr. Fire Service
Milford Tech
Milford, NE 68405

Civil Defense
1300 Military Rd.
Lincoln, NE 68508