Automatic Aid Agreement
Travis and Williamson County Agencies
Operational Guidelines

I. PURPOSE
To establish operational guidelines that will address the basic provision of emergency service response into the designated service areas identified within the Travis and Williamson County Automatic Aid Agreement(s).

II. BACKGROUND
Each agency participating in an Automatic Aid Agreement agrees that automatic aid provides for the most efficient and effective delivery of emergency response services to the citizens of our respective jurisdictions. While all jurisdictions have common hazards and challenges, there are characteristics and circumstances that can also make them unique and set them apart. Due to this, it is further agreed that each agency listed within this agreement may adopt their own Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) for incident response within their respective response jurisdiction(s).

However, all agencies must operate under an Incident Command System (ICS) that is National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant as promulgated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This will enable each of the participating agencies to provide the most appropriate and efficient response within their respective jurisdictions while also addressing the safety concerns of first responders.

In order for there to be a core standard when it comes to an ICS, all agencies participating in this agreement agree to utilize the “Blue Card” certification system for Incident Command qualifications.

These guidelines shall be reviewed at least annually by the participating agencies. Any revisions shall require prior notification, review, and approval from all participating agencies.
III. PROCEDURE

A. Response

1. Until common Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) can be established that incorporate all of the safety elements found within the current SOGs of all AHJs that ensure use of common terminology, standard definitions, common strategies and tactics, and standardized procedures and incident management, AHJs residing within Travis County agree to continue adhering to the following previously agreed upon Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines:

   a. A101 - Fire ground Operations
   b. A104 - Two In and Two Out
   c. A105 - Mayday and Rapid Intervention Company
   d. B402 - Emergency Terminology
   e. B104 - Lost Firefighter Strategies
   f. A110 - Light Box Alarms
   g. A201 - High Rise Fires
   h. A202 - Mid-Rise Fires
   i. A708 - Response to Alarm Activations
   j. A610 - Response to Active Shooter Incidents
   k. A401 - Wildland Fire Response

2. Until common Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) can be established that incorporate all of the safety elements found within the current SOGs of all AHJs that ensure use of common terminology, standard definitions, common strategies and tactics, and standardized procedures and incident management, AHJs residing within Williamson County agree to continue adhering to the following previously agreed upon Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines:

   a. Regional Procedure #1 - County Resource Coordination Guidelines
   b. Regional Procedure #2 – Fire Investigation Team
   c. Regional Procedure #4 – Rapid Intervention Crew
   d. Regional Procedure #5 – Firefighter Accountability
   e. Regional Procedure #6 – Incident Command System
   f. Lost, Trapped, or Missing Firefighter (Mayday)

3. AHJs which reside along the contiguous borders of Travis and Williamson County may opt to use either County’s Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines, but must declare this with all other participating AHJs.
1.4. Each Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) shall determine the appropriate response plans for the alarm types within their jurisdiction. Per the Automatic Aid Agreement, these response plans shall be rostered with the geographically closest and most resource appropriate unit(s) based upon resource typing within the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, regardless of jurisdiction. The first responding unit, regardless of resource type or jurisdiction, shall report directly to the scene, provide a size-up, and assume Incident Command.

2.5. All later arriving units shall do one of the following when responding into another agency’s jurisdiction:

a. Follow the SOGs for the jurisdiction to which they are responding (if known),
b. Follow the direction of on-scene Incident Command, or
c. Report out as staged (“staged”, “Level 1”, or “Level 2”) at an appropriate location and await assignment from Incident Command. This is the most appropriate action for a second or later arriving unit that is unfamiliar with the AHJ’s SOGs.

3.6. Regardless of jurisdiction, Incident Command shall have the authority to reduce/upgrade the response level (Code 1 or Code 3) of all incoming units and may cancel/upgrade the response of units based upon conditions found on scene. However, the AHJ may continue the response of a unit(s) if required by the AHJ’s SOGs.

7. Any AHJ may respond a command element on a response into another jurisdiction when that department has units assigned to an incident. If the Auto Aid department command element responds into a jurisdiction that operates under the other county’s SOGs, they shall report to the Command Post upon arrival and will confer with Command regarding the current Incident Action Plan (IAP) for the incident. The Auto Aid department’s command element shall then be assigned to an IMS role that best affords the management and supervision of the assisting jurisdiction’s units. Examples of possible assignments include: Unified Command, Operations, Safety Officer, Branch Director, Division/Group Supervisor, or a Single Resource Unit Leader. If the Auto Aid command element does not concur with the IAP due to unsafe acts, orders or conditions he/she has the authority to remove that jurisdiction’s units from an IDLH atmosphere or other unsafe assignment.

8. Any firefighter, company officer, or chief officer on the emergency scene, regardless of assignment, has a duty to immediately stop an unsafe act or, to communicate an unsafe condition to Command. The firefighter, company officer, or chief officer who stops the unsafe act, including the removal of
Firefighters from an IDLH atmosphere, must immediately communicate their actions to Command.

9. When appropriate, the AHJ may assume Incident Command for all multi-unit responses. The arrival of the AHJ on the incident scene does not mean that command should be automatically transferred to the AHJ. Command should only be transferred when the AHJ is completely aware of the position and function of crews operating at the scene and has an understanding of the overall IAP: Incident Action Plan (IAP).

10. Any Auto Aid department may limit resources in their response plan which respond into other jurisdictions to ensure the maintenance of coverage in their home jurisdiction.

4.11. A Post-Incident Review (PIR) should be conducted on any working structure fire where automatic aid units were utilized on the fire ground. The PIR will include units and command elements from all assisting jurisdictions.

5.12. In jurisdictions where medical emergencies are not prioritized, responses shall be handled by the geographically closest available unit. In jurisdictions where medical emergencies are prioritized, the geographically closest available unit shall only respond to priority 1 through 3 call types. Priority 4 and 5 call types shall be handled by the AHJ.

6.13. This automatic aid agreement shall cover only the first twelve (12) hours of an event. After twelve (12) hours the involved agencies may request reimbursement as outlined within section III E of this document.

B. Staffing

Although preferred staffing for Engine and Ladder Companies is four (4) personnel, each agency shall determine the appropriate personnel staffing numbers for their respective units. However, in order for units to be available to be resourced into the response plans of another agency’s jurisdiction, the following criteria must be met:

1. Engine Companies shall be staffed with a minimum of three (3) certified personnel per the certification requirements listed within section III D of this document.

2. Ladder Companies (aerial devices) shall be staffed with a minimum of three (3) certified personnel per the certification requirements listed within section III D of this document.
3. Units with less than three certified personnel assigned may not be resourced as an Engine or Ladder company within another agency’s response plans.