

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

January 26, 2012

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 12-021

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Brian L. Cummings, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: ADDENDUM TO DEPARTMENT POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ON HOME GARAGED VEHICLES BFC 12-005

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Recommendation: That the Board:

Receive and file this addendum to the Department Policy and Recommendations on Home Garaged Vehicles Board Report 12-005 (attachment 1), submitted to the Board of Fire Commission (BFC) on January 17, 2012.

Summary:

During the BFC Meeting on January 17, 2012, the Fire Department was directed to submit a written report that should be "comprehensive" in light of the 2009 Controllers Audit regarding the Citywide use of home-garaged vehicles. The direction was also to discuss which audit items the Department was still not compliant with as outlined in the follow up audit and what the Department was doing to comply with all audit recommendations.

During the January 17th 2012 Commission meeting, Commissioner Hudley-Hayes directed the Department to answer specific questions not covered in the written report and therefore continued the item to the February 7th Commission meeting. These questions were provided to the Fire Chief in a written document.

The Department has responded to 39 detailed questions provided by the Commission in this addendum to BFC 12-005.

BFC Context:

In the first paragraph under the **Analysis** section on page 2, it states that in November 2006, the City Administrative Officer (CAO) Rule No. 5 directed all Departments to

consider the home garaging of vehicles as a budgetary matter that would need to be approved each year during the budget process.

BFC Question:

To what extent does the Fire Department consider the home garaging of vehicles a budgetary matter in the budget that is approved by the Fire Commission each year?

Department Response:

According to Administrative Services Bureau the proposed budget for each year contains funding for the Fire Department's fleet, which comes through Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA). However, home garaged vehicles are not a separate part of the budget process. The decision for the Department to determine thresholds for the number of home-garaged vehicle is based primarily in operational considerations.

BFC Context:

Page 3 of the Board Report says the City Controller performed an audit of home garaged vehicles in 2009, including those in the Fire Department.

BFC Question:

Was the Controller's audit, and the Department's response to the audit, shared with the Fire Commission before now?

Department Response:

Research of the BFC Meetings minutes from January 2009 until present found no evidence that it was presented to the BFC.

BFC Context:

Page 3 of the Board Report states the intent of the Controller's audit was to evaluate controls over the assignment, usage and monitoring of home garaged vehicles.

BFC Question:

- (1) How many home garaged vehicles does the Fire Department currently have?
- (2) How does the current number of home garaged vehicles compare to:
 - (a) When the CAO directed all Departments to comply with CAO Rule No. 5 in November 2006?
 - (b) When the Department responded to the CAO's directive in November 2007?
 - (c) When the Controller issued the 2009 audit?

Department Response:

- (1) *The Department currently maintains 126 home-garaged vehicles.*
- (2a) *In 2006, based on our research, there were approximately 180 home-garaged vehicles.*

(2b) In 2007 the Department maintained approximately 174 home-garaged vehicles.

(2c) In 2009 during the Controller's audit, the Department maintained 130 home-garaged vehicles.

BFC Context:

Page 3 of the Board Report points out that according to the Controller's 2009 audit, the City was spending \$10 million a year on home garaged vehicles and, of this amount, the Police Department was spending \$7 million a year.

BFC Question:

How much is the Fire Department currently spending a year on its home garaging vehicle program?

Department Response:

Approximately \$1.707 million a year. This number includes all light vehicles other than Fire heavy apparatus. At this time, we are unable to extract home-garaged vehicles from other light vehicles.

BFC Context:

Page 4 of the Board Report, under the response to Recommendation #3 (see attachment 1), says the Department currently conducts a home garaged vehicle needs analysis during the month of November on an annual basis.

BFC Question:

What does the Department's "needs analysis" consists of?

Department Response:

In November of each year the Department sends out a request for CAO forms to all supervisors and members that were assigned a home-garaged vehicle the year prior. A spreadsheet of home-garaged vehicles is compiled by the Planning Section that includes a column for justification of a home-garaged vehicle for each individual vehicle assigned. Justification will be determined annually as per the Fire Chief. Should an assignment not have a justification for the home-garaged vehicle that member would be asked to turn their vehicle in.

BFC Question:

What criteria are used to conduct the home garaging vehicle needs analysis on an annual basis?

Department Response

The needs assessment is determined by two categories:

- Essential Personnel*
- Incident Management Team (IMT) responsibilities*

BFC Question:

Can the Department provide the Commission with a copy of the most recent home garaging internal audit or "needs analysis?"

Department Response:

Yes, please see attachment #2.

BFC Question:

Is the primary justification for providing a home garaged vehicle based on the need to provide an on-call emergency capability 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?

Department Response:

The decision to assign home-garaged vehicles is operationally based in that it supports the command and control capacity of the Department.

BFC Question:

To what extent does the Department track emergency call-outs for each home garaged vehicle?

Department Response:

Recently the Department implemented an alpha-numeric identification system for all administrative vehicles that is integrated with the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. This system will allow the Department to track all emergency call outs of administrative vehicles provided that the responding member indicates their attachment to the incident. This system has been operational since July of 2011. To date, there have been 161 responses from administrative home-garaged vehicles. This number is not accurate and most likely higher than this. To be added to the incident the member assigned to the home-garaged vehicle must verbally notify dispatch of the alpha numeric identification they have been assigned. As members become aware of the importance of notifying dispatch of their attachment to the incident we will most likely see this number increase significantly.

BFC Question:

How does the Department monitor the frequency of home garaged vehicles being used for emergency call-outs?

Department Response:

The Department monitors the frequency of call outs using data provided by the CAD.

BFC Question:

Does the Fire Department require members to utilize vehicle usage logs to track the number and mileage of emergency call-outs?

Department Response:

The Department does have a form that tracks vehicle usage on a monthly basis. However, the form is not used regularly. As the Department develops an electronic

version of the CAO Form 34 the information that is currently requested would be transferred to the CAO Form 34.

BFC Context:

Page 4 of the Board Report, under the response to Recommendation #3 (see attachment 1), says each Department member assigned a home garaged vehicle fill out a CAO Form 34.

BFC Question:

What is the approval process once the Department member fills out the CAO Form 34?

Department Response:

Once the member has completed the form and provided proof of liability insurance it is collected by the Planning Section and forwarded to the Fire Chief for approval. Once approved by the Fire Chief it is then forwarded to the Fire Commission Executive Assistant for approval and signature. The form is retained by the Department as directed in the Controller's audit by City Council.

Page 2 of the Controller's Audit states that "The Council has designated the CAO to approve home-garaging authority for City owned vehicles for all Departments, "except Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Fire Department and the proprietary Departments operate their own home-garaged vehicle programs with CAO's involvement."

The approval process is ultimately determined by the Fire Chief. The assignment of a home-garaged vehicle would have to fall into one of the categories established by the Fire Chief; essential staff or IMT responsibility. According to the CAO's office, each individual organization decides its own standards for approving home-garaged vehicles.

BFC Context:

The CAO Form 34 attached to the Board Report (see attachment 1) as a part of Attachment 1 calls for "Commission Approval."

BFC Question:

How long has the Department been using CAO Form 34?

Department Response:

The Fire Department has been using this form regularly since 2009.

BFC Question:

What process does the Department use to obtain the "Commission Approval" called for by CAO Form 34?

Department Response:

The Department forwards the CAO Form 34 document to the Fire Commission Executive Assistant after receiving an approval signature from the Fire Chief. This procedure was started for the first time last year. The Commission Executive Assistant was provided a signature stamp to facilitate this process.

BFC Question:

Since CAO Form 34 calls for "Commission Approval," has the Department's current home garaging policy been reviewed or approved by the Fire Commission?

Department Response:

No, the Department's current home-garaging policy has not been reviewed or approved by the Fire Commission. With regard to the CAO Form 34 requiring "Commission Approval," it was determined by the Department that this form would be recorded by the Commission Executive Assistant with a signature and retained internally to manage the home-garaged vehicle program.

BFC Context:

Page 4 of the Board Report, in the response to Recommendation #5 (see attachment 1), says the Department is prepared to discuss alternative options to reduce the number of home garaged vehicles.

BFC Question:

What options has the Department considered and implemented to reduce the number of home garaged vehicles?

Department Response:

As stated earlier, the Department over the last several years has made significant reductions in the number of home garaged vehicles. Beginning in 2006, the Department had nearly 180 home-garaged vehicles. Today, the number is 126. The Department plans on continuing to manage and supervise the home-garage program with scrutiny. The Department is currently reviewing staff work that was done in 2009 that recommended significant reductions in the number of home-garaged vehicles.

BFC Context:

Page 5 of the Board Report, under Recommendation #19, says the Department will submit an annual "Taxable Benefit for the Use of City-Owned Cars" report.

BFC Question:

Are the "Taxable Benefit for the Use of City-Owned Cars" reports being prepared and submitted to the Controller's Office on an annual basis?

Department Response:

Not at this time.

BFC Question:

How many members with home garaged vehicles do NOT qualify for the IRS tax exemption?

Department Response:

Six.

BFC Context:

Page 43 of the Controller's 2009 audit says the Fire Department managers who drive unmarked vehicles do not appear to qualify for the IRS exemption.

BFC Question:

Do all Department members who drive City unmarked cars meet the definition of "law enforcement officer" found on page 42 of the Controller's audit?

Department Response:

No.

BFC Question:

Is the Controller advised on an annual basis of all Department members who drive unmarked City cars that do not meet the definition of a "law enforcement officer?"

Department Response:

No.

BFC Context:

Page 5 of the Board Report under the Recommendation #19 (see attachment 1) discussion, the Department says the Apparatus Tracking System (ATS) will prove helpful in determining where a vehicle is located and who is responsible for the vehicle.

BFC Question:

What is the timeline for fully implementing the ATS for home garaged vehicles?

Department Response:

According to Administrative Services Bureau, the system for tracking home garaged vehicles is 80% complete, and will be done before July 1, 2012.

BFC Context:

The Department's home garaging policy included as Attachment 4 to the Board Report says (see attachment 1):

- When members are on-call they shall be available for rapid response; and
- On-call shall require that the person and assigned vehicle remain within 50 miles of the City.

BFC Question:

Does the Department provide a home garaged vehicle to Department members who are not subject to emergency call-outs while normally off duty?

Department Response:

Yes, there are currently three. The vehicles are assigned to Administrative Services Bureau.

BFC Question:

Do all home garaged vehicles subject to emergency call-outs comply with the 50 mile rule?

Department Response:

No. The amount of vehicles is undetermined at this time. As we develop to the electronic CAO Form 34 we will be able to identify a point of entry into the City nearest the member's residence. We will then be able to reconcile whether or not the member is meeting the 50 mile requirement.

BFC Question:

To what extent does the Department track the ratio of commuter miles driven for emergency call-outs for the Fire Department's home garaged vehicle program?

Department Response:

In the past, we have not kept that data. In the future with the automation of CAO Form 34 we will be able to track incidents and miles driven for on-call staff.

BFC Context:

Page 5 of the Board Report (see attachment 1) says the Department's policy is included as Attachment 4. What is provided to the Commission as Attachment 4 does not exactly match the home garaging policy that is currently available on-line in the Department's library. There is other information included in the on-line version that is not included in Attachment 4. For example, what is available on-line in the Department's library says: "The Operations Commander shall designate essential personnel and positions with on-call responsibility by Departmental Bulletin annually by August 1." This sentence is not included in Attachment 4 provided to the Commission.

BFC Question:

Is what has been provided to the Commission a complete copy of the Department's current home garaging policy?

Department Response:

No, unfortunately due to a clerical oversight the subsection .12 was inadvertently left out, please see attached complete version (attachment 3).

BFC Question:

Can the Department provide the Commission with a copy of the most recent Departmental Bulletin containing the designation of essential personnel and positions with on-call responsibility?

Department Response:

No, presently this Department Bulletin has not been generated at this point.

BFC Context:

Page 6 of the Board Report, in the paragraph under **Conclusion**, states:

- The Department needs a management response capability to assist with large complex incidents;
- There have been recent cuts of 1 division office, 2 Battalion offices, and 7 emergency incident technicians with the Deployment Plan; and
- These cuts have reduced the Department's "command and control" capacity.

BFC Question:

How does the Department define command and control capacity?

Department Response:

Command and control refers to the oversight and management at an incident. Command specifically refers to the rank structure necessary in the decision making process. As an incident increases in size and complexity the need for members authorized to make significant decisions on behalf of the Department increases as well. Accountability for Department operations is founded in this command function.

Control refers to the management of incident objectives. This is the management part of an incident from logistical concerns to finance issues. Large scale incidents can become very complex and require multiple layers of control to effectively manage the resources and personnel assigned.

BFC Question:

How many home-garaged vehicles could be classified as augmenting the management response capability or contributing to the command and control function for a large scale incident?

Department Response:

This is difficult to determine in that each incident is unique and different. Therefore to accurately assess exactly how many members would be needed to augment the command and control is largely determined by how complex the incident is. For example, a wind driven brush fire may necessitate as many as 40 to 60 command level officers to sustain the operational foundation necessary to mitigate the incident. In contrast, a large earthquake with multiple incidents occurring simultaneously in the City would require significantly more command level officers as Department operations shift to an area command and multiple incident commanders are required. In order to answer this question it would really depend on the incident. During an escalating incident all of the assigned vehicles would be needed.

BFC Question:

To what extent has the Deployment Plan resulted in an increased number of call-outs for members of the Department who were off duty at the time of the call-out?

Department Response:

The Deployment Plan by itself has not increased the number of call-outs for off duty members. The issue that was raised in the Board Report is that as a result of the Deployment Plan, the Department on duty command and control capacity has been reduced. Therefore the need to maintain a robust off duty capacity has increased.

BFC Context:

The last page included with Attachment 4 (see attachment 1) is a February 11, 2008 draft "Home Garage Vehicle Report" setting forth 10 job categories or classifications of Department members who may be assigned home garaged vehicles. One of the classifications listed as receiving home garaged vehicles is "Public Assemblage Major Incidents."

BFC Question:

To what extent does the February 11, 2008 draft "Home Garage Vehicle Report" reflect current practice?

Department Response:

Currently, the Department is continuing to refine and improve its adherence to Department policy as written in the Manual of Operations. Clearly, the Department can improve in many areas. The CAO Form 34 recently changed formats and we are addressing those changes as well as working with MIS to develop an electronic version that will provide oversight.

BFC Question:

How many home garaged vehicles are currently assigned to each of the 10 classifications?

Department Response:

Essential Personnel - 53

*Incident Management Teams – 98 ***

Medical Liaison Support – 5 (all currently assigned to IMT Teams)

Information Technology – 2 (counted as essential staff)

Professional Standards/Operations – 7 (4 counted as essential and one as both essential and IMT)

Brush Incidents – 2 (counted as IMT as well)

Harbor Major Incidents – 1 (also counted as essential staff)

Public Assemblage "Major Incidents" – 5 (all currently assigned to IMT Teams)

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) – 2 (one counted as essential)

Air Operations - 1

**** -** Nineteen of the members assigned to IMT Teams are also counted as essential staff.

BFC Question:

How many home garaged vehicles are assigned to Fire Prevention officers?

Department Response:

According to the Fire Prevention Bureau, there are 16 vehicles home garaged.

BFC Question:

To what extent are major "Public Assemblage" events unknown to the Department before they occur or are unscheduled events?

Department Response:

According to the Fire Prevention Bureau, of the Public Assemblage events that occur, approximately 30% are unknown or unscheduled.

BFC Question:

How often have "off duty" fire prevention officers been called out on an emergency basis to a previously unknown or unscheduled "Public Assemblage?"

Department Response:

According to the Fire Prevention Bureau, it is very rare for an Inspector to be called out for an unknown or unscheduled "Public Assemblage."

Board report prepared by the Administrative Office.

Attachments