



**CONFIRE**

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** January 23, 2024

**FROM:** Nathan Cooke, Director

**TO:** Administrative Committee

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**SUBJECT: Cost Recovery for Non-Emergency Calls**

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt a policy revision that requires agencies generating non-emergency calls in their jurisdiction or involving their direct interests, to reimburse CONFIRE at the established cost per call rate.
2. Direct staff to explore staffing alternatives and apply these reimbursements to options that will increase capacity for processing non-emergency calls and reduce their impact of these calls on 911 dispatchers.
3. If recommendation #1 is approved, consider a 60-day exemption for burn permit calls so that staff and affected agencies can research alternative methods for processing these call types and minimize impacts on 911 dispatchers.

### BACKGROUND

In addition to providing emergency 911 communications, CONFIRE provides non-emergency dispatching and notification services to member and contract agencies, as well as other non-CONFIRE public agencies. While many of these services have been provided at no additional cost to the agency served, they do contribute to dispatcher workload. In many cases, processing these non-emergency calls requires more dispatcher time per call on average than emergency calls (See Attachment A). As call volumes continue to rise and dispatching resources strained, the addition of these non-mission critical services can disrupt emergency operations, reduce efficiency, and increase operational costs.

If CONFIRE agencies wish to continue providing these services, one approach to reducing the impact of the additional workload is to treat these calls as billable incidents similar to other emergency calls. The rationale for this would be that any additional funds recovered for these services could be reinvested into increasing call taking resources. While not all non-emergency calls fall into a category where a specific agency could logically be billed for the service, the majority can be tracked and billed to the appropriate agency.

Call types with potential for cost recovery include those where the dispatcher is required to open a call in CAD, enter relevant information, and coordinate activities related to the call either through documentation (written or in CAD), phone calls, or radio transmissions. Call types with questionable cost recovery include those where

the dispatcher may still open a call in CAD and enter relevant information, but the nature of the call relates primarily to the logistics of comm center operations, such as calls to MIS. Other calls, such as referrals, may not have a clear source to bill to. A breakdown of call distribution by agency and estimated associated reimbursements are outlined in Attachment B.

Unique consideration was given to out-of-area mutual aid (GMU) calls due to the dispatching process and time commitment. Most, if not all the responding resources to non-emergency call types are assigned using a single entry for all resources. Mutual Aid calls in this category differ in that they require a different point of contact and monitoring for each individual resource assigned. For example, a resource request from an incident may have multiple units assigned, but each unit is contacted, dispatched, and tracked individually, even though they may all be under the same CAD incident number. This creates an equivalent workload of dispatching several different incidents. For this reason, reimbursement for GMU calls was tracked by assigned unit, not incident number.

An analysis of non-emergency calls by time of day (Attachment C) shows that over 80% of the calls come in between 0600 and 1800 hrs. This trend also identifies that the non-emergency call volume peaks and begins to decline just prior to the emergency call volume ramping up to its peak from 1000 to 2100 hrs. These trends offer opportunities to strategically enhance staffing in a way that could balance dispatcher workload and improve efficiency while still handling non-emergency calls.

#### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

Staff projects that if calls are billed at the current rate of \$46 per call, CONFIRE could realize total reimbursements of approximately \$274,528 annually based on 2023 non-emergency call volume and type. If burn permit calls were exempted, this amount would be reduced to \$104,558. See Attachment B for breakdown of call volume and cost distribution by agency.

## ATTACHMENT A

### Impacts of Non-Emergency Calls from Government Agencies

#### Background

The following analysis describes each current non-emergency call type and provides a framework for impact measurement as follows:

**Annual Calls:** Total number of calls of the specific call type for calendar year 2022.

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** The average time that it takes a dispatcher to process a call from the time the call is initially picked up to the time when the is marked as complete.

**Potential Reimbursement:** The number of calls of the specific call type that could be billed at the standard per-call rate for CONFIRE (Currently at \$46 per call). Some call types, like GMI-Miscellaneous, which includes records of hospital redirect status would not be considered for reimbursement while other calls in that category would.

**Current Reimbursement:** The amount that CONFIRE is currently collecting for servicing the specific call type. This is not necessarily at the \$46 per call rate, but there is some remittance being paid.

**Potential New Reimbursement:** Potential reimbursement minus any fees currently being collected.

#### CALL TYPES:

##### GHZ – Hazardous Materials Inc

This code is used when non-emergency Haz-Mat resources are requested to evaluate illegal use or disposal of potentially hazardous products. These typically result in a response from a county haz-mat resource or contact of appropriate resources to deal with the call. These differ from haz-mat emergency response calls that pose an immediate threat to life and/or property. In Table 1, the number of Haz-mat calls for County Fire (BDC) includes calls in their jurisdiction and calls in the county that are not in any CONFIRE jurisdiction (e.g. Ontario, Barstow).

**Annual Calls:** 242

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:03:41 per call, 14:51:04 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$10,994

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$10,994

### **GLAW – Law Enforcement Incident**

This code is used when a fire investigator or SWAT Medic is assigned to an incident. Any reimbursement would be charged to the jurisdiction where the resources responded to.

**Annual Calls:** 91

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:01:59 per call, 3:00:08 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$4,094

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$4,094

### **GLL – Loma Linda City Inc**

This code is used to facilitate contact with various Loma Linda City resources (not necessarily fire) to respond to non-emergency requests.

**Annual Calls:** 204

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:04:59 per call, 16:56:19 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$9,384

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$9,384

### **GPH – Public Health Incident**

Any incident where the Public Health Department has to be notified. These include notifications of communicable diseases, emergency death certificates, commercial food problems, re-opening of a restaurant after discharge of fire extinguishers, bee problems, problems at apartment complexes such as sewer issues, rodent/insect infestation etc. and other various Public Health related issues. Because these requests generally

require dispatchers to make telephone calls to the on-duty public health officer, it is recommended that CONFIRE bill County DPH for this service.

**Annual Calls:** 49

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:03:44 per call, 3:02:41 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$2,254

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$2,254

### **GRD – Road Department Inc**

This code is used when reports of road hazards on county roads come into Comm Center. These reports are subsequently transferred to a designated contact to mitigate the problem. There is currently an agreement in place to bill the County for these services. It is recommended that this agreement be updated to ensure that the terms are in line with what other agencies are paying for this service.

**Annual Calls:** 399

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:05:20 per call, 35:29:54 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$18,354

**Current Reimbursement:** \$18,354

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$0

### **GMI – Miscellaneous Govt Inc**

Although this code has been used for a variety of non-emergency requests, over 80% of the calls involve notification or hospital redirect status. This includes any incident entered into the ReddiNet system where a request has been made to Comm Center to poll the hospital(s) for bed availability that is out of our agency/dispatch jurisdiction. As a normal function of the EMS call continuum, these redirects are not included for any additional charges. However, the remaining calls represent dispatcher intervention and are therefore included. For the chart in Table 1, only non-redirect calls are included in this category.

**Annual Calls:** 608 (includes 337 hospital redirect calls)

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:02:44 per call, 12:20:49 annually (all GMI calls)

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$11,684 (non-redirect calls only)

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$11,684

### **GBP – Burn Permit**

Burn permits are issued through the AHJ for the areas where the permitted burning is to take place. CONFIRE is not involved in the issuing of permits. However, CONFIRE dispatch is advised when a burn is going to take place so that 911 calls for smoke in the area can be appropriately dealt with by dispatchers. This requires the call taker to create a CAD incident and enter the details of each permitted burn event. This ultimately reduces unnecessary responses and associated costs for agencies where the calls originate. Burn periods are typically between 0600 and 1200 hrs.

**Annual Calls:** 3,664

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:01:24 per call, 86:21:42 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$168,544

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$168,544

### **GAT – Alarm Testing**

This code is used when a fire alarm system is being tested for community risk reduction purposes. These are generally initiated by fire department employees so that the alarm activation does not generate a false response. This requires the call taker to create a CAD incident and enter the details of each permitted planned alarm activation event.

**Annual Calls:** 184

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:03:07 per call, 9:35:03 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$8,464

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$8,464

### **HELO – Helicopter Resources**

CONFIRE assists in coordinating helicopter responses from private providers throughout the county. When these resources are dispatched to a CONFIRE incident, information is gathered and confirmed by dispatchers and an incident is generated in CAD.

**Annual Calls:** 541

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:05:56 per call, 13:55:38 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$24,886

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$24,886

### **GCC – County Comm Incident**

Any incident where contact is attempted with someone from the County 800-mhz Radio Operations group or the County Network Management Center (NEMAC) about a radio or County telephone problem. This can involve either VHF or 800-mhz radio or a CAD SIMS problem that needs to be repaired. County telephone problems (The County has their own phone system/switch) are any that we might be advised of or occurring anywhere in the County. This includes problems at our dispatch center.. (No cost recovery since these are CONFIRE related calls).

**Annual Calls:** 44

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:16:18 per call, 11:56:58 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$2,024

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$0

### **GFM – Facilities Management Inc.**

Similar to GCC, this is used when there is an issue with a Comm Center physical facility. CAD entries track when the appropriate agency needed to mitigate the problem is notified. (No cost recovery since these are CONFIRE related calls).

**Annual Calls:** 5

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:11:34 per call, 0:57:50 annually.

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$230

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$0

### **GIT – IT Incident**

Any incident that occurs that involves a system or network issue in dispatch (this includes but not limited to CAD or VESTA problems, hardware issues, etc.). The dispatch supervisor will determine what notifications need to be made. If the problem cannot be resolved on the dispatch floor, notifications will be made to our technical support or ISD Computer Operations to resolve the problem. (No cost recovery since these are CONFIRE related calls).

**Annual Calls:** 142

**Average Dispatcher Impact(h:mm:ss):** 0:16:57 per call, 40:07:56 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$ 6,532

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** 0

### **GRF – Referral Incident**

This code is used when Comm Center receives a call that is not within CONFIRE’s scope of services or within the jurisdictional areas served by CONFIRE agencies. The majority of these are calls that are misrouted to Comm Center from law enforcement.

**Annual Calls:** 65



**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:04:57 per call, 5:22:05 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$2,990

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$0

### **GMU – Out-of-system Mutual Aid**

This code is used to track fire department resources that are assigned to out-of-area mutual aid events. This includes strike teams comprised of units from various agencies and incident overhead positions. For most non-emergency call types, any responding resources are all counted under one incident number as they are usually covered under one dispatch. However, mutual aid requests generally require an individual notification to each responding unit, even if they are part of a multi-unit configuration such as a strike team. Dispatchers continue tracking of these assigned resources on an individual resource basis throughout the assignment until they are released, which increases the workload. For this reason, GMU calls are counted by responding unit, with each responding agency having responsibility for reimbursement for their resources.

It should be noted that non-CONFIRE agencies also benefit from CONFIRE dispatching resources as the Operational Area Coordinator. In these cases, CONFIRE must notify the other agency's communication center, and they monitor their units from there. Therefore, the time impact on CONFIRE dispatchers is less, but is still present. Requesting reimbursement from outside agencies for these services is something that could be considered in the future, and could result in up to \$2,300 annually in additional reimbursements.

**Annual Resource Assignments:** 345

**Average Dispatcher Impact (h:mm:ss):** 0:09:38 per call, 55:23:44 annually

**Potential Reimbursement:** \$15,870 (CONFIRE agencies only)

**Current Reimbursement:** \$0

**Potential New Reimbursement:** \$15,870

**ATTACHMENT B**

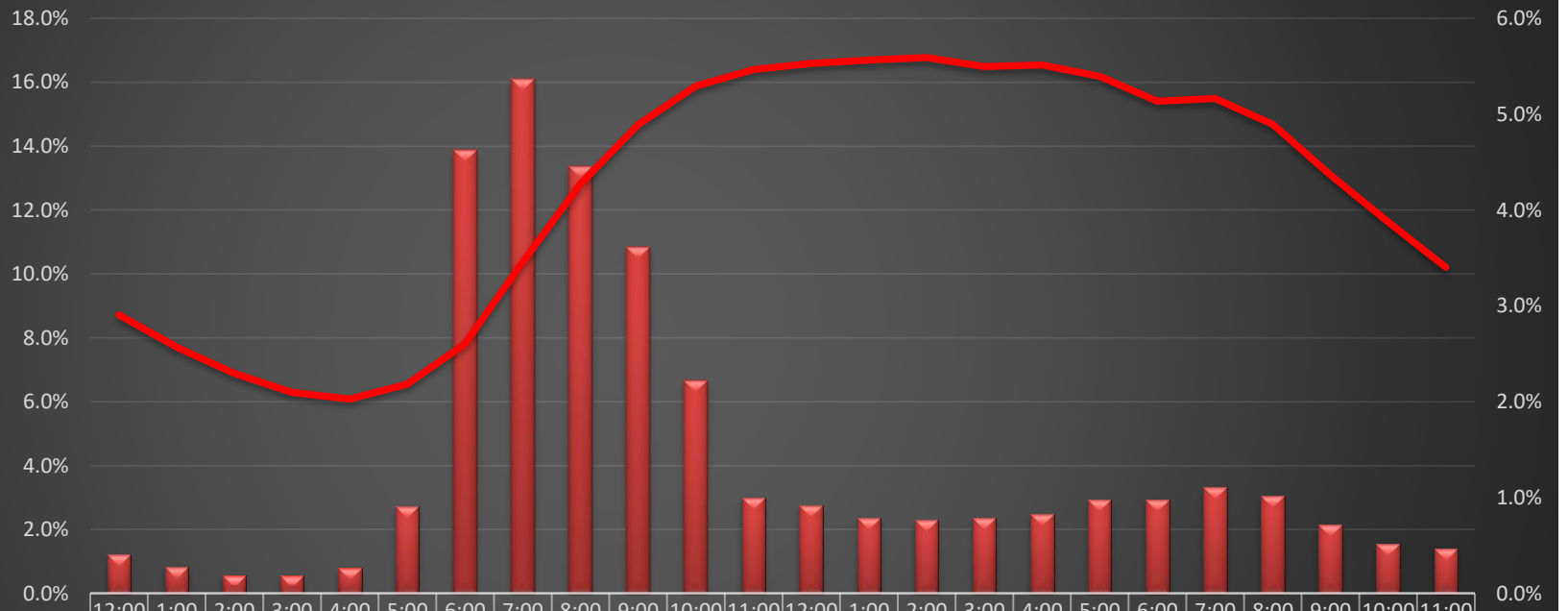
Non-Emergency Call Distribution by Agency

City	GAT - Alarm Testing	GBP - Burn Permit	GHZ - Hazardous Materials Inc	GLAW - Law Enforcement Inc	GLL - Loma Linda City Inc	GMI - Miscellaneous Gov Inc	GMU - Out-of-System Mutual Aid	GPH - Public Health Incident	GRD - Road Department Inc	Helo	Total Calls	Potential Revenue based on \$46 per call
Apple_Valley	3	2047	8	2	0	5	12	-	-	64	2129	\$ 98,486
BDC	103	1328	194	80	0	153	171	-	-	292	2159	\$ 106,766
Big_Bear	0	1	0	0	0	2	14	-	-	50	53	\$ 3,082
Chino	45	10	10	1	0	28	35	-	-	0	94	\$ 5,934
Colton	1	27	3	1	0	4	24	-	-	0	36	\$ 2,760
Loma_Linda	6	0	0	0	204	4	6	-	-	0	214	\$ 10,120
Montclair	4	0	1	0	0	3	0	-	-	0	8	\$ 368
Rancho_Cucamonga	3	9	1	1	0	11	33	-	-	3	28	\$ 2,806
Redlands	4	5	2	0	0	4	20	-	-	0	15	\$ 1,610
Rialto	2	52	11	1	0	15	10	-	-	0	82	\$ 4,186
San_Manuel	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	-	-	0	0	\$ 414
Running_Springs	0	17	0	0	0	5	5	-	-	1	23	\$ 1,288
Victorville	13	164	9	3	0	14	6	-	-	130	333	\$ 15,594
Barstow	0	4	0	0	0	6	0	-	-	1	11	\$ 506
Public Health	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	49	N/A	N/A	49	\$ 2,254
County Road Department	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	399	N/A	399	\$ 18,354
<b>Totals</b>	184	3664	239	89	204	254	345	49	399	541	5968	\$ 274,528

## ATTACHMENT C

Emergency and non-emergency calls by time of day

### Call Volume Percentage by Time of Day



	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM
Percentage of Total Gov calls	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	2.7%	13.9%	16.1%	13.4%	10.8%	6.7%	3.0%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.4%	2.5%	2.9%	2.9%	3.3%	3.0%	2.1%	1.5%	1.4%
Percentage of All Emergency Calls	2.9%	2.6%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	3.5%	4.3%	4.9%	5.3%	5.5%	5.5%	5.6%	5.6%	5.5%	5.5%	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%	4.9%	4.4%	3.9%	3.4%

## Government Calls by Day of Week

