

# Walton County Department Agenda Request

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Department Name: **Walton Fire Rescue**

Department Head/Representative: **Kevin Haney**

Meeting Date Request: **June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025**

Has this topic been discussed at past meetings? **no**

If so, When?

TOPIC: **Updated Auto Aid Agreement**

Wording For Agenda: **Rockdale / Walton updated Auto Aid Agreement**

This Request:   Informational Purposes Only                      Needs Action by Commissioners\* **yes**

\*What action are you seeking from the Commissioners? **approval**

Department Comments/Recommendation: **This is to update the Auto Aid with Rockdale and is beneficial for ISO.**

Additional Documentation Attached?

Is review of this request or accompanying documentation by the County Attorney required? **yes**

If so, has a copy of the documentation been forwarded to County Attorney? **yes**

Date forwarded to County Attorney: **May 21<sup>st</sup> 2025**

Has the County Attorney review been completed? **yes**

If this request involves the expenditure of county funds, please answer the following:

Approved in current budget?

Budget information attached?

Comments: **This does not request funds**

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Purchasing Department Comments:

County Attorney Comments:

Chairman's Comments:

**AGREEMENT OF MUTUAL AID AND AUTOMATIC AID  
BETWEEN WALTON COUNTY, GEORGIA AND ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA**

This Agreement ("Agreement") is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, by and between **ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA**, (hereinafter "Rockdale County") a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, acting by and through its duly elected Board of Commissioners, and **WALTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**, (hereinafter "Walton County") organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia, acting by and through its duly elected Board of Commissioners.

**WITNESSETH:**

**WHEREAS**, Rockdale County and Walton County, Georgia are contiguous; and,

**WHEREAS**, Rockdale County and Walton County, Georgia each maintain and staff a fire department for the purpose of fire suppression, protection, prevention, rescue and emergency medical assistance; and,

**WHEREAS**, Rockdale County and Walton County, Georgia have determined that it is to the mutual advantage and benefit of each of the parties hereto that they render supplemental fire suppression, protection, prevention, rescue and emergency medical assistance to the other party in the event of fire or other local emergency, and to take part in joint training exercises; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is the desire of the signatories hereto to enter into this agreement for mutual aid and automatic aid (first response) pursuant to the 1983 Constitution of the State of Georgia, Article IX, Section II, Paragraph 3 and the Official Code of Georgia Annotated O.C.G.A. 36-69-3 "Georgia Mutual Aid Act".

**NOW THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the parties hereunto agree as follows:

**ARTICLE 1 - AUTOMATIC AID FIRST RESPONSE**

**Paragraph 1.0.** The parties shall establish a mutually beneficial response district within and up to certain feasible boundary limits as designated and agreed upon by the Rockdale County Fire Chief and the Walton County Fire Chief and attached and incorporated hereto as Addendum A and hereinafter referred to as "response district". This response district may be changed to reflect additions or deletions of response areas with the written approval of both parties.

**Paragraph 1.1.** In the event of any fire, rescue, disturbance, or other fire related local emergency occurring in the response district, Rockdale County and Walton County shall furnish such fire suppression, protection, and rescue services as may be reasonably required to cope with such emergency, in addition to the first response assignment, subject to the limitations hereinafter set forth in this agreement.

**Paragraph 1.2.** The level of automatic aid (first response), including the equipment and minimum staff utilized, shall be extended to a level agreed upon by the Rockdale County Fire Chief and the Walton County Fire Chief and included herein as Addendum B.

## **ARTICLE 2 - MUTUAL AID**

**Paragraph 2.0.** The level of mutual aid shall be extended to a level agreed upon by the Rockdale County Fire Chief or their designee and the Walton County Fire Chief or their designee and included herein as Addendum B. Upon approval of the Fire Chiefs or their designee, the party furnishing aid shall determine the actual amount of equipment and staff it will request or extend in each emergency based on the available personnel and equipment and of local conditions at the time of the emergency.

**Paragraph 2.1.** It is expressly agreed that the aid actually furnished may be recalled at the discretion of the Fire Chief or their designee of the furnishing jurisdiction.

**Paragraph 2.2.** It is further agreed that the parties will participate in joint training exercises to promote a basic standardization of operations and philosophy to the extent necessary as determined and agreed upon by the Fire Chiefs for each party.

## **ARTICLE 3 - SUPERVISION**

**Paragraph 3.0.** The furnishing jurisdiction shall dispatch a Chief Officer. The Chief Officer shall coordinate the resources of the furnishing jurisdiction and shall report to the OIC (Officer in Charge) of the jurisdiction having authority over the fire, rescue, disturbance, or other fire related local emergencies occurring in the response district.

**Paragraph 3.1.** When the furnishing jurisdiction's Chief Officer arrives before the Chief Officer of the jurisdiction receiving aid then the furnishing jurisdiction's Chief Officer shall coordinate and give the general directions as to the work to be done. The furnishing Chief Officer will be in command until properly relieved by the Chief Officer of the jurisdiction receiving aid.

**Paragraph 3.2.** Personnel who are furnished will work as far as possible under their own equipment except as provided in Paragraph 3.1.

**Paragraph 3.3.** All general directions relating to the work will be given by the appropriate Officers of the jurisdiction receiving the aid except as provided above in Paragraph 3.1.

**Paragraph 3.4.** The receiving jurisdiction will be responsible for providing gasoline, diesel fuel, oil and other materials as needed for the use of equipment at the scene of an emergency.

#### **ARTICLE 4 - LIABILITY**

**Paragraph 4.0.** There shall be no liability imposed on any party or its personnel for failure to respond for the purpose of extinguishing or controlling fire or other immediate response emergency.

**Paragraph 4.1.** Every employee shall be deemed to be an employee and agent of their regular employer, and under no circumstances shall any employee be deemed to be an employee or agent of any entity other than their regular employer.

**Paragraph 4.2.** All damages or repairs to any equipment or apparatus shall be the responsibility of the owner's jurisdiction.

#### **ARTICLE 5 - CONSIDERATION**

**Paragraph 5.0.** No party under this agreement will be required to pay any compensation to the other party under this agreement for services rendered pursuant to this agreement.

**Paragraph 5.1.** It is expressly agreed that the mutual advantage and protection afforded by this agreement is adequate consideration to both parties.

**Paragraph 5.2.** Each party to this agreement shall comply with the workers compensation laws of the State of Georgia without any cost to the other party.

**Paragraph 5.3.** Each party shall pay the salaries, benefits, and all other compensation of its own personnel without cost to the other party.

#### **ARTICLE 6 - RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

**Paragraph 6.0.** Each of the parties agree to release the other party from any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, costs, or demands for damage to its own property whether directly arising or indirectly arising out of the use of any vehicle, equipment, or apparatus by the other party during the provision of service pursuant to this agreement.

#### **ARTICLE 7 - INJURIES TO PERSONNEL**

**Paragraph 7.0.** Any damage or other compensation which is required to be paid to any employee regarding any injury occurring while their services are being utilized pursuant to this agreement shall be the sole liability and responsibility of the party regularly employing that person.

#### **ARTICLE 8 - NO THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARIES**

**Paragraph 8.0.** This agreement shall not be construed as, or deemed to be, an agreement for the benefit of any third party or parties, and no third party or parties shall have any right of action hereunder for any cause whatsoever.

#### **ARTICLE 9 - TERM OF AGREEMENT**

**Paragraph 9.0.** This agreement shall commence upon its approval by the respective governing bodies of Rockdale County and Walton County. This agreement shall stand automatically renewed by the parties each year thereafter on January 1<sup>st</sup>, unless and until such time as written notice of termination or modification is received by either party at least ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of the first term of any renewal term thereafter.

#### **ARTICLE 10 - DISPATCHING OF ALARM - AUTOMATIC AID**

**Paragraph 10.0.** The dispatcher of the party having control over the emergency scene will dispatch his or her department's preassigned apparatus first.

**Paragraph 10.1.** The dispatcher will then contact the fire department, which provides automatic aid apparatus to the alarm and advise them of the request.

**Paragraph 10.2.** When dispatching an apparatus to a location involving automatic aid, each party's dispatcher will announce that automatic aid is responding. This will enable the Officer in Charge of the assignment to know precisely what equipment the officer can expect to arrive on the scene.

#### **ARTICLE 11 - FIRE SCENE COMMUNICATIONS**

**Paragraph 11.0.** The Officer in Charge of the jurisdiction having authority over the fire, rescue, disturbance, or other fire related local emergency occurring in the response district shall provide specific instructions to the automatic or mutual aid Officer arriving on the emergency scene, unless and until a more sophisticated fire scene communications system can be provided for the automatic aid system.

**Paragraph 11.1.** Whenever possible, the Officer in Charge of the emergency scene should provide the automatic or mutual aid Officer with a portable radio for use during the emergency.

**Paragraph 11.2.** Upon arriving on the scene, the automatic or mutual aid Officer in Charge shall keep his or her department informed of the status of the operation. If it appears the automatic or mutual aid equipment will be needed at the emergency scene for an extended period of time, the automatic or mutual aid Officer should advise his or her dispatcher.

#### **ARTICLE 12 - MOVE UP OR EQUIPMENT - MUTUAL AID**

**Paragraph 12.0.** Each party agrees and acknowledges that it will be the responsibility of each party to provide the back-up coverage necessary for its own department.

**Paragraph 12.1.** In the event that a jurisdiction has dedicated a major amount of fire suppression or specialized equipment on an incident, the jurisdiction may request aid to cover vacant areas by "moving up" mutual aid units into the affected jurisdiction.

#### **ARTICLE 13 - ADMINISTRATION**

**Paragraph 13.0.** It is agreed by each of the parties that for the purposes of liaison and administration, the Rockdale County Fire Chief and the Walton County Fire Chief shall be jointly responsible.

#### **ARTICLE 14 - ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

**Paragraph 14.0.** This agreement shall constitute the entire agreement between the parties and no modification thereof shall be binding unless evidenced by a subsequent signed written agreement.

**Paragraph 14.1.** This agreement shall be the sole instrument for the provision of emergency fire service mutual aid and automatic aid between the parties.

#### **ARTICLE 15 - TERMINATION**

**Paragraph 15.0.** Either party to this agreement may terminate the agreement by giving not less than ninety (90) days' advance written notice to the other party.

#### **ARTICLE 16 - TERM OF AGREEMENT**

**Paragraph 16.0.** Unless otherwise extended or shortened in writing by all parties, the initial term of this Agreement shall be for ten (10) years, expiring at midnight on December 31, 2035. This Agreement shall automatically renew on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each successive year thereafter, but in no event shall this agreement extend for more than fifty (50) years from the effective date of this Agreement. As a best practice, during the term of this Agreement, the parties may periodically review the terms and conditions and determine whether any amendments are warranted.

**Paragraph 16.1.** Nothing in this Article shall preclude termination pursuant to Article 15.

#### **ARTICLE 17 - SEVERABILITY OF TERMS**

**Paragraph 17.0.** In the event any part or provision of this agreement is held to be invalid, the remainder of this agreement shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

#### **ARTICLE 18 - GOVERNING LAW**

**Paragraph 18.0.** This agreement shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Georgia

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties hereto set their hands and seals by their duly authorized representatives on the date and year first above written.

**ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**WALTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
JaNice Van Ness, Chair & CEO

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
David Thompson, Chairman

Attest:

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Rutledge, Executive Director/County Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rhonda Hawk, County Clerk

Approved as to Form:

Approved as to Form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
M. Qader A. Baig, County Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles M. Ferguson, Jr., Esq, County Attorney

Approved as to Substance:

Approved as to Substance:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Robinson, Rockdale County Fire Chief

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Haney, Walton County Fire Chief



**ADDENDUM A**  
**RESPONSE DISTRICT**

Per Paragraph 1.0 of the Aid Agreement, the Automatic Aid Response Districts of both Rockdale County and Walton Counties shall be defined as those areas contained within one (1) linear mile of the county line separating the counties and be considered the feasible boundary limits as designated and agreed upon by the Rockdale County Fire Chief and the Walton County Fire Chief.

All care will be made to maintain current information within each receiving jurisdiction to note those addresses to receive Automatic Aid from the furnishing jurisdiction. Such information may come from any or all the following entities, departments, or groups within each jurisdiction with the approval of the Fire Chief of that jurisdiction:

Fire Department

911/Dispatch Center

GIS (Geographic Information Systems)

Each receiving jurisdiction shall provide the appropriate maps (electronic and hard copy) and other location information to the furnishing jurisdiction and update those maps when warranted by changes in the response district.

This response district may be changed to reflect additions or deletions of response areas with the approval of both parties.

**ADDENDUM B**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

**WALTON COUNTY, GEORGIA RESPONSE:**

**AUTOMATIC AID:** One (1) Fire Apparatus and a Minimum of Two (2) Firefighters  
One (1) Chief Officer

Apparatus to be committed from the nearest designated station in the “response district”.

If the apparatus in the designated station is not available for the call, no other apparatus shall be dispatched.

One (1) Fire Apparatus, one (1) Rescue Unit, and one (1) Chief Officer shall be dispatched on any Structure Fire, Entrapment, or Hazardous Material Incident.

**Mutual Aid:** Request for specific equipment will be made by an officer of the receiving jurisdiction. The response of this equipment will be contingent on the approval by the Chief Duty Officer of the furnishing jurisdiction.

**ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA RESPONSE:**

**AUTOMATIC AID:** One (1) Fire Engine and a Minimum of Three (3) Firefighters  
One (1) Battalion Chief

Apparatus to be committed from the nearest designated station in the “response district”.

If the apparatus in the designated station is not available for the call, no other apparatus shall be dispatched.

One (1) Fire Engine and one (1) Battalion Chief shall be dispatched on any Structure Fire, Entrapment, or Hazardous Material Incident.

**Mutual Aid:** Request for specific equipment will be made by an officer of the receiving jurisdiction. The response of this equipment will be contingent on the approval by the Chief Duty Officer of the furnishing jurisdiction.

**ADDENDUM C**  
**MAINTENANCE OF THE AGREEMENT**

Both parties to the agreement will review the contact and general information contained in the agreement and all addendums annually for completeness and correctness.

Both parties to the agreement agree to meet and have at least one (1) mutual aid training session each quarter and each fire department will document said training with a sign-in sheet and an outline of the training reviewed. These training documents will be retained by each department with the annual confirmation of the agreement.

Each party will keep a notation of the annual confirmation of the agreement in their own records.

Any correction of information in the agreement will not constitute a change in the spirit or intent of the agreement and will not require any additional action on either party to continue the agreement.