

Eastern Will County Communication Center

Policy and Procedure

Subject: Storm Mode

Fire 3.22

If a weather event, tornado or major storm is striking the EastCom dispatch area or reports from neighboring dispatch centers indicate a severe weather event is eminent, the EastCom dispatch center may go into "Storm Mode".

Purpose

The purpose of storm mode is to provide a guideline to improve the communications flow during a major storm or power outage. It also allows the triaging of calls, such that some incidents may be handled as non-emergency or delayed response during peak volumes of incidents. This prioritization allows for the safety of personnel through management of incidents utilizing available resources that will provide the best care and emergency response for residents.

Storm Mode has been developed to guide Fire Department communications and responses ***only during a major storm or power outage.***

A Major Storm is defined as a weather related event that has the potential to impact one or more EastCom agencies causing a higher level of call volume which will disrupt normal dispatching procedures.

Procedure

When a *Severe Weather Warning* is issued for Southern/Eastern Will County;

- Eastcom Director *or designee* will report to the Dispatch Center (unless the incident is limited in scope and can be handled by existing personnel.)
- Siren activation will take place per Weather warning policy
- Code Spear Notification will take place as per current policy

The following personnel may authorize moving into Storm Mode:

1. The Eastcom Director
2. The Eastcom Shift Supervisor with authorization of the Director
3. The On Call Fire Chief of an Eastcom member agency
4. The Fire Chief or designee of the (Eastcom member) Department experiencing the major storm incident.

Once it is determined that the Center will go into “Storm Mode”, the following shall be completed by Eastcom:

1. Eastcom member Fire Agencies and Crete EMA will be toned on their respective frequencies (S4 for Eastcom Fire and Monee Fire) and the announcement will be made;

“Attention all Eastcom member Fire Departments, Eastcom is now in Storm Mode”.

Upon notification of “Storm Mode”, each Fire Agency and Crete EMA will have a supervisor report on the air as Communications Coordinator. The Communication Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with Eastcom via telephone or radio and the dispatching of non-emergent calls.

2. A Smart Message sent to the Weather Warning group, advising a summary of the weather and the “Storm Mode” activation.
3. The dispatcher will then create a CAD (incident) card for each member Fire agency, using the type code of STORM and the common place of STORM. (The common place of STORM exists for each Fire Agency, using the address of each agency’s Station #1).

The purpose of this one incident card is for non-emergent calls;

For the purpose of Storm Mode, the following will be defined as “*non-emergent*” calls and will NOT be toned out.

- Fire Alarms
- Trouble Alarms
- Wires down (not sparking)
- Trees down
- And other non-emergent calls
- Stranded Motorists

The priority calls that are a threat to life, ambulance and rescue calls, structure fires, smoke investigations, lightning strike and wires down and sparking will take precedence and be toned (stilled when applicable).

The original storm mode incident card will be used for the non-emergent situations - documenting the nature, location and receipt time in the comment field of the incident card. The dispatcher will notify individual department Communication Coordinators on the air or by phone to update each of them with a list of incidents to check, when available. (An effort shall first be made to have the Communication Coordinator telephone Eastcom and provide him with a list of the pending incidents)

4. The Director of Eastcom, or designee, will report to Eastcom unless the incident is limited in scope and can be handled by existing personnel.
5. All EMS/Ambulance/priority incidents will be paged and a CAD card created, as per current policy.
6. The first report of a structure fire will be toned as a Still Alarm for each agency and a CAD card created, as per current policy. If the original Still Alarm is active, any additional report of structure fires will be toned with only the stricken agencies tones followed by a Still Alarm announcement. When all units have returned in service from the original Still Alarm, a new Still Alarm tone procedure will start again.
7. At any time during Storm Mode, the Communication Coordinator may accept the responsibility for dispatching their personnel to identified Target Hazards within their jurisdiction.
8. When the threat of severe weather has passed or the dispatch center incidents have reduced to normal volume, the dispatch center will contact all Communication Coordinators on the air and announce that Storm Mode has expired and the center will resume normal dispatching procedures. (Following the “on air” announcement, the dispatcher shall send a CodeSpear Smart Message to the Weather Warning group indicating that “Storm Mode” has expired and the center will resume normal dispatching procedures”.)

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