



CITY OF FINDLAY, OHIO

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Approved by:   
Mayor Anthony P. Iriti

Subject: Emergency Notification Policy – Unusual Events

Special instructions: This is PUBLIC RECORD.

Department: ALL

Division: ALL

Supersedes SOP issued: None

Date of issue: 9 / 9 / 05

Effective date: 9 / 9 / 05

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Findlay to notify and to communicate with the upward chain of command at all times; but it is especially the policy of the City of Findlay to ensure that the upward chain of command is notified timely and appropriately if an unusual or high-profile incident occurs.

The City recognizes that some circumstances indicate the need to respond quickly because of an imminent threat to the safety of persons and property. Proper response, however, includes notification of the upward chain of command at some point early in the development of the City's response to any such incident. When such circumstances arise, it is the policy of the City of Findlay to apply a common-sense approach toward notification, so that those who are charged with making command decisions are informed fully as soon as possible, thereby allowing such persons to participate in the resolution of the incident giving rise to the notification.

It is not the City's intention to micro-manage or to second-guess the actions or decisions of employees and their supervisors on the field; rather, it is the City's intention to protect employees, the City's interests, and the community by insisting on complete and timely reports of unusual or noteworthy events.

City officials are accountable for the safety of the members of the community and City employees. It is therefore critical that the upward chain of command be made aware of incidents that give rise to concerns for safety and otherwise for the community's well-being. No City official should be placed in a position not to know what has occurred in the Divisions, Departments, Sections, or Units of City government. No city employee should withhold information regarding unusual incidents. No member of the community should be deprived of knowledge of the City's business.

The City of Findlay hereby adopts in these unusual or high-profile situations an **Emergency Notification – Unusual Events Policy**, through the use of which employees in the field might arrive at a more reasoned resolution of problem or emergent situations than might otherwise happen.

II. EMERGENCY INCIDENT NOTIFICATION ~ WHAT IT MEANS; HOW IT IS TO BE APPLIED

A. SUMMARY Every Department Head and Supervisor involved with an emergent or significant incident is to do the following:

1. Decide whether the event or incident is significant, important, or high profile.
2. If the answer is "yes", then call or radio your immediate supervisor, advising him/her of the facts.
3. Make certain that the Mayor, Safety Director, and Service Director are notified as soon as possible.

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4. Complete a **triage form**, including the bare essentials describing the vent.
  - a. Follow up after the incident has been resolved, providing information regarding the resolution. **Use the “follow-up” portion of the original Triage Form for this purpose.**
  - b. **Send the Triage form as an attachment to an e-mail to the Mayor’s Office.**
5. Send **copies of reports** up the chain of command after the incident has concluded/been resolved.
6. Schedule a **debriefing session** of the participants, if necessary, to plan for better response, or to forestall future occurrences of such an incident or event.

## B. Baseline Questions

1. **What is an emergency or high-profile situation?** Although difficult to define, an emergency or high-profile incident is, for purposes of this policy statement, one which:
  - Involves injury to an employee; *or*
  - Requires immediate response; *or*
  - Requires significant uses of manpower; *or*
  - Requires significant and extraordinary deployment of equipment and materiel; *or*
  - Involves severe weather or events related to it; *or*
  - Requires the response of more than one City Department; *or*
  - Requires the response of one or more City Department under unusual circumstances; *or*
  - Involves an incident of employee misconduct, on- or off-duty; *or*
  - Disrupts vital City services in a material way; *or*
  - Creates an immediate and significant stress on vital City services; *or*
  - Results on significant damage to a City facility or City equipment;
  - Involves more than the typical response to a call for service, either in the Safety Division [Police and Fire] or in the Service Division; *or*
  - Involves an instance of extraordinary and exemplary effort by a City employee; *or*
  - Is one that the news media has inquired about or is reasonably likely to, given the nature of the incident; *or*
  - Involves a prominent member of the community; *or*
  - Involves a large section of the City, a school, or other entity that by its nature will require more than a typical response for a call to service; *or*
  - Is an incident that the first-line supervisor, in his her experience and best judgment, determines to be of the nature that warrants emergency notification up the chain of command.
2. **Whom should I notify?** The Emergency Notification Policy is intended to inform and to guide the judgment of employees, especially supervisors, in the field. When confronted with a situation that appears to require emergency notification, the supervisor or responding employee should:

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- Contact Police Dispatch if the event or incident is one that requires Public Safety Division response; *and*
- Make certain that the employee's immediate supervisor is notified of:
  - The nature of the event or incident
  - The scene or situation as it is at the moment that the report is made
  - The action that the employee has taken to secure the scene or otherwise to effect immediate resolution to the incident
  - Any other information that is pertinent
- The **immediate supervisor** must inform the upward chain of command, including the Department Head. That notification process may be effected in the manner that the individual Departments have established for such notification.
- The **Department Head** must cause the Mayor and the Division Heads [Safety and Service Directors] to be notified of any emergency, unusual, or high-profile incident. In addition to the information, listed above, which the first responding employee must relay to his/her immediate supervisor, the Department Head must include the following information:
  - The extent of the harm or other effects of the event
  - The City's response, in terms of manpower and materiel required and deployed
  - Whether any other agencies or units of government are to be involved
  - Whether the Incident Command System is necessary, and whether an Emergency Operations Center or similar coordination among Departments and agencies is indicated
  - The possible resolution of the incident

## C. Intra-Departmental Preparation – Contact Lists

1. In addition to emergency and unusual incident preparedness efforts within each Department, every Department is to construct a **current contact list** for reporting emergency or unusual incidents up the chain of command.
2. The contact list should take the form of a matrix or other easily understood form, accessible to every employee who might be called upon to make contacts up the chain of command. The matrix must contain the following information:
  - The call-out list for employees who are on call or otherwise expected to respond to unusual or emergent events or incidents.
  - The chain of command, from Department first-line Supervisor, to the Department Head, to the Service and Safety Directors, and to the Mayor.
  - Land line and cellular telephone numbers, at work and at home, of every person on the Department's contact list.
  - Instant messaging or paging number, if any, of persons on the contact list.
  - Radio call signals and numbers, if applicable.

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3. The current list must be provided to the Mayor's Office staff every 3 months: on January 1; on April 1; on July 1; and on November 1.
4. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that the contact list is updated regularly; and that changes are reported to the Mayor's Office staff as the changes occur.
5. Department Heads are further responsible for employee instruction in the uses of the emergency contact list, and in the requirements of this policy statement.

**D. Exercise of Professional Judgment; Means of Communicating with City Administration**

The City recognizes that persons in positions of authority, whom the City employs as managers or supervisors, are endowed with the power of the City to make certain operational decisions in the field. The City confers that power based on the employee's professional or technical education, training, and experience.

Conferring power to enforce and to manage implies the City Administration's expectation that an educated, trained, and experienced manager or supervisor will use that experience with discretion, based on education and training. Discretion regarding notice to the upward chain of command, and the City Administration in particular, must be exercised according to the guidelines described in this policy statement, and based on the sound judgment of experienced supervisors. It is not the City Administration's intent to usurp authority or to second-guess field decisions; but it is the Administration's prerogative to demand to be informed, regularly and fully.

Because responsibility for events and incidents that involve the City's resources – human and materiel - ultimately rests with the Mayor and the Administration, the need for information flow upward and downward, especially during an emergency or crisis, is paramount.

When an unusual or emergent incident occurs. Share the information with the City Administration *as it is happening*. *Do not rely solely on Triage Forms or faxes or e-mails after the fact. If the incident is important, call or otherwise notify the upward chain of command immediately.*