



Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Accountability at Emergency Scenes

The safety of responders is the most important consideration for leaders at an emergency incident. Knowing who is on scene, where they are, and how their actions fit into the operational plan are the critical elements of first responders safety. First responders working at large-scale incidents must be managed using the Incident Command System (ICS) and a Personnel Accountability System (PAS) in New Jersey. Responders that self-deploy and just show up at an emergency scene can render a PAS inaccurate and endanger all first responders.

The fire service in New Jersey recognized the hazard of self-deployment and supported the Emergency Deployment Act ([N.J.S.A. Title 52, Chapter 75](#)), which states the incident commander “shall determine whether additional fire service resources are required and, if so, shall call upon the members of their local fire mutual aid plan.” This statement mandates fire resources be called by the Incident Commander, and unsolicited responses are prohibited.

However, the Emergency Deployment Act specifically exempts EMS agencies and personnel, except for any EMS unit or personnel that provides both fire and emergency medical services. Also, the Office of Emergency Medical Services does not have equivalent legislation or regulation. Therefore, it is incumbent for each EMS agency to prohibit the dangerous act of responding to an incident without a specific request for assistance from the incident commander.

The Safety Director offers the following model language for EMS agencies:

Initial dispatch procedures

Insert information and procedures for the normal dispatching of your agency personnel and resources

No member of *insert name of EMS agency* shall respond to the scene of an incident, including a staging area, without a request for a response from *insert name of dispatch agency*. Self-deploying of personnel or apparatus is strictly prohibited.

This does not preclude a member from proceeding to the *insert name of EMS agency* station in anticipation of a request for assistance.

This does not in any way preclude a member or crew on an ambulance who comes upon an incident requiring medical assistance (such as a MVC when returning to the station from the hospital) from stopping at a safe location, notifying *insert name of dispatch agency or local police*, and commencing to render aid.