

FIRE DEPARTMENT WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Permit RD&C to better utilize their funding by advising fire departments that the program of mail outs by RD&C will cease effective April 1, 2016 in favor of dues collections being done through the county collector as passed by the 90th General Assembly of 2015. Other agencies such as Arkansas State Forestry, Rural Services new fire station program, Insurance Commissioner's Office, State Fire Marshall's Office, and RC & D dry hydrant program give priority to those fire departments that can verify that they are working towards lowering their ISO ratings and have an approved improvement plan as described in item 5 below.
2. Develop and adopt an Arkansas addendum to ISO 2013 grading plan to better reflect the rural needs of the vast majority of fire departments in the State of Arkansas.
 - a. Under communications give full credit to all departments for CAD GIS/AVL until State funds are available to fund the departments and 911 centers.
 - b. Under communications review operator training requirements.
 - c. Move poultry houses to individual property grading
 - d. Needed service companies determined by the old rural skip rules not 1 per station.
 - e. Count automatic aid personnel to manpower points that respond from stations within 5 miles of boundary, no matter how they arrive or what job they do.
 - f. Develop a definition of automation aide response.
 - g. Credit training under old facilities schedule.
 - h. Credit 7 road miles and 45 miles per hour instead of 5 miles and 35 miles per hour with the use of late model forestry or commercial tanker chassis that will run 55 miles per hour for an initial response of 5,000 gallons of total water on scene.
 - i. Extra Credit of 2 points for 125 gallon per minute penetrating nozzles carried on engines in districts with poultry houses.
 - j. Increase mileage for deployment analysis when using the old training schedule above.
 - k. Drop NFPA/ANSI type requirements requiring fire departments to change each time these organizations change their rules.
 - l. Allow a review of all ISO rules as they become apparent or change over time.
3. All fire departments are advised that they can appeal their ISO grading plan thru an appeal process set up and developed thru the Arkansas State Fire Marshall's Office and the results then referred to the Arkansas State Insurance Commissioner.
4. **This Committee is charged by Act 1032 to develop a comprehensive plan to bring ALL Fire Departments to an ISO rating of class 6 or better for ALL residents in their fire districts by January 1, 2024. That is just 8 years and three months!** To do this EVERY Fire Department in the State of Arkansas needs to be contacted and advised of the program this committee is working to meet the goals of ACT 1032. It is suggested that a written message be delivered to each fire department that would require written

responses to what that fire department needs to meet the goal of ISO Class 6 for ALL residents by January 1, 2024. The information gathered can be used by the committee to develop future funding needs of fire departments who wish to participate in these and other programs under Section 2 of Act 1032.

5. Each department that is interested in participating in the ISO Public Protection reduction program will need a plan developed that will accomplish an area grade reduction. The plan will identify any procedural needs, equipment needs, tanker and vehicle equipment needs, station/building needs, hydrant placement needs with water sources certification, and/or other limitations in advance of funding request. It is the suggestion that this is where State agencies (Forestry, RC&D, Rural Services and others) will prioritize their programs to first fund the identified needs of these departments working on their plan to reduce their ISO ratings.
6. Another organization may be allowed to do hydrant/hailed water type ISO grading to meet the schedule and intent of this program.
7. **Under Section 2 line item 1 of Act 1032 the Committee shall study, review and analyze potential incentives and methods to recruit and retain volunteers for fire departments.** The Fire Department workgroup suggest the committee consider funding for all fire fighters to have as a minimum, their firefighting time be retroactively paid for retirement, accidental life and disability insurance. Potential for funding could be in item 10 below.
8. Another incentive plan could be the setting aside of funds to pay for hours of training, per year, and run attendance using a weighted average system to prorate payments. Potential for funding could be in item 10 below.
9. Each fire department should allocate funds to reimburse a secretary a minimum number of hours per month to keep paperwork properly updated and filed to meet reporting requirements. Potential for funding could be in item 10 below.
10. **Under Section 2 and line item 5 of Act 1032 the Committee shall study and review the financial solvency of fire departments and analyze the impact of an increase in funding to these fire departments.** It is suggested the Committee look to funding those fire departments that have already achieved a hailed water/area grading and are working to maintain that rating. It is suggested those departments be eligible to receive up to \$15,000 per needed engine as determined by the ISO needs evaluation. This cost is developed considering annual pump test of \$200, annual hose test \$700, truck maintenance \$1500, annual repair cost \$1500, extra fuel to train and run automatic aid, cost of tankers and their supplies \$5,100, other cost \$5,000. These cost would have to be supported by paid invoices.

11. Under Section 2 and line item 8 of Act 1032 the committee shall study and review fire departments matters as deemed necessary by the committee.

- a. The Fire Department Workgroup recommends that the Committee establish rules concerning the acceptance or adaption of NFPA rules concerning the 10 year life of turnout gear for use in structural fire and live fire training and any other NFPA recommendations that the State has not officially adopted.
- b. Establish and fund a county wide certification process to assist in fire department compliance with testing, training and certification for grant monies.