

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA  
EMERGENCY SERVICES  
MUTUAL RESPONSE AGREEMENT**

*CITY OF ALEXANDRIA*

*CITY OF FAIRFAX*

*CITY OF MANASSAS*

*CITY OF MANASSAS PARK*

*COUNTY OF ARLINGTON*

*COUNTY OF FAIRFAX*

*COUNTY OF FAUQUIER*

*COUNTY OF LOUDOUN*

*COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM*

*COUNTY OF STAFFORD*

*FORT BELVOIR*

*JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL*

*METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY*

*MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO*

*Current Agreement Ratified by the Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs March 2016  
Updated Signature Page Attached*

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA EMERGENCY SERVICES MUTUAL RESPONSE

## MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

### *I. Purpose*

This Memorandum of Agreement, hereinafter known as the NOVA Agreement, is intended to update and reaffirm the provisions of the original emergency services Memorandum of Understanding, which was agreed to and signed by the parties on December 12, 1975.

### *II. Background*

For 40 years, the Fire and Rescue Departments of the Northern Virginia region have displayed an unprecedented level of cooperation in providing emergency services to the citizens of our collective Northern Virginia community. The provisions of the original Memorandum of Understanding created a framework that has allowed our citizens to enjoy the benefits of a regional approach to the delivery of emergency services, using standardized response protocols and operational procedures that are unencumbered by the boundaries of our respective political subdivisions. This system of automatic mutual response has proven to be invaluable, and this update is intended to perpetuate and strengthen this method of emergency service delivery within the region.

### *III. Parties to this Agreement*

This NOVA Agreement is made for the purpose of continuing the mutual exchange of emergency services between the fire, rescue, and emergency medical service agencies of the northern Virginia jurisdictions that are signatories to this agreement. These parties recognize that within the geographic area of northern Virginia the organizational nature, authority, scope of service and operational capability of each fire, rescue and emergency medical service agency differs and, as such, not every jurisdiction that is a party to this agreement can fully comply with all provisions of this agreement.

With this understanding, the parties to this agreement recognize that jurisdictions are willing to comply with all provisions currently within their organizational capability, engage in mutual response wherever and whenever appropriate and commit to continue improvement toward become fully compliant with all provisions of this agreement in the future.

With this understanding, the parties of this agreement commit to continually strive toward a common platform of operational capability and organizational authority to ensure the highest levels of fire and emergency medical service delivery to the region, consistent with the provisions of this agreement.

The Chief of Fire and Rescue, or other official as appropriate shall serve as the signatory to this agreement.

**IV. Authority**

This agreement is made in accordance with the provisions of Title 27. Chapter 1, Sections 27-1, 27-2, 27-3, and 27-4 of the 1954 Code of Virginia, as amended and 42 USC, Section 1856a.

**V. Proviso**

The parties to this NOVA Agreement concur with the following provisions specific to the exchange of mutual response emergency services:

A. For the purpose of this agreement, the Northern Virginia region is defined as the entire geographical land area within the political subdivisions of Arlington County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, Fairfax County, Fauquier County, Fort Belvoir military base, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Loudoun County, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Prince William County, Marine Corp Base Quantico, and Stafford County.

B. Emergency Services shall mean Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Services, Hazardous Materials Response, Technical Rescue Response, Bomb Squad Response, Fire Marshal Investigation Services, and/or other related types of emergency services. Other services not specifically named in this section may also be exchanged if mutually agreed upon by the parties to this agreement

C. Each party agrees to participate in a mutual response system that, when needed or requested, will automatically dispatch the most appropriate response resource(s) available, to an incident location, without regard to jurisdictional boundary lines.

D. Each party to this agreement shall retain primary responsibility for determining the most appropriate response resources to be utilized within its jurisdiction; however, standardization for common incident types is desirable. For service in geographic areas where mutual response is desirable, the responsible jurisdiction shall confer with the other jurisdiction(s) affected prior to implementing mutual response programming.

E. Each party's Public Safety Communications Center shall maintain direct links to the other communication centers within the Northern Virginia region. These communication centers shall serve as the primary source for a mutual response request. Requests for mutual response may be made by telephone, radio, or via computer network. Each communication center shall also maintain records and reports of mutual response incidents, using their established procedures. Records, reports, and information concerning mutual response incidents shall be provided to the parties to this agreement, when requested through the appropriate method.

F. All tactical units and personnel responding to a mutual response incident shall operate in accordance with the NIMS Incident Command System and all established NOVA operational procedures. Incidents will be under the command of the first arriving officer on scene, regardless of jurisdiction, until command is transferred to an appropriate command officer.

G. Each party shall participate in the development and use of operational procedures to be used during mutual response incidents. These guidelines shall cover such areas as dispatch procedures, communications, apparatus response, tactical operations, medical control, EMS

protocols, incident command, and incident reporting. These operational guidelines shall be reviewed by the NOVA Operations Chiefs on at least a three (3) year cycle and updated as necessary.

***VI. Cost for Services***

In general, a party to this agreement shall not be indebted to another party for the costs of any usual and customary emergency services rendered by that other party in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement. However, in the event of a specific incident where the responsible jurisdiction may be able to recover costs of mitigating an incident, the costs incurred by an assisting jurisdiction may be reimbursed to that jurisdiction if said costs are recovered from the party legally responsible for causing the incident or from a significant event that is approved for cost reimbursement from state and/or federal disaster assistance funds (i.e. a declared emergency under the provisions of the federal Stafford Act),

***VII. Indemnity***

A. All services performed and expenditures made under this agreement shall be deemed for public and governmental purposes and all immunities from liability enjoyed by federal, state and local governments within its boundaries shall extend to its participation in rendering emergency services, in accordance with this agreement, outside of its boundaries.

B. Each party to this agreement shall waive any and all claims against all the other parties hereto, which may arise out of their activities outside their respective jurisdictions while rendering assistance under this agreement.

C. In providing for the exchange of Emergency Medical Services, each party agrees to acknowledge and accept the use of the pre-hospital medical protocols, procedures, and standards of care regularly employed by another party's EMS agency for use by said agency when providing patient care during a mutual response incident.

D. This NOVA Agreement is intended to work in concert with any other existing agreement(s) between the parties, which address issues relating to cooperation of emergency services agencies. Should the terms of this agreement conflict with similar provisions of another existing agreement

between any of the parties, said parties agree to meet and confer to resolve the conflict between the agreements in question.

**VIII. Modification and Termination of Agreement**

A. This agreement may be modified at any time the parties deem it necessary. Suggested modifications to this agreement shall be developed in writing and distributed to each party for their review and comment. A modification to this agreement is approved or rejected by mutual consensus of the NOVA Fire Chiefs.

B. Any party may terminate their participation in this agreement by submitting written notice of their withdrawal to the other parties. This notice shall include the reason for their withdrawal from this agreement. A termination notice shall be provided at least 90 days in advance of the effective date of such termination to provide time for any adjustments in response procedures that may be necessary.

**IX. Date of Effectiveness**

The terms and conditions of this agreement shall become effective on the date that the representatives of each jurisdiction sign this agreement. The provisions of this agreement shall remain in full force and effect until such time that this agreement is modified or terminated by the parties.

**X. Signatures**

Signatures from the 14 member fire departments are individually signed, one agency per signature page, with signature pages being updated as required (usually due to a change in leadership). Therefore, the date may change on the respective individual signature pages, but the ratification date of the Agreement itself will not change unless and until the Chiefs vote on editing the Agreement.

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City of Alexandria

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Arlington County

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City of Fairfax

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Fairfax County

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Fauquier County

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For Belvoir

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For Myer-Henderson Hall

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Loudoun County

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City of Manassas

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City of Manassas Park

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Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

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Prince William County

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Quantico Marine Corps Base

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Stafford County