

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How can I get a copy of a Fire Report?

You must call the Columbia Fire Department at 931-560-1700 and request a copy of the report. The office hours are open 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday thru Friday. Requests for reports by mail will be honored only when payment is included in request. Checks or money orders should be made to the City Of Columbia.

2. Is there a charge for copies of fire reports?

There is a fee for copying reports. Fees are as follows:
Fire Report: .25 a page (Call for pricing, reports vary)

3. What information is needed to obtain a copy of a report?

1. Date of incident
2. Name of property owner
3. Location/address of incident

4. How do I obtain a burn permit for inside the City limits of Columbia?

You must come to the Main Fire Station located at 1000 S. Garden Street to obtain a burn permit. The business office hours are open 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM Monday thru Friday, however, you may obtain a permit after hours and on weekends from on duty fire personnel. Attachment: Burn Ordinance NO. 3402

5. Is there a charge for a burn permit?

There is no charge for a burn permit.

6. How do I obtain a burn permit for outside the City limits of Columbia?

You can call 1-877-350-2876 or visit the website at:

<http://tennessee.gov/agriculture/forestry>

7. What happens if I burn without a permit inside the City limits?

Per ordinance NO. 3402 you will receive a bill from the City of Columbia at a rate of \$45.00 per hour (1 hour minimum) per apparatus, \$15.00 per hour (1 hour minimum) per person that was on the call and any materials used at cost.

8. Why do you send a fire truck to a medical emergency?

As a Fire Officer I've been asked many questions throughout my career. One of the most commonly asked questions is: "Why do we send a fire truck and an ambulance to a medical emergency?" There are actually many reasons to send both, but here are the top five reasons that come to mind.

1. Fire Engines usually arrive first and STOP the response clock. On emergency calls every second counts, especially if it's you or a loved one. That's why we try to work within the Golden Hour, from the time the illness or injury occurs we strive to have the patient to a trauma center within an hour. Columbia's fire stations, apparatus, and personnel are all strategically located throughout Columbia so they can get to all areas in their district quickly. We try to keep our

personnel and apparatus in district and available for a fast response. On the other hand, Maury Regional's ambulances have a larger response area (Maury County 612 sq miles) so they can arrive quickly but usually after the fire truck. In addition, ambulances also transport patients to hospitals which take them into and out of different response areas. Also patients are allowed to request which hospital they would like to be transported to and if their conditions allows, the ambulance will take them there even if it is not the closest hospital.

2. Some Cities such as Spring Hill contract for ambulance response with a private company. This goes back to reason number one, stopping the response clock as quickly as possible. In Tennessee there are more than 700 fire departments both career and volunteer. Although we try to provide similar services, each department operates a little different. This is also true for medical emergencies. Some departments operate their own ambulances while others contract with private companies. Some private ambulances respond from fire stations and others respond from private companies. Here in Columbia we have one station at Spring Hill High School that has a Maury Regional ambulance in the same building through a cooperative agreement. Many times they arrive together at a scene and perform together to provide the best patient care possible to stop the response clock. However, there are times the ambulance is out on another call, and then the fire truck provides patient care and stops the response clock while another ambulance is dispatched from a different location.

3. Columbia's fire engines are staffed and equipped to provide Basic Life Support (BLS) care when they arrive. All fire engines throughout the City have the ability to provide Basic Life Support (BLS) care. So, when a fire truck arrives on scene they can begin assessment and treatment until Advance Life Support is conducted by Paramedics. This also speeds up patient care and improves scene times because we try to staff all of our fire trucks with at least one Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

4. The patient's condition and symptoms are very serious and require extra personnel and an emergency response or red lights and siren transport to the hospital. When the emergency dispatcher answers the 9-1-1 emergency phone, they have just seconds to find out what is wrong and dispatch or notify emergency personnel of the need for service. Usually the patient's or caller's chief complaint determines which units need to respond. Most communication centers answer the 9-1-1 call, determine what is wrong, who should go, and dispatches emergency personnel to the call in less than one minute. That is fast and not all callers are completely accurate with their information. Once the first responders are on their way, the dispatcher can provide medical instructions over the phone until the fire truck arrives on scene. The more serious the patient's condition is the more emergency personnel are needed. It is very difficult to treat a chest pain, shortness of breath, or full arrest heart attack with just two responders from an ambulance. Five or six people definitely help to improve patient care and scene time during these types of incidents. Many times our personnel are on-board with Paramedics working under their direction and providing patient care during an emergency transport back to the emergency room.

5. The amount and size of equipment needed on emergency calls has continued to grow over the years. When I started as a firefighter in 1988, we carried a face mask with a one-way valve and gloves for CPR on our fire truck; that was it, nothing else. However, today our fire trucks carry a vast array of medical equipment that includes a defibrillator, oxygen, airways, and many others items used for BLS on emergency calls. With these tools such as the defibrillator that can many times start the heart back while recording the heart's pre and post conditions that can be downloaded at the emergency room for the ER doctors evaluation. In addition, blood pressures are taken and recorded, oxygen content that is in the blood is measured that can indicate the need for oxygen therapy, blood sugar levels taken and treated all of which leads to better and quicker care in the hospital. Also, if the ambulance responded by itself with just an EMT and a paramedic, getting all the equipment and the gurney to the patient's side would be time consuming and delay patient care. Then loading the patient onto the gurney and getting everyone and everything loaded in the ambulance would be even more difficult and time consuming.

These are just some of the reasons why both a fire truck and ambulance respond to medical emergencies. I am sure there are many others that could be mentioned. In the fire service and emergency medical service, a quick response time and patient care can be the difference between life and death. If we are going to error, we would rather arrive too fast and with too much equipment and personnel than not enough. Someday we may be better at differentiating a patient's need before we arrive but until that time, you may see both a fire truck and ambulance on a medical emergency.

Randy Fox
Training Officer
Columbia Fire Department.