

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

August 29, 2023

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SUBJECT: MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORTING STRUCTURE IN EMS AND FIRE OPERATIONS

This informal report provides information on the role of a medical director in Emergency Medical Services (“EMS”) and Fire operations and shows a comparison of the reporting structure for medical directors between the City of Fort Worth (“Fort Worth”) and its peer cities in Texas and the United States. The following three tables compare Fort Worth to the top 5 DFW Metroplex cities by population, top 10 Texas cities by population, and top 20 US cities by population.

Role of the Medical Director in EMS and Fire

The role of an EMS medical director is to provide medical oversight, direction, and guidance to EMS providers and organizations. Texas is a delegated practice state which allows EMT’s and Paramedics to work under the license of the EMS medical director. Texas Administrative Code 157.14 requires first responder organizations to have a written affiliation agreement with the primary licensed EMS provider, which includes a medical director. The medical director is responsible for ensuring that pre-hospital patient care is aligned with current medical practices and standards. Key responsibilities of an EMS medical director include medical oversight, protocol development, training and education, quality improvement, and research and evidence-based medicine.

Chief Medical Director, Assistant Medical Directors and Staff

The number of staff assigned to the medical director’s office varies greatly across jurisdictions. It is not uncommon to find a chief medical director and a number of assistant medical directors (also physicians) working for large jurisdictions. Several fire-based EMS organizations also use staff completely comprised of members of the fire department. Nurses and ancillary civilian staff for quality assurance, research and infection control were also reported.

Top 5 DFW Metroplex Cities by Population

Analysis reveals 80% of the top 5 DFW Metroplex cities’ medical directors report to the fire chief or city management. The City of Arlington (“Arlington”) and Fort Worth are the only two jurisdictions that do not provide fire-based EMS, however, Arlington’s medical director reports to the fire chief. Arlington contracts ambulance service through American Medical Response (AMR).

Top 5 DFW Metroplex Cities by Population

City	State	Population	EMS Delivery Model	Reporting Structure (reports to)
Dallas	Texas	1,299,544	Fire-based	Fire Chief and City Manager
Fort Worth	Texas	956,709	PUM	Emergency Physician's Advisory Board
Arlington	Texas	400,316	Private	EMS Assistant Chief and Fire Chief
Plano	Texas	285,537	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Irving	Texas	254,715	Fire-based	Fire Chief

PUM – Public Utility Model

Sources:

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>



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Top 10 Texas Cities by Population

Analysis reveals 80% of the top 10 Texas cities' medical directors report to the fire chief or city management. Only Fort Worth and Lubbock have medical directors that report to an outside board. Fort Worth, Lubbock and Arlington are the only jurisdictions that do not provide fire-based EMS.

Top 10 Texas Cities by Population

City	State	Population	EMS Delivery Model	Reporting Structure (reports to)
Houston	Texas	2,302,878	Fire-based	Fire Chief
San Antonio	Texas	1,472,909	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Dallas	Texas	1,299,544	Fire-based	Fire Chief and City Manager
Austin	Texas	974,447	Third City Service	City Manager
Fort Worth	Texas	956,709	PUM	Emergency Physician's Advisory Board
El Paso	Texas	685,434	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Arlington	Texas	400,316	Private	EMS Assistant Chief and Fire Chief
Corpus Christi	Texas	237,144	Fire-based	EMS Assistant Chief and Fire Chief
Plano	Texas	285,537	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Lubbock	Texas	265,761	Private	Board of County Commissioners

PUM – Public Utility Model

Sources:

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Top 20 U.S. Cities by Population

Analysis reveals 80% of the top 20 US cities' medical directors report to the fire chief or city management. All of the cities that do not follow this arrangement, Fort Worth, Charlotte, Denver, and Oklahoma City are structured as a unique Public Utility Model EMS System. For the majority of the largest US cities, the medical director reports directly to the fire chief/ fire commissioner through a fire-based EMS system. Approximately 90% of the population (30.7 million) are served by a centralized medical director in a fire-based EMS system, while only 10% of the population (3.2 million) are served by an outside public utility.

Top 20 US Cities by Population

City	State	Population	EMS Delivery Model	Reporting Structure (reports to)
New York	New York	8,335,897	Fire-based & Hospital	Fire Commissioner
Los Angeles	California	3,822,238	Fire-based	Fire Commissioner
Chicago	Illinois	2,665,039	Fire-based	Fire Commissioner
Houston	Texas	2,302,878	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Phoenix	Arizona	1,644,409	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	1,567,258	Fire-based	Fire Commissioner
San Antonio	Texas	1,472,909	Fire-based	Fire Chief
San Diego	California	1,381,162	Fire-based & Private	EMS Deputy Chief and Fire Chief
Dallas	Texas	1,299,544	Fire-based	Fire Chief and City Manager
Austin	Texas	974,447	Third City Service	City Manager
Jacksonville	Florida	971,319	Fire-based	EMS Division Chief and Fire Chief
San Jose	California	971,233	Fire-based & Private	EMS Deputy Chief and Fire Chief
Fort Worth	Texas	956,709	PUM	Emergency Physician's Advisory Board
Columbus	Ohio	907,971	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Charlotte	North Carolina	897,720	PUM	Medical Control Board
Indianapolis	Indiana	880,621	PUM	Fire Chief
San Francisco	California	808,437	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Seattle	Washington	749,256	Fire-based	Fire Chief
Denver	Colorado	713,252	Hospital	Medical Control Board
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	694,800	PUM	Medical Control Board

PUM – Public Utility Model

Sources:

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>

If you have questions concerning this information, please contact Assistant City Manager Valerie Washington, City Manager's Office, at 817-392-6192.

David Cooke
City Manager

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FORT WORTH, TEXAS