



## Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

**Request By:** Supervisor Bulova

**Question:** Are there fire stations that can be consolidated based on activity?

**Response:** The Fire and Rescue Department embarked on a Fire Station Master Plan in 1988, which developed the placement of future fire stations within appropriate geographical locations based on existing fire stations as well as projected growth and access within the County. The master plan included the placement of Wolftrap Fire Station 42 at Beulah Road and Leesburg Pike as the last station to be constructed within the overall 1988 plan.

While the construction of Wolftrap Fire Station 42 has been delayed at the present time, the Fire and Rescue Department currently operates thirty-seven multi-functional fire stations throughout the County.

Based on the current existing thirty-seven fire stations, response times *per type of function* (engine, truck, EMS, etc.) do not currently meet the recommendations of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1710 Standard.

For example, the standard (and the department's performance measures) requires engine companies to be on the scene of structure fires within 5-minutes 90 percent of the time. With the current resources and distribution, the department is only able to meet the standard 50.43 percent of the time. The standard also requires that a unit be on the scene of a medical emergency with an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) within 5-minutes as well. With the current resources and distribution, the department is only able to meet the standard 59.54 percent of the time. NFPA standards have long been highly relevant to courts in deciding if a jurisdiction has negligently failed to provide adequate fire or emergency medical protection within the community.

Changes in the geographic distribution and/or reduction in capacity of any of these resources from the existing thirty-seven fire stations within the County will result in longer response times for all areas. Consolidation of fire stations in outlying areas, (i.e. Great Falls, Clifton) is even more susceptible as their response times will increase exponentially. Reduction of units would further exacerbate the department's effort to meet industry standard goals for fire protection, EMS response, and safety measures. As an example, NFPA 1710 requires that *at least* fourteen personnel arrive on the scene of a fire incident within a 9-minute time frame to 90% of the incidents. Utilizing all personnel and apparatus that currently reside in all stations, the department is able to currently reach 89.47% of all occupancies in the County within that time frame. While that percentage almost meets the NFPA requirement, any consolidation or removal of apparatus from current locations will cause a corresponding gap in the ability to meet the standard.