

REGIONAL FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

SMART STRATEGIES FOR KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE



Phoenixville, PA

REGIONALIZING VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES

In 2005, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee released the HR 148 Report - *The Feasibility of Regionalizing Pennsylvania's Volunteer Fire Companies*. This detailed and informative document provides an overview of volunteer fire services in Pennsylvania, identifies their common problems and challenges, and analyzes regionalization as a potential solution. Examples and case studies are provided, as well as suggestions for building partnerships designed to increase recruitment, retention, and other operational efficiencies.

Through voluntary mergers and consolidations, fire departments and emergency service providers may become more sustainable.

REGIONAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services provides a full range of vital programs, training, and services to municipal governments to resolve problems at the local level.

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services also offers technical and financial assistance to support regionalization efforts, and continually recognizes successful ventures to encourage more fire departments and emergency service providers to consider regionalization.

For more information about regional fire and emergency services, visit dced.pa.gov/fire.

REGIONAL FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUNICIPALITIES REGARDING FIRE SERVICES

1. Create an Emergency Services Committee, comprising municipal staff and emergency services staff.
2. Plan budgets in one, five, and ten-year increments in cooperation with fire company expectations.
3. Pay fire company invoices as allocated in the municipal budget without handing over cash to company.
4. Consider the overall needs and level of service of the municipality, surrounding municipalities, and county emergency planning staff.
5. Assist fire departments with securing external bookkeeping/accounting support for financial management, including annual tax preparation.
6. Require fire departments to conduct annual and recruit physical examinations.
7. Conduct annual criminal background/drivers' license checks on all firefighters and new recruits.
8. Require that all new recruits and firefighters pass an annual fitness/agility test.
9. Contact the Center with questions.
10. Submit a Letter of Intent to the Center (if needed) to request a study.

FIRE STUDIES OFFERED

- ☒ Emergency Services Evaluation
- ☒ Fire Services Management
- ☒ Fire Apparatus and Equipment
- ☒ Merger Feasibility
- ☒ Consolidation Feasibility
- ☒ Regional Feasibility

Emergency service comes in a variety of forms, from a simple intergovernmental agreement like mutual aid to a complex merger. Other forms of service may include automatic aid agreements or functional, partial, and operational consolidations.

REGIONAL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

The Department of Community & Economic Development's regional offices are the first point of contact for municipalities regarding economic development programs. Our department provides technical assistance to local and regional agencies relating to planning, implementation, funding opportunities, grant applications, and project management. We are invested in enhancing the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians through the revitalization of our cities and boroughs. Contact an office near you to get started.

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

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