



Office of the Assistant Fire Chief

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**TO: GREGORY SUMMERS, FIRE CHIEF**

**BY: DOUGLAS R. CONEY, ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF** *DRC*

**DATE: APRIL 21, 2011**

**SUBJECT: STORM FATALITIES ON APRIL 15, 2011**

I have investigated the actions of our crews on the night of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. As you are aware, Truck 15 was dispatched to a gas leak with a tree on the house at 9206 Cynthia Drive; that is the only information they received on the dispatch. On arrival, they were unable to get to the scene (due to a large tree across Nebling Rd.) and were met by the occupants of 9206 Cynthia approximately one block from the address. Those occupants informed Capt. Dan Calaway of what was going on, and as he approached the address he could hear and smell gas; he immediately shut gas off to both of the structures involved and called for the gas company. He determined the tree had uprooted the gas line and he was unable to stop the leak and asked that Centerpoint expedite due to the amount of gas escaping from the line. While waiting, he advised the house occupants adjacent to the leak to evacuate their homes and advised other neighbors that approached him to stay in their homes if they were Ok until he got the gas leak stopped. The crew proceeded back to the tree in the road and began to remove it so Centerpoint could get to the location of the leak. They were approached by a vehicle and were told the occupants were concerned about their elderly neighbors. Capt. Calaway immediately sent his crew to check on the house on Dryad. HazMat was dispatched and plugged the gas leak prior to Centerpoint's arrival. After Capt. Calaway felt the area was safe, he returned to service to assist with any other alarms in the area.

I have discussed the matter with Capt. Calaway, his crew and Capt. Lampkin and his crew, as well as neighbors in the area and, although they mitigated the emergency they were called to take care of, there are some issues that I determined could have been handled a little differently. I have met with our Battalion Chiefs and instructed them to be more involved in what is going on when one of these large-scale storms comes through the city. Specifically, I have asked that they make sure our companies are doing a door to door check of the residents in the affected neighborhoods and mark each home as appropriate per SOG # 11200 or, at a minimum, keep a listing of what was checked and by what company. I have discussed the incident with Capt. Calaway and, although he did not intentionally do anything wrong, he could have done a better job of checking adjacent structures for damage and ensure that everyone in the area was accounted for and did not need any medical attention.



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I have reviewed the 911 tapes and determined that some of the information that was given to the call-takers was not forwarded to our responders (i.e., several trees down in the area). More specifically, our personnel were not given the information that has been discussed by the media regarding the tree through the house at 9201 Cynthia involving the fatalities. I have talked with our personnel that were on the scene, and all of them deny being told about the tree on the house by either the dispatch center or any neighbors. They did state that they noticed the shed but did not think the tree was on the house and assumed it was in the yard.

As unfortunate as this night was, I do not believe any of our personnel acted inappropriately based on the conditions they encountered that night. I do, however, believe that the changes I have listed above, as well as some specific notifications that have been implemented by the 911 center, should eliminate any reoccurrence of these issues in the future.

DRC:mr