

Berks County Fire Services Working Group

July 23, 2026

Officers: Chair Colin Hackman, Vice Chair Jesiah Newsome, Secretary Blair Miller

The meeting was called to order at 1800hrs with 15 people in attendance. There were no additions or corrections to the previous month's minutes (May 2026), they stand approved as read.

Attendance:

Zone 1: Jesiah Newsome, Josh Young

Zone 2: Blair Miller

Zone 3: Bob Martin

Zone 4: Colin Hackman, Lance Parmer

Zone 5&6: Michael Blevins, Josh Trate, Brian Sierocinski

Zone 7: Jesiah Newsome, Andrew Getka

BCFA: No Attendance

BCFT: Jeff Reinert

BCFPA: Tim Goodhart, Greg Moll

Forestry: No Attendance

DES: Brian Gottschall, Matt Stairiker, Michael Smith, Christina Wood, Philip Salamone

Additional Attendance: None

Communications: None

Zone 1: Nothing to report.

Zone 2: Nothing to report.

Zone 3: Nothing to report.

Zone 4: Nothing to report.

Zone 5&6: Nothing to report

Zone 7: Nothing to report

BCFA: No attendance / report

BCFT: Classes on website. VRT in August Full. Pump I and Pump II are scheduled for August and September. Fire Ground Support starting September 10.

BCFPA: Fire Police Association communicated with DES and requested no further action at this time.

Forestry: No attendance / report

DES: Christina Wood - Testing of geo-spatial EMS dispatching has been making good progress. DES will begin going live with geo-spatial EMS dispatching the end of August with a completion dated by the end of September. When geo-spatial EMS dispatching goes live Fire QRS will change over to time-based responses versus due order and announced as Medical Response instead of QRS.

Director Gottschall – DES has been working with Zone 7 to implement a Working Fire Assignment. This would be an intermediate alarm between first and second alarm. Departments would be able to change run cards to add additional units to the Working Fire Assignment. If changes are not made to run cards the Working Fire Assignment would re-page originally dispatched companies, add the home companies WF designation and add electric utilities if DES is able to determine the provider. The Working Fire Assignment needs to be requested. Additional discussion ensued to add a Working Fire Assignment to Brush Fires. See attached PowerPoint for further details.

Additional benchmark times are now available for use:

- 360 Completed
- Command Established
- Fire Knocked Down
- Fire Suppression Completed
- Fire Under Control
- Primary Search Started
- Primary Search Completed
- Water on the Fire

Field users would need to hail berks and report Benchmark Water on the Fire or Departments using Fire Field Mobile can access Benchmarks via the widget screen

DES is still actively working with Motorola for the radio refresh. Departments should be doing their diligence and looking at radios, pricing and ready to order when negotiations are completed.

Michael Blevins asked DES if they must send out the CAD impairment notifications. Director Gottschall advised this was discussed previously and the field users wanted notification on planned outages and for DES to use their judgement for unplanned outages.

Question was brought up regarding DES's 20-minute checks and if that was time stamped in CAD. Director Gottschall advised it is not intended to be a PAR check timer and more of a

progress timer for the IC. For the 20-minute checks to be implemented IC must be established, and it is only for Structure Fires and Vehicle Rescues. IC must request the checks be terminated.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Good of the Order: Andrew Getka and Jesiah Newsome thanked DES and the CAD Team for working on the Working Fire Assignment.

Andrew Getka advised he overheard field users at incidents operating on the wrong talkgroups and not being able to communicate with Command and asked for everyone to try and be better. Director Gottschall advised dispatchers will advise field users if they hear them on the wrong talkgroup.

Next meeting will be Thursday September 24, 2026, at 1800 hours via Teams.

Meeting adjourned at 1915 hours with 18 people in attendance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colin D. Hackman

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Chair

