



- **Why are fire and emergency medical services (EMS) studies conducted?**

Fire and EMS studies are conducted at the request of a local jurisdiction from the Virginia Fire Services Board, per Section 9.1-203.4 of the *Code of Virginia*.

- **What is the purpose of a fire and EMS study?**

The purpose of a fire and EMS study is to provide an objective view of the fire and EMS services in a local jurisdiction, and to provide feedback on areas that are successful and areas that could use improvement. Additionally, a fire and EMS study provides recommendations on how to improve a local jurisdiction's fire and EMS service delivery.

The intent of fire and EMS study recommendations is to provide broad recommendations for the local jurisdiction to review and customize to the benefit of the citizens, organizations and the local jurisdiction. **Study recommendations should not be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendations.**

- **What is the fire and EMS study process?**

The fire and EMS study process is initiated by a request letter from the Board of Supervisors, City Council or Town Council (i.e. governing body) of a local jurisdiction to the Virginia Fire Services Board.

After approval by the Virginia Fire Services Board, the local jurisdiction will complete a self-assessment questionnaire and hold an initial teleconference with the study team. The self-assessment questionnaire and initial teleconference are used to gather background information and data on the local jurisdictions fire and EMS service delivery, such as response maps, ordinances, budgets and incident reporting information.

A site visit will be held to meet with all relevant fire and EMS organizations and entities to gain feedback and insight into the successes and areas of improvement for the local jurisdictions fire and EMS service delivery. As part of the site visit, a Town Hall meeting will be held.

After the site visit, the study team will compile their notes; complete the draft report, and then a final Fire and EMS Study Report. The local jurisdiction will be allowed to review the draft report for technical corrections only.

Once the final Fire and EMS Study Report is approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board, the study team will work with the local jurisdiction to establish and hold a meeting to present the report to the requesting governing body.

- **Who is on a fire and EMS study team?**

Study teams are composed of two members of the Virginia Fire Services Board, one Division Chief and an administrative liaison from the Virginia Department of Fire



Programs, one representative from the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services, and one representative from the Virginia Department of Forestry.

- **How long does a fire and EMS study take?**

Typically, fire and EMS studies take less than six (6) months to complete, after they are approved by the Virginia Fire Services Board. A fire and EMS study could take long if there are scheduling issues for the site visit portion of the study.

- **Who does the study team meet with during the Site Visit?**

During the site visit, the study team will meet with a variety of fire and EMS organizations or personnel. Below is an example of those that would meet with the study team:

- The Chief or designated representative from each fire and/or EMS organization/department;
- Local government officials with relevant ties to fire and/or EMS service delivery;
- The 911 or Emergency communications center;
- The general public through the Town Hall meeting;
- Where appropriate, select members of the career fire and/or EMS organization/department;
- Where appropriate, fire and/or EMS association, commission or council members;
- As deemed appropriate, members of the local governing body; and,
- Other representatives deemed appropriate.

- **If I meet with the study team, will my name show up in the report?**

Meetings held with the study team are considered in anonymity, in that conversations will remain only between the representative and the study team, allowing an open and honest conversation. Additionally, names are not used in the study report to maintain the established trust that is necessary for an open and honest conversation.

- **Is there a chance for the general public to provide feedback to the study team?**

Members of the general public are invited to attend the Town Hall meeting held during the study site visit. Additionally, members of the fire and/or EMS organizations are invited to attend and can provide additionally feedback during the Town Hall meeting.

- **Can the local jurisdiction change the fire and EMS study report?**

The local jurisdiction cannot change the content(s) of the fire and EMS study report. The local jurisdiction will be asked to provide a technical review of the study, to ensure locality specific information is accurate.



- **What happens after a fire and EMS study?**

Once the study team concludes the site visit and has developed its final fire and EMS study report, the Virginia Fire Services Board will review and approve the study. Then the study team's administrative liaison will work with the local jurisdiction to set a study presentation date. The study team will present the final fire and EMS study report to the local governing body that requested the study in an open meeting that the general public can attend.

After the presentation, the Virginia Fire Services Board asks that the local governing body vote to accept receipt of the study report. Which means that the local governing body acknowledges that the study report was delivered, not that the local governing body agrees or disagrees with study recommendations.

It is then up to the fire and EMS organizations, and the local governing body to determine if, when, and to what extent the study recommendations are implemented. Fire and EMS study recommendations should be used as a guide to assist the fire and EMS organizations and local governing body in improving service delivery to the citizens. As a reminder, the **fire and EMS study recommendations should not be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.**

- **What costs are associated with having a fire and EMS study completed for my jurisdiction?**

Fire and EMS studies are completed at no cost to localities

- **Who do I contact about a fire and EMS study or for more information?**

For more information about fire and EMS studies, please contact:  
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