



Fire and EMS Terminology

If you have never set foot inside a fire or EMS department before, some of the lingo might be unfamiliar to you. To provide you with a little background, below are some commonly used terms and their definitions. Please note that some terminology may vary depending on the location.

Apparatus – Vehicle used in transporting firefighters to the scene of an incident. Types of apparatus include aerial or ladder trucks, engines or pumpers, and brush trucks, among others. In some areas, it may also be referred to as a “rig.”

Career, call, and volunteer – Career refers to individuals who make fire and emergency services their primary occupation. They have shifts at a station and are paid. Call refers to individuals who have a different, primary job and are paid only for incidents that they respond to. Volunteer refers to individuals who respond to incidents without pay.

EMS – Emergency medical service.

EMT – Emergency medical technician. Individuals who are specially trained and certified to provide basic emergency care and life support services before and during transport to a hospital or other care facility.

Engine – This is an apparatus designed for fire attack and is equipped with a water tank, water pump, and firefighting hose. Also called pumpers.

First responders – Individuals who, in the early stages of an incident, are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment. This general term includes firefighters and EMTs.

Firefighters – Individuals who respond to fire incidents and, frequently, to other types of emergency calls such as medical emergencies and natural and man-made disasters.

Fire chief – The head of a fire department.

Hazmat – Hazardous materials. Includes chemicals and materials that are explosive, flammable, or otherwise capable of causing death or destruction when improperly handled or released.

ICS – Incident Command System. This is a set structure for command, organization, and coordination of an emergency response effort. The Incident Commander is the person in charge of and responsible for the emergency response to an incident.

Non-operational – This refers to the non-response or non-emergency tasks of the department.

Paramedic – Highest level of prehospital care, requiring more advanced training than EMT. Trained and certified to provide advanced life support and care in emergency situations, and qualified to administer certain pharmaceutical drugs.

PPE – Personal protective equipment. This includes items such as gloves, eye protection, turnout gear, and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

Rehab – Service provided to firefighters on the fireground that provides immediate medical attention after extended or extreme incident scene operations. It includes rest, rehydration, nourishment, treatment for smoke inhalation, and prevention of life-threatening conditions such as heatstroke and heart attack. Rehab units may provide items and services such as water, food, chairs, cooling items such as a canopy for shade or misting fans, and medical monitoring.

Turnouts – The fire-retardant clothing that firefighters wear to a fire call. Sometimes called “bunker gear.”

SCBA – Self-contained breathing apparatus. This is the device worn by firefighters and rescue workers to provide breathable air during incidents.

Commonly used 10-codes you will often hear on Scanners

- 10-1 Receiving Poorly
- 10-2 Receiving Well
- 10-3 Stop Transmitting
- 10-4 Acknowledgement Rec'd.
- 10-5 Relay To
- 10-6 Busy
- 10-7 Out Of Service
- 10-8 In Service
- 10-9 Repeat-Conditions Bad
- 10-10 Out Of Service- Subject to call
- 10-11 Dispatching Too fast
- 10-12 Passenger
- 10-13 Weather/Road Cond.
- 10-14 Convoy Or Escort
- 10-15 Prisoner In Custody
- 10-16 Pick Up Prisoner At
- 10-17 Conduct Investigation
- 10-18 Expedite Assignment
- 10-19 Return To Station
- 10-20 Your Location?
- 10-21 Call Station (phone)
- 10-22 Disregard
- 10-23 Standby
- 10-24 Trouble-Send Help
- 10-25 In Contact With
- 10-26 Message Received
- 10-27 Complete Record OK
- 10-28 Check Registration
- 10-29 Stolen And/Or Wanted
- 10-30 Against Rules/Reg.
- 10-31 In Pursuit
- 10-32 Is D.O. Opr. Available
- 10-33 Emergency Traffic
- 10-34 Jail Break/Trbl. Station
- 10-35 Confidential Info.
- 10-36 Correct Time
- 10-37 Operator On Duty
- 10-38 Block Road (s) At
- 10-39 Message Delivered
- 10-40 Out For Meal
- 10-41 In Possession Of
- 10-42 Out Of Service-Home
- 10-43 Any Traffic For
- 10-44 Pick Up Papers At
- 10-45 Call ____ By Phone
- 10-46 Urgent
- 10-47 Blood Run
- 10-48 End/Did You Receive

10-49 Serving Warr. Capais
10-50 Stop Veh. (tag 10-20)
10-51 En route
10-52 Est. Time Of Arrival
10-53 Coming By Office
10-54 Negative
10-55 Car Calling To Car
10-56 Meet.....At.....
10-57 At Pistol Range
10-58 At Road patrol Office
10-59 Send Teletype/Comp. mag.
10-60 Assist To Motorist
10-61 Need R.P. SGI On Scene
10-62 Need R.P. LT. On Scene
10-63 Need Bomb Squad (scene)
10-64 Need Crime Lab (scene)
10-65 Can You Copy
10-66 Cancel
10-67 Serving Civil Process
10-68 Legal Advice/Advisor
10-69 Send Narc. Agent
10-70 Send Wrecker
10-71 Send Ambulance
10-72 Send Helicopter
10-73 Open Gate S.O.
10-74 Re-Call
10-75 Are you OK?
10-85 Vacation Watch
10-86 Medical Hazard
10-88 Phone #
10-89 On Pager
10-90 Scramble (code ABCD)
10-91 Tactical Freq.
10-92 Info. Freq.
10-93 Detective Needed
10-94 Send Back-Up Car
10-95 Computer Check
10-96 Radio-Telephone Patch
10-97 Arrived At Scene
10-98 Completed Assignment
10-99 NCIC / FCIC Hit