



Boulder Emergency Squad

Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program Proposal

© 2006 Boulder Emergency Squad, Inc.
P.O. Box 18887
Boulder, CO 80308
(303) 443-4081

Prepared By: Sean Michael
Document Version: 1.1
Date: December 23, 2006

Executive Summary

The Boulder Emergency Squad is proud to have developed a longstanding working relationship with a large number of fire/rescue departments in Boulder County. Likewise, most agencies have strong ties to their neighboring jurisdictions, but unfortunately, much of the interaction between departments occurs only on emergency incidents, rather than during joint training sessions.

The fact of the matter is that each department often trains in its own “sphere of isolation,” only training with other agencies a few times each year. Organizing a training program for a single department is no doubt a daunting task, requiring a great deal of time, money, and effort. Of course, each agency, despite the fact that a neighboring department may be doing the same thing, usually operates its own training program internally, and this fragmentation results in duplication of effort and wasted money.

Imagine pooling the resources of multiple agencies, making all trainings “joint trainings,” and allowing the members of different department to develop meaningful professional relationships. Imagine having access to a large number of experts in a variety of disciplines. Imagine never duplicating the time and effort a neighboring department puts into their training program, never being forced to continuously “reinvent the wheel.” Imagine having all information about your personnel’s certifications, credentials, and competencies immediately available. This is the vision of the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program, and it is exciting to see a number of agencies already in pursuit of this goal.

This document serves to illustrate the potential role of the Boulder Emergency Squad in this program and proposes a financial, operational, and administrative cooperation of the training divisions of the participating departments, with joint support services provided by BES.

Understanding of Requirements

The fragmentation of fire/rescue operations in Boulder County has created a considerable constraint on smaller departments, especially in the area of training. In addition to concerning themselves with day-to-day issues of responding to emergency and non-emergency incidents, recruiting personnel, and handling routine administrative tasks, fire/rescue department leadership teams struggle to provide a sufficient quantity of high-quality, meaningful education and training for their personnel. This burden has prompted a number of agencies to investigate the possibility of creating a “training consortium” of neighboring agencies, and a few departments have taken great strides in pursuit of this end. There are a handful of key considerations and factors that could be addressed in implementing such a program:

1. **Quantity of training:** An individual department, especially a smaller, more rural department, is often faced with the daunting task of making training available in dozens of specialty skill sets. Effective education in even one perishable skill set (pump operations and hydraulics, for example) may require upwards of 10-20 hours each year.
2. **Interoperability:** Personnel from different departments on incidents requiring mutual aid/multiple-agency responses often have trouble interfacing effectively, often due to the lack of opportunities to work or train together.
3. **Quality of training:** Smaller departments often draw from a proportionally smaller pool of qualified instructors, proctors, and assistants. Thus, many have difficulty consistently delivering high-quality training.
4. **Resource utilization:** Not unlike the lack of instructors, smaller agencies tend to find themselves unable to easily obtain key training resources, such as props, tools, apparatus, training facilities, exercise locations, instructional materials, teaching aids, and personnel, especially for staff-intensive activities, such as live burns.
5. **Tracking, compliance, and information management:** It is exceptionally difficult to manage the information generated and necessitated by training frequently. For each course, data must be captured regarding attendance, performance, and topics covered, not only to create a documentation trail for legal purposes, but to ensure staff compliance with educational minimums and established competency requirements.
6. **Current trends:** Many agencies quickly find themselves unable to deal with the volume of information available regarding emergency services training, especially when it comes to new solutions, techniques, and technologies. Too often, they are struggling just to maintain their current system and don't have time to investigate new ones.
7. **Duplication/economics:** Clearly, a system in which each agency needs to develop, implement, and maintain its own training program, despite the fact that a neighboring agency may already be doing the same, is wasteful of time, energy, and taxpayer dollars.

Key Benefits and Qualifications

The Boulder Emergency Squad is in the business of providing essential emergency services in areas where local departments are unable to do so themselves, so coordinating a consolidated training program seems to be a logical niche for BES. Already well-versed in minimizing duplication of services and maximizing efficiency of service delivery, the BES leadership team is poised to quickly and suitably implement such a training program. The utilization of the Boulder Emergency Squad in this role brings a few key advantages:

- BES is recognized locally, regionally, and nationally as having an intense in-house training program, and the lessons learned and systems used internally can easily be extrapolated to a larger consortium.
- BES staff members are comfortable with balancing a large number of diverse training topics and are able to implement and maintain a multi-agency training program without losing focus on the importance of each specific skill set.
- BES is politically neutral and is able to draw from a larger pool of instructors and resources without being confined by political boundaries, inter-jurisdictional conflicts, or “turf wars.”
- BES works closely with a large number of agencies and is able to synthesize the input and ideas of a large number of sources to develop a single cohesive plan.

Solution Overview

In general terms, the following is how BES plans to address the requirements and considerations of a consolidated training program, should they be selected to provide support services for the program:

1. **Quantity of training:** By pooling the resources of all participating agencies, the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will provide a large number of training opportunities each year. Based on a rotating training schedule, upwards of 50 sessions each year are possible, far more than any one department might be otherwise able to accomplish.
2. **Interoperability:** The Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will allow personnel from multiple jurisdictions to work closely on a regular basis, and the communication, workflow, and efficiency benefits will be immediately noticeable on multi-agency incidents. In addition, the program will incorporate and employ the key components of the National Incident Management System, helping the participating agencies to achieve the NIMS compliance status that is so critical for grant eligibility.
3. **Quality of training:** By utilizing instructors from each participating agency, the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will ensure a consistently high quality of education. Instructors will teach in their areas of expertise, and outside specialists will be invited to teach as needed.
4. **Resource utilization:** With a larger number of participants, staff-intensive trainings are more realistic, and because multiple agencies will be positively impacted, better

Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program

educational resources and facilities will be available. The Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will make use of the resources available from all participants, creating a better educational environment.

5. **Tracking, compliance, and information management:** The Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will include information management services to monitor the training and certification status of all participants, as well as make attendance, performance, and compliance data available to agency representatives. By utilizing a web-based interface, available from any internet connection, training participants and instructors will have access to training schedules and personal progress information, and authorized users will have access to a suite of robust monitoring and reporting capabilities. In addition, online educational systems will be available for students to access course information both in advance of classes and well after course completion for pre-reading and refresher purposes. Online-only education options for specific topics are available as well.
6. **Current trends:** Because the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will employ a dedicated staff member, the participating agencies benefit from having a training coordinator available to research current issues and techniques in fire, rescue, and EMS.
7. **Duplication/economics:** Clearly, by consolidating the training plans of a handful of departments into a unified, cohesive program, each participating agency saves time and money by not duplicating systems. The Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program offers a single-source, high-quality solution to the issue of training fragmentation and offers great promise to participating departments and to the communities they serve.

Project Timetable

It is reasonable to estimate that the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program, with support services provided by BES, will require two to three months of planning and preparation time, prior to commencing training. After being provided with input from the participating agencies as to the structure of the schedule, a year-long master plan will be available within 30 days. Additional development of the systems and infrastructure to support the program will require 30 to 60 days. A sample plan is provided in Appendix B.

Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program

Costs

Administrative support to the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will initially be available for a fixed annual rate, distributed among the participating agencies. Enrollment of additional agencies will be at a lower, per-agency rate to reflect the additional cost of adding participants.

Fixed Price Costs

The initial annual cost of the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program (assuming four participating agencies) is \$31,000. Additional agencies may be added for \$10,000-\$15,000 annually, depending on the number of personnel to be served. Annual rates may be pro-rated in the event agencies join the program mid-year. The cost breakdown below assumes that the participating agencies are able to provide their own training materials and training sites.

Cost Breakdown

Description	Expense
Instructor Recruitment (For non-volunteer instructors, proctors, etc.)	\$1,500.00
Information Technology Resources	\$1,000.00
Training Program Coordinator	\$26,000.00
Administrative Costs (For payroll administration, office usage)	\$305.00
Miscellaneous (Fuel, office supplies, mailing, reserve)	\$2,195.00
Total	\$31,000.00

Conclusions

There is a definite need for far-reaching changes to the training program of fire/rescue departments in Boulder County, and the formation of a training consortium addresses the key shortcomings of current systems: quantity of training, interoperability, quality of training, resource utilization, tracking, compliance, and information management, keeping with current trends, and duplication/economics.

Allowing the Boulder Emergency Squad to provide support services for the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program leverages the strengths of BES in the areas of training planning and administration to develop an all-encompassing solution to growing training concerns. In addition, the management and tracking features of the program provide department leaders with the tools they need to ensure that their staff functions safely and effectively. In all, the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program will deliver the highest quality training services to emergency responders, allowing them to better protect the citizens of Boulder County.

Appendix A (Fire Training Program Coordinator Position Description)

This position description is established by the Boulder Emergency Squad (“BES”) to outline the basic requirements, duties and general responsibilities of the position Fire Training Program Coordinator. The position is part-time (approximately 20 hours per week) and FLSA exempt (as an independent contractor). The work hours and schedule are as necessary to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.

This position is “at-will,” which means BES may terminate the contractor relationship at any time and for any reason, subject only to the requirements of Federal and State law. Similarly, the contractor may terminate the relationship without notice at any time for any reason.

1. Position Summary

The Fire Training Program Coordinator is responsible for the administration and operation of the Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program. The Fire Training Program Coordinator shall perform technical and administrative duties required to evaluate, develop and implement a high-quality, cost-effective and efficient training program for the program’s participating agencies.

2. Immediate Supervisor

The Fire Training Program Coordinator works under the direction and supervision of the Chief.

3. Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The primary duties and general responsibilities of the Fire Training Program Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluate the training needs of participating emergency services agencies and develop a master training plan to make available the necessary and required education to participating agencies
- Implement a logical rotation of training topics, geographic sites, and instructors
- Compile curriculum outlines provided by the participating agencies and make course descriptions and outlines available to participants and instructors
- Oversee the implementation and maintenance of a high-quality, cost-effective and efficient training delivery system, encompassing classroom, field, and online educational methods for the program’s participating agencies by scheduling instructors, facilities, and resources and by publishing the schedule of upcoming trainings to the participating agencies with reasonable notice
- Establish relationships with publishers, distributors, and resellers of relevant educational materials and implement a budget-conscious acquisition and distribution plan for published materials
- Prepare classroom materials in advance of training sessions, having been provided with the necessary resources to do so by the participating agencies
- Develop, implement, and maintain a master database of certifications, training attendance, and compliance information for the members of the participating agencies

and make this information available by reasonable means to authorized representatives of the participating agencies

- Design, create, and maintain a web-based interface for authorized users of the participating agencies to interact with the Fire Training Program Coordinator, other users, instructors, and class participants, including automating course scheduling, registration, resource utilization, materials distribution, examinations, and progress tracking
- Exercise discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance, including but not limited to, governmental and public relations; legal and regulatory compliance; evaluation of training facilities and equipment, and implementation of training programs and plans, taking into consideration factors such as budgetary limitations, program participant needs and service requirements, and regulatory requirements
- Continually identify and evaluate new or improved training systems, techniques and methods in the emergency services
- Developing administrative and operational rules, policies and procedures for the BES consolidated fire training program, provided that no rule, policy or procedure is inconsistent with the rules, policies and procedures established by the boards or the chiefs of the participating agencies
- Attend and interact positively and effectively in BES meetings and meetings with other agencies and the public
- Consistently demonstrate positive, effective communication skills with the Board, Chief, employees and volunteers of BES and participating agencies, other public and private individual and agencies, and the community
- Demonstrate analytical and problem solving skills, including ability to collect, integrate, analyze, and use data and information, and compare and evaluate possible actions or courses of conduct based upon such analysis
- Work in a safe manner, maintain a professional appearance, and positively represent BES at all times
- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of BES's rules, policies, and procedures
- Perform other duties and/or tasks assigned by the Chief from time to time

4. Equipment Used

The Fire Training Program Coordinator must have the ability to properly operate or use the equipment necessary to perform the functions of the job such as: telephone, copier, cell phone, personal computer, other office equipment, personal protective equipment, and fire/rescue equipment.

5. Independence Of Action

Work is governed by general policies requiring judgment and initiative in developing and implementing procedures to address work challenges. The employee is provided with administrative direction and review by the Chief and uses individual initiative in establishing more specific tasks and objectives. The worker plans and assures completion of the assignment, maximizing resources, and resolving most conflicts. The Chief may review completed work for attainment of objectives and effectiveness of results. The participating agencies should be kept informed of progress and potentially controversial matters.

6. Working Conditions

This position is primarily indoors with occasional outdoor activities and visits to training operations. Due to the nature of some activities, the full range of physical movements may be required in this position, i.e. walking, running, jumping, lifting, climbing. As a result, the worker is exposed to a wide variety of potential safety hazards. Supervisory and administrative duties will require at times working in a standard office environment. Travel by automobile may be required to attend meetings or to coordinate the program's activities with participating agencies.

7. Qualifications:

Skills/Abilities/Knowledge

- Ability to fulfill all essential duties and responsibilities above
- Knowledge of fire/rescue service training techniques, skill sets, and job requirements
- Ability to prepare clear written reports and project plans
- Skilled in operation of equipment necessary to perform functions of the job
- Ability to work flexible schedule, including working evenings, weekends, and holidays as required
- Ability to maintain accurate cost, credential, attendance, and other records
- Ability to supervise, direct, oversee, train, review and evaluate the work of others
- Ability to follow written and oral instructions
- Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with volunteers, employees, subordinates, other supervisors, and the public, including members of BES and participating agencies
- Ability to coordinate programs with other divisions, departments and agencies
- Ability to develop and administer program budget, prepare clear and concise reports, logs, and files
- Ability to read and interpret detailed plans

Education

- High school diploma or GED
- Associate's Degree or higher in Fire Science, Public Administration, Applied Technology, Information Systems, or similar field OR Bachelor's Degree in any field
- Current and valid certification as an Emergency Medical Technician-Basic or higher in the State of Colorado

Experience

- Be a member of BES in good standing at the rescuer or support level
- Have at least one year of applicable experience in emergency services or fire/rescue
- Demonstrated success in implementation and maintenance of web-based e-learning tools (WebCT, Blackboard, Blueboard, Claroline, or similar)
- Demonstrated ability to design, build, and utilize relational database tools (MS SQL, MySQL, OpenBase, Oracle, or similar)
- Demonstrated ability to publish dynamic database content in a user-friendly, web-based format, including leveraging effective access control, privileging, and automation functions (FMIWP, PHP, ASP.NET)

Boulder County Consolidated Fire Training Program

Appendix B (Example of a Possible Training Rotation)

January 2007						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Structural (GH)		Wildland (4M)			Practical (SS)
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Structural (SS)		Wildland (4M)			Practical (GH)
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Structural (4M)		Wildland (BM)			Practical (4M)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Structural (SL)		Wildland (BM)			Practical (BM)
28	29	30	31			
	Structural (GH)		Rescue (4M)			

February 2007						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
						Practical (SL)
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Structural (GH)		Wildland (4M)			Practical (SS)
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Structural (SS)		Wildland (BM)			Practical (GH)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Structural (4M)		Wildland (BM)			Practical (4M)
25	26	27	28			
	Structural (SL)		Rescue (SL)			

March 2007						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
						Practical (BM)
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Structural (GH)		Wildland (4M)			Practical (SL)
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Structural (SS)		Wildland (4M)			Practical (SS)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Structural (4M)		Wildland (BM)			Practical (GH)
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	Structural (SL)		Rescue (GH)			Practical (BM)