

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2020



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## SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE AND CHESAPEAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT BEGIN AUTOMATIC AID PROGRAM

SUFFOLK, VA (September 2, 2020) We are pleased to announce the beginning of an automatic aid program between Suffolk Fire & Rescue and the Chesapeake Fire Department. This program is building on the successes of an existing automatic aid agreement between the Fire Departments of Chesapeake, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach. Suffolk and Chesapeake have shared resources for years to cover bordering responses from Route 58 near the Hampton Roads Airport, to Churchland and Northern Suffolk areas.

We would like to invite the media to attend a Joint Press Conference scheduled for **Thursday, September 3, 2020, at 11:30 a.m.** at Suffolk Fire Station 5, 3901 Bridge Road, Suffolk, VA 23435 to formalize this program. Speakers include Mayor Linda T. Johnson and Mayor Rick West, as well as Chief Michael Barakey and Chief Ed Elliott. Representatives from each Department will also be available to answer questions.

The automatic aid agreement will enhance the structure fire response and reduce response times to bordering areas by having resources automatically dispatched without the delay caused when either Department has to request resources. Predefined locations along the Suffolk/Chesapeake border will trigger a response

from both Cities, thereby placing critical resources on the scene of an emergency quicker.

Over the past year, firefighters from both Departments participated in live-fire training at the Virginia Beach Fire Training Center. During these evolutions, Departments worked to streamline communication and fireground tactics in preparation for automatic aid responses. Fire administrators also identified call types, developed new dispatching practices, and shared policies to ensure firefighters have the tools needed to work as one team.

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