

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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**BULLETIN NO. 66**

**AUGUST 2006 (Revised)**

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Bulletin No. 66 revises and replaces Old Bulletin No. 58 issued March 1986.

**EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY FOR HOSPITALS**

As the result of an agreement with the District of Columbia Hospital Association, the FEMS Department has implemented a policy to supply water on an emergency basis to various hospitals in the District of Columbia in the event there is an interruption to their domestic water supply for an extended period of time.

The extended loss of water to a hospital would constitute an extreme emergency, endangering the lives of the patients being treated there. Hospitals need as much as 500 - 1000 gallons of water per minute to operate life support equipment such as suction devices and pumps, as well as heating and cooling equipment and toilet facilities. Water supplied through this medium will not be used for drinking purposes due to the possibility of contamination.

Hospitals participating in this program will install a 2 ½" gated National Standard Fire Thread female intake coupling to their existing water service. The coupling will be located inside of the hospital so that it will not be easily accessible to unauthorized personnel. The coupling will have an intake gauge attached and a placard over the connection stating the correct intake pressure needed for adequate supply.

The hospital Administrator, acting Administrator or the Chief Engineer will be the only persons authorized to request the FEMS Department to supply emergency water to the hospital. An emergency of this nature would require the presence of the Administrator at the hospital regardless of the hour. Therefore, the Administrator would either be on the scene or enroute for the purpose of verification of the request.

The hospital in need of water will call the Office of Unified Communications and give the Watch Commander all available information regarding the problem.

The Watch Commander will notify the nearest in-service Battalion Fire Chief of the need for emergency water at the hospital. The Battalion Fire Chief will go "On-the-Air", proceed to the hospital and consult with the Administrator, acting Administrator or Chief Engineer regarding the problem. After consultation, the Battalion Fire Chief will make a determination as to the degree of assistance needed from the FEMS Department. If necessary, he/she will notify the Office of Unified Communications to dispatch the necessary companies to supply water to the hospital from the nearest fire hydrant.

Considering the risk of possibly contaminating the hospital's water supply, which could adversely affect the health of the patients, visitors and employees, the Battalion Fire Chief on the scene shall verify the authenticity of the request to supply emergency water with the hospital Administrator, acting Administrator or the Chief Engineer before allowing the companies to connect their hoses to the emergency water supply intake coupling. If confirmation of the request cannot be obtained personally from one of the above hospital officials, the Battalion Fire Chief shall place the companies back in service and return to quarters.

To minimize the possibility of contaminating the hospital's water supply, all FEMS Department hoses which are to be used to supply the water shall be flushed for a full five (5) minutes before being connected to the hospital intake coupling. During periods of freezing temperatures, consideration shall be given to the direction of the flow of water while flushing hoses. If possible, the water should be flushed as close to the curb as possible or down a sewer to prevent the accumulation of ice on the street. Salt or sand trucks may have to be requested at the same time the companies are dispatched to the hospital.

Remember, companies shall not attach supply lines to any connection at the hospital unless it is clearly marked that it is to be used by the FEMS Department to supply emergency water to the building. The connection will be located inside of the hospital, placarded to indicate the proper intake pressure needed and the coupling will have an intake gauge attached.

Members shall use care to prevent unnecessary water damage to the interior of the hospital and its grounds.