



Silver Lake Fire Department  
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[www.silverlakefire.org](http://www.silverlakefire.org)

March 5, 2014

To: Silver Lake Village Board

From: Andrew D. McFarlane, Fire Chief

Re: Incident on March 4, 2014

Yesterday, March 4, 2014 Silver Lake Fire, Silver Lake Rescue along with the preexisting Automatic Response (ARA) was dispatched for a possible structure fire on Depot St at 1755 hrs. Initially Officer Kirwin was on scene with SLRS arriving shortly after. Prior to SLFD engine 6118 arriving on scene, a determination was made by a SLRS EMT that the ARA response was not needed.

I have 6 fire fighters that were on the call asking how a person or persons that aren't trained as fire fighters can make the determination to stand down our mutual aid from other departments. This being done creates a liability to me and my fire fighters. Fortunately the incident wasn't as serious as initially thought. My concern and the members of this department's concern is the fact that it isn't SLRS's place to make a determination of how or what responds to a fire call. We aren't allowed to make any decisions on patient care for medical calls even though some of our members responding to those calls have the same level of training or higher.

From this point forward, Silver Lake Rescue is not to stand down any fire units from responding to emergency calls. This was also put forth by the Emergency Government Committee in 2012 because of the same situations. Based on Incident Command, the Fire Chief is the person in charge of emergency incidents in all municipalities. I understand that most Fire Chiefs do not have a medical background. I do yet I don't tell Silver Lake Rescue how to do their job and how or when to respond on calls.

After having discussions with some of the responding agencies, there was concern as to how a private ambulance could make a determination as to who responds to the scene of a fire call in our village. I assured them that I would look into the situation. I spoke with Police Chief Kingsly and he read the report created by Officer Kirwin which stated that the fire was out upon arrival. That is fine, and I understand the fact that our engine would be on scene shortly but, we have an ARA set up for a reason. Worst case scenario is that they go back to quarters because there wasn't a fire. Where part of my concern comes in is that even though it was deemed a stove fire, fire extends into the walls and can spread to double in size every minute. We were fortunate that we didn't clear based on radio traffic and something worse happened.

I am concerned about this type of actions taking place and am not “throwing stones” or “trying to stir the pot”. All I ask is that I am allowed to do my job and to let my officers do their jobs. That is what they go to school for.

If you have any questions regarding this matter please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

*Andrew D. McFarlane*

Chief Andrew D. McFarlane, NREMT-P  
Silver Lake Fire Department