Name: _____ Date: _____

Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Circle group

A big fire can be too much for one fire station. There may not be enough trucks or firefighters. Small towns face this most often. They may own only a couple of engines. Many use a plan called mutual aid. It is a written agreement. Neighboring fire departments promise to help each other.

Here is how it might go. A fire starts in a big barn at the edge of town. The dispatcher answers emergency calls. She sends the local engine right away. The crew arrives and sees the fire is big. The officer in charge asks the dispatcher to call for help. Soon engines and water tankers from nearby towns race to the scene.

The helpers do not just do whatever they like. Someone from the local department stays in charge. Every crew knows its job. The same signals and plans for everyone prevent confusion.

Mutual aid is a good bargain for all the towns. A department that sends a truck today may need one tomorrow. It costs less than owning many engines that are rarely used. A fire near the town line can get the closest help, even if the nearest station is in another town.

Questions

1. What is mutual aid?

_____

_____

2. What does a dispatcher do?

_____

_____

3. Who stays in charge when helpers arrive?

_____

_____

4. Why do small towns often need mutual aid?

_____

_____

5. Why must every crew use the same signals and plans?

_____

_____

6. Why is mutual aid a good bargain for all the towns?

_____

_____

Words to know

mutual: shared by two or more groups
dispatcher: the person who answers emergency calls and sends help
agreement: a promise that people make to each other
tankers: large trucks that carry water
confusion: a mixed-up feeling when no one knows what to do

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Triangle group

When a big fire breaks out, one fire station may not have enough trucks or firefighters to handle it. Smaller towns have this problem most often, since they may only own a couple of engines. Many solve it with a plan called mutual aid, a written agreement in which neighboring fire departments promise to help each other.

Here is how it might work. A fire starts in a large barn at the edge of town. The dispatcher, the person who answers emergency calls, sends the local engine at once. As soon as the crew arrives and sees how big the fire is, the officer in charge asks the dispatcher to call for help. Soon, engines and water tankers from nearby towns are racing toward the scene.

The helpers do not just show up and do whatever they like. Someone from the local department stays in charge of the whole scene, so that every crew knows its job. Using the same signals and plans for everyone prevents confusion.

Mutual aid is a bargain that works for all the towns. A department that sends a truck today may need one tomorrow. It costs less than each town owning a huge number of engines it rarely uses. It also means that a fire near the town line can get the closest help, even if the nearest station belongs to another town.

Questions

1. What is mutual aid?

_____

_____

2. What does a dispatcher do?

_____

_____

3. Who stays in charge of the scene when helpers arrive?

_____

_____

4. Why do smaller towns often need mutual aid?

_____

_____

5. Why does it matter that every crew uses the same signals and plans?

_____

_____

6. Why is mutual aid called a bargain that works for all the towns?

_____

_____

Words to know

mutual: shared by two or more groups
dispatcher: the person who answers emergency calls and sends help
agreement: a promise that people make to each other
tankers: large trucks that carry water
confusion: a mixed-up feeling when no one knows what to do

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Square group

When a large fire breaks out, a single fire station may lack the trucks or the firefighters needed to handle it. Smaller towns encounter this difficulty most often, since they may own only a couple of engines. Many of them address it through a plan called mutual aid, a written agreement in which neighboring fire departments promise to assist one another.

Consider how it might unfold. A fire begins in a large barn at the edge of town. The dispatcher, the person who answers emergency calls, sends the local engine immediately. As soon as the crew arrives and judges how big the fire is, the officer in charge asks the dispatcher to summon reinforcements. Before long, engines and water tankers from nearby towns are speeding toward the scene.

The helpers do not simply arrive and act as they please. Someone from the local department remains in command of the entire scene, so that every crew understands its assignment. Relying on the same signals and plans for everyone prevents confusion.

Mutual aid is a bargain that benefits every town involved. A department that sends a truck today may need one tomorrow, and the arrangement costs far less than each town owning a huge number of engines it seldom uses. It also means that a fire near the town line can receive the closest help, even when the nearest station belongs to another town.

Questions

1. How is mutual aid described?

_____

_____

2. What is the job of a dispatcher?

_____

_____

3. Who remains in command of the scene once helpers arrive?

_____

_____

4. Why do smaller towns encounter this difficulty most often?

_____

_____

5. Why does it matter that every crew relies on the same signals and plans?

_____

_____

6. Why is mutual aid called a bargain that benefits every town?

_____

_____

Words to know

mutual: shared by two or more groups
dispatcher: the person who answers emergency calls and sends help
agreement: a promise that people make to each other
tankers: large trucks that carry water
confusion: a mixed-up feeling when no one knows what to do

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Easier · 198 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.1

1. A written agreement where nearby fire departments promise to help each other.
2. Answers emergency calls and sends help.
3. Someone from the local department.
4. They may own only a couple of engines.
5. It prevents confusion at the fire.
6. A town that sends help today may need help tomorrow.

Triangle: Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

This passage · 228 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.5

1. A written agreement in which neighboring fire departments promise to help each other.
2. Answers emergency calls and sends help.
3. Someone from the local department.
4. They may only own a couple of engines.
5. It prevents confusion at the fire.
6. A town that sends help today may need help tomorrow.

Square: Fire Trucks That Cross the Town Line

Harder · 232 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.8

1. A written agreement in which neighboring fire departments promise to assist one another.
2. To answer emergency calls and send help.
3. Someone from the local department.
4. They may own only a couple of engines.
5. It prevents confusion at the fire.
6. A department that sends a truck today may need one tomorrow.