

**SCOPE:**

With the wide array of emergency incident scenes our personnel respond to, it is imperative to initiate a system to bring organization to chaos. The purpose of an Incident Command System is to provide structure and coordination to the management of emergency incident operations in order to provide for the safety and health of the personnel involved in those activities. The Incident Command System should be used at all emergency situations. It should also be applied to drills, exercises, and other situations that involve hazards similar to those encountered at actual emergency incidents, and to simulated incidents that are conducted for training and familiarization purposes.

**PROCEDURE:**

**1. Command Procedures are designed to:**

- 1.1. Fix the responsibility for Command on a certain individual or unified team through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies and officers.
- 1.2. Ensure that a strong, direct and visible Command will be established from the onset of the incident.
- 1.3. Establish an effective framework outlining the activities and responsibilities assigned to Command and other individuals operating within the Incident Command System.
- 1.4. Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning and decision-making.
- 1.5. Provide a system for the orderly transfer of Command to subsequent arriving officers.
- 1.6. Ensure a seamless transition from a Type 5 incident to a Type 4, 3, 2, or 1.

**2. Roles and Responsibilities within the Incident Command System**

**2.1. Senior Chief Officers (Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, or Assistant Chief)**

- 2.1.1. Occupy the position of Senior Advisor (Incident Advisor) on the Command Team (Incident Advisory Team) when appropriate.
- 2.1.2. Occupy the position of Incident Commander (IC) when appropriate.
- 2.1.2. Occupy the position of Division or Group Supervisor when appropriate

**2.2. Battalion Chiefs**

- 2.2.1. Occupy the position of Incident Commander (IC) when appropriate.
- 2.2.2. Occupy the position of Division or Group Supervisor when appropriate
- 2.2.3. Manage companies and supervise company officers.

### **2.3. Company Officers (Captains)**

- 2.3.1.** Manage task level activities and supervise firefighters.
- 2.3.2.** Occupy the position of Division or Group Supervisor when appropriate.
- 2.3.3.** Occupy the position of IC when appropriate.

### **3. Responsibilities of Command**

The Incident Commander is responsible for the completion of the tactical objectives. The tactical objectives (listed in order of priority) and their corresponding benchmarks are:

- 3.1.** Address life safety. This objective is often best accomplished by removing the hazard. Controlling the fire improves tenability for potential victims and increases the safety of personnel working in the hazard zone (Fire Control). Support fire attack with a systematic search. (Primary search and Secondary Search)
- 3.2** Stabilize the incident. (Fire Out)
- 3.3.** Conserve property. (Loss Stop)
- 3.4.** Provide for the safety, accountability and welfare of personnel. This priority is ongoing throughout the incident.
- 3.5.** Stabilize Customer

ICS is used to facilitate the completion of the tactical objectives. The IC drives the Incident Command System towards the completion of the tactical objectives by building a Command structure that matches these objectives and fits with the incident. The functions of Command define standard activities that are performed by the IC to achieve the tactical objectives.

### **4. Functions of Command**

The Functions of Command include:

- 4.1.** Assume and announce Command and establish an effective initial command position (Command Post).
- 4.2.** Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up).
- 4.3.** Identify the incident strategy, develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) and assign companies and personnel consistent with plans and standard operating procedures.
- 4.4.** Initiate, maintain and control effective incident communications.
- 4.5.** Provide and manage a steady, adequate and timely stream of appropriate resources.
- 4.6.** Develop an effective incident organization using Groups/Divisions to decentralize and delegate functional and geographic responsibilities.

- 4.7. Review and revise (as needed) the strategy to keep the IAP current.
- 4.8. Provide for the continuity, transfer and termination of Command.

The IC is responsible for all of these functions. As Command is transferred, so is the responsibility for these functions. The first six (6) functions must be addressed immediately from the initial assumption of Command.

## **5. Establishing Command**

The first unit or member to arrive at the scene of a multiple unit response (3 or more) SHALL assume command of the incident. The initial IC shall remain in Command until Command is transferred, or the incident is stabilized, and Command is terminated. Examples would include:

- 5.1. Structure fires
- 5.2. Motor vehicle collisions requiring more than two units (this includes air medical resources)
- 5.3. Mass Casualty Incidents
- 5.4. Any incident requiring technical rescue
- 5.5. Hazardous materials incidents
- 5.6. One- or two-unit responses that are not going to escalate beyond the commitment of these resources do not require the first arriving officer to assume Command. The first arriving officer or unit will, however, remain responsible for any needed Command functions. Examples would include:
  - 5.6.1 Single unit responses
  - 5.6.2 Fire alarms (single unit)
  - 5.6.3 Public Assists
  - 5.6.4 EMS incidents requiring only one or two units

The first arriving unit initiates the Command process by performing a scene size-up and giving an initial radio report.

## **6. Size-up and Initial Radio Report (IRR)**

The person assuming Command shall perform a size-up of the incident and transmit a brief initial radio report including:

### **7. Fire Initial Radio Report:**

- 7.1. Clear the assigned channel.
- 7.2. Unit identification, location's address and on which side.
- 7.3. Building(s) will be labeled with the following designations (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta).
- 7.4. Building Occupancy / Number of Stories

- 7.4.1. Single Family Residence
  - 7.4.2. Duplex / Quadplex
  - 7.4.3. Apartment Building (small, medium or large / can also just say the number of units).
  - 7.4.4. Hotel (small, medium or large / can also just say the number of units).
  - 7.4.5. Strip Mall (small, medium or large / can also just say the number of units / configuration).
  - 7.4.6. Office Complex (small, medium or large / can also just say the number of units).
  - 7.4.7. Big Box Retail store (ex: Wal Mart, Target, Lowes etc..).
  - 7.4.8. Specialized / Other (simply state the name and they will know what you mean. Ex: metal shed).
- 8. Size should be addressed according to the Blue Card recommendation of the coverage from a 200 foot pre-connected hose line.**
- 8.1. Small- 100% coverage with a 200 ft preconnect
  - 8.2. Medium- 75% coverage with a 200 ft preconnect
  - 8.3. Large- 50% coverage with a 200 ft preconnect
  - 8.4. Mega- 25% or less coverage with a 200 ft preconnect
- 9. Roof (Only three types and describe if necessary)**
- 9.1. Flat
  - 9.2. Pitched (Tile, Asphalt Shingle, Metal)
  - 9.3. Other (Just say it)
- 10. Condition (There are only three conditions you can have showing)**
- 10.1. Nothing Showing
  - 10.2. Smoke Showing
    - 10.2.1. Black
    - 10.2.2. Grey
    - 10.2.3. Brown
    - 10.2.4. White
  - 10.3 Smoke and Fire Showing

**11. You will only have something showing from six areas**

- 11.1. Alpha, Bravo, Charlie or Delta
- 11.2. Front of structure
- 11.3. Rear of structure
- 11.4. Roof of structure
- 11.5. Eaves of structure
- 11.6. Gable ends of structure

**12. Assume Command**

**13. Name Command (ex: Second St. Command)**

**14. Announce the mode of command (Forward, Fixed, or Investigative).**

**15. Operating strategy**

- 15.1. Offensive or defensive

**16. Initial actions**

**17. Water supply**

- 17.1. Location

**18. IRIT (2 in / 2 out)**

- 18.1. Bypass
- 18.2. Establish

**19. Once a Fixed Command is established, announce the location of the Command Post (Inside the cab of BN203 on the alpha side)**

- 19.1. Address tactical objectives (working towards the next benchmark)
- 19.2. Assess incident resources and determine if they are adequate to complete the mission.

**20. IRR Example**

Clear the Channel (this is clearly defined in the Communications and Deployment Procedures depending on who the first arriving unit is)

Engine 201 is on scene; confirm address, side (alpha, bravo, charlie, delta) of a (small, medium, large, or mega and number of stories) occupancy, and conditions. Engine 201 will be establishing "name" Command, command will be (forward, fixed, investigative), we'll be operating in the (offensive/defensive) strategy, stretching an attack line to the \_\_\_\_ side for fire control and search/rescue, standby for a 360 report.

## **21. 360 or Follow-up Report:**

360 complete/not complete, changes/no changes to the IAP. No hazards identified or specify hazards identified on the 360. We do/do not have a water supply, and we'll be (bypassing/establishing) IRIT.

**21.1.** This IRR (Initial Radio Report) should take you no more than 30 seconds. Address the need for more resources. A 2nd alarm is available which will double the initial response package, or the IC can order a la carte as needed. This decision will be dependent on the initial IC of what he or she deems necessary to effectively mitigate the incident. It is encouraged for the IC to be aggressive with ordering resources. Keep a pessimistic outlook and forecast appropriately.

**21.2.** The 360 or follow-up report should be communicated as quickly as a 360 view of the structure can be accomplished. The ONLY reasons to not complete a 360 is if the building is too large (i.e strip malls, large commercial) or if there is a safety hazard preventing a 360 (i.e. vicious dog in the backyard, fire is blocking access to the Charlie side). If it is a safety hazard, this should be addressed with priority traffic.

Note: These are broad generalizations based on most of the construction found within our area. This is meant to help streamline effective on scene reports. The goal is to paint a picture for the incoming units. Do not get caught up in insignificant details but say what you need in order to complete the picture. There is no size-up or initial report template that is pertinent for all types of emergencies. There will always be emergencies that the personnel respond to that will be a first for those tasked with painting the picture for additional incoming units. In those situations, use common terms and simple speech:

- "What do you have?"
- "What are you doing?"
- "What do you need?"

## **22. Radio Designation**

The radio designation "Command" will be used along with the occupancy or address of the incident (i.e. "Wal-Mart Command", "7th Street Command"). The designation will not be changed throughout the incident. The "Command" designation will remain with the officer currently in command of the incident.

## **23. Modes of Command**

The responsibility of the first arriving unit or member to assume Command of the incident presents several options, depending on the situation. If a chief officer, member or unit without tactical capabilities (i.e. staff vehicle, no equipment, etc) initiates Command; the establishment of a Fixed Command mode and a Command Post should be a top priority. At many incidents the initial Incident Commander will be the first arriving company officer. The following Command options define the Company Officer's direct involvement in tactical activities and modes of Command that may be utilized.

- Investigative Mode (Nothing Showing/ Will be Checking)
- Forward Mode
- Fixed Mode

### **23.1. Investigative Mode:**

This is an IC on a portable radio, moving around and evaluating conditions while looking for the incident problem. The company officer should go with the company to investigate while utilizing a portable radio to command the incident.

\*\*Due to modern fireground behavior and construction, it is good practice to ensure the crew is in full PPE and consider taking equipment such as irons, TIC, and portable water can.

### **23.2 Forward Mode:**

If the first arriving company officer arrives at a visible working fire and his/her direct participation in the attack will make a positive difference in the outcome (search / rescue, fire control, and crew safety), the officer will give an on-scene report, declare the strategy, and announce the command mode to be Forward. This should alert the next arriving companies that "Command" is going to be a working command. The initial arriving officer will go inside with his/her crew with and supervise the crew in the attack. Due to the Forward IC overseeing the strategic, tactical, and task levels of Command all at once, this mode of command should only be considered temporary. As soon as a Command Officer arrives on scene, the formal transfer of Command should take place. Some examples of the Forward mode situations are:

- Visible working fire in a house or commercial occupancy.
- Critical life safety situations (i.e. rescue that must be achieved in a compressed time).
- Obvious working incidents that require further investigation by the Company Officer.
- Combined crew experience level.
- Staffing levels (PAR 3 vs PAR 4)

\*\*Keep in mind the importance of IRIT in this example, especially with PAR 3 units. If the Forward IC cannot justify bypassing IRIT, the crew will have to wait to enter into the IDLH until the 2 in / 2 out standard can be satisfied with subsequent arriving companies.

Additional incoming units must recognize the initial company officer is in an offensive position inside the hazard zone and is attempting to quickly solve the incident problem.

The Forward mode should not last more than 10 minutes and will end with one of the following:

**23.2.1.** Situation is stabilized.

**23.2.2.** Command is transferred from the forward company officer IC to a subsequent arriving command officer in a fixed command mode.

**23.2.3.** If the situation is not stabilized, the forward IC must move to an exterior (fixed) command position and is now in the fixed command mode. The company officer must decide whether or not to withdraw the remainder of the crew, based on the crew's capabilities and experience, safety issues, and the ability to communicate with the crew.

### **23.3. Fixed Mode:**

Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity or potential for rapid expansion demand early, strong, fixed command from the outset. In these cases, the first arriving IC will assume a fixed exterior

command position (preferably inside a vehicle) outside of the hazard zone. The location of the Command Post shall be announced to all units and the IC must remain there until the incident is terminated or command is transferred. Accountability should be established by the incident commander at the location that he or she assigns. Tactical worksheet(s) should be utilized to assist in managing the incident.

If the Company Officer assumes a fixed command mode, the following options are available with regards to the assignment of the remaining crew members.

- 23.3.2.** “Move-up” an acting officer within the Company. This is determined by the individual and collective capabilities and experience of the crew.
- 23.3.3.** Assign company personnel to another Company or Group. This must be acknowledged by both the original and the receiving officer and by their inclusion in the accountability system.
- 23.3.4.** Assign the crew members to perform staff functions to assist the IC. Staff functions include recon/reporting, communications assistance; help with tactical worksheet tracking, etc.

#### **24. Q-Channel Operation within Command Modes**

In an effort to ensure a consistent approach to incident communications, the public safety dispatcher will assign a Q-Channel for incident operations however will remain on the primary dispatch channel of Fire West/Fire East during the event. The IC must be able to manage the scene with two radios and will be tasked with running operations on the assigned Q-Channel and communicating with dispatch on Fire West/Fire East. The following incidents will automatically receive a Q-Channel to operate on: Commercial Fires/Downgrades, Residential Fires/Downgrades, Aircraft Emergencies, Multiple Medical, Explosion Upgrade, and Brush Fire Threatening. These nature codes have their assigned Q-Channel frequency inserted into each response plan. All other nature codes that require a Q-Channel due to their forecasted size or complexity can receive one upon request through dispatch. The only time that a dispatcher will monitor the assigned Q-Channel is during a Firefighter Mayday and or a change in strategy when emergency traffic is required. Once the dispatcher initiates the emergency traffic tones and channel markers on the assigned Q-Channel, they will continue monitoring that frequency until the emergency traffic is cancelled by the Incident Commander. The cancellation of emergency traffic should be communicated after the rescue of the down firefighter or following the safe exit of all crews working within the hazard zone and a roll call has been completed by the IC with a successful PAR on the fire ground.

If at any time, a chief officer or designee is not available to respond to an incident that requires a command officer response, it is suggested that all incident communications remain on Fire West/Fire East to allow for dispatch to monitor the frequency while also simplifying on scene communications for the company officer who is operating in a Fixed Command Mode.

#### **25. Transfer of Command**

There are two primary situations in which Command should be transferred:

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**25.1.** A Forward IC who transfers Command to a subsequent arriving officer (another company officer or chief officer, who then establishes a Fixed Command at a Command Post). "Passing Command" to a unit that is not on scene creates a gap in the Command process and compromises incident management. Command should never be transferred to a unit who is not yet on scene. On working incidents, command should rarely, if ever be kept in the Forward mode when a Chief Officer is on scene, available to take over a Fixed position.

**25.2.** Transfer of Fixed Command from a company officer to a subsequent arriving chief officer in the instance the company officer could be better utilized within the hazard zone (i.e. to provide oversight of his/her company or as a Group or Division Supervisor). The arrival of a ranking officer on the incident scene does not mean that Command has been automatically transferred to that officer. Command is only transferred when the following structured process has been completed:

**25.3.** The Fixed Command officer contacts the IC directly on the assigned Q-Channel. Face-to-face is always preferable; however, Command transfer by radio can be accomplished, providing the incoming officer has copied all Command activity prior to his/her arrival.

**25.4.** The Fixed Command officer arriving on scene needs to confirm strategy and tasks of all units operating on the fireground with the current IC. The IC being relieved will need to confirm and provide a CAN report:

Example of the transfer on the assigned Q-Channel:

2nd Street Command from Battalion 203.

Battalion 203; 2nd Street Command go ahead.

I understand that you are operating in the offensive strategy, in the forward command mode. You have stretched an attack line in through the front door for fire control, you have TWR202 conducting a primary search, M361 is medical, and E1310 is staged at a hydrant. If this is all correct, CONFIRM and give me a CAN report.

That is all correct. We performed a transitional attack on the bravo side and are currently working our way to the seat of the fire. Conditions are moderate heat, moderate visibility. Low air is 3300 psi. We have no needs at this time.

I copy transitional attack on the bravo side, working towards the seat, low air 3300 psi, with no needs. I'm going to take it from out here. All units assigned to the 2nd Street fire, be advised BN203 will be assuming 2nd Street Command, fixed command post will be at my location on the alpha side, we'll be continuing in the offensive strategy, working towards fire control and primary all-clear.

\*\*Once the fixed IC has formally taken command, the fixed IC will communicate this to dispatch on the dispatch frequency (Fire West/East).

Dispatch from Battalion 203 on Fire West.

Battalion 203 from Dispatch, go ahead.

Battalion 203 will be assuming 2nd Street command, Command will be fixed at my location on the alpha side. We will remain in the offensive strategy, still working towards fire control and primary all clear. The current resources assigned to the incident are adequate for now.

**25.5.** The use of tactical worksheets that outline the location and status of resources will assist the transfer process. The final component should be to address the amount of resources needed for the incident scene. By keeping a pessimistic outlook, the Fixed IC should challenge whether he or she has the support assigned to effectively manage the incident. If not, the IC should quickly begin ordering additional resources via a la carte or requesting the balance of a 2nd alarm which doubles the initial response.

## **26. Command Communications**

### **26.1. Sequence of Assignment**

Sequence of Assignment is an efficient and inclusive way to make assignments on the fire ground. In one transmission, the IC can contact the fire unit, label the radio designator, announce the accountability location, and give a very specific assignment. This radio transmission is also very easy to repeat back to follow the communication order model. It also cuts down on radio traffic by providing efficient and concise radio transmissions, preventing radio ping-pong.

Example:

E365 from Command

Command; E365

E365, you're going to remain E365, accountability will be at E203, I need you to pull a second line off E203, enter from the alpha side and conduct a primary search. Give me your PAR going forward.

E365 copies, remaining E365, accountability at E203, pulling a 2nd line off E203, entering from the alpha side and performing a primary search. Our PAR going forward is 2.

\*\*If a unit is not assigned to a group or division, it is important, as the IC, to advise them they will maintain their unit ID. This will help prevent a unit from self-assigning inside the hazard zone based on their fireground function or task.

## **27. Emergency Traffic**

Emergency traffic receives the highest communication priority on scene and should only be used for true emergencies. The improper, overuse of emergency traffic at incident scenes tends to diminish the overall effect it has on the operation. Units operating at the incident site must be able to differentiate the use of routine, priority, and emergency traffic radio reporting. The use of emergency traffic is reserved for only two critical emergencies on the fire ground, firefighter mayday and a change in strategy. This radio signal is made through dispatch requesting an emergency traffic tone (high-low tone) on the assigned Q-Channel to alert all personnel working on that incident scene of the emergency.

Only the INCIDENT COMMANDER can request the use of Emergency Traffic through dispatch. It is very important to get the emergency traffic tones transmitted as soon as possible. The sooner they are activated, the sooner the IC and all other affected units can initiate corrective action. Once the dispatcher initiates emergency traffic on the assigned Q-Channel, the fire dispatcher will monitor the Q-Channel along with Fire West/ Fire East until the emergency traffic is cancelled by the Incident Commander. The IC may need to prompt dispatch to initiate channel markers during the stretch of time after emergency traffic tones has been initiated and just prior to the cancellation. The use of channel markers offers a subtle reminder for all units on the incident scene to remain radio discipline and keeps the IC in the drivers seat with control of the radio frequency.

Example:

Dispatch from Command, give me Emergency Traffic on Q14-800N.

Dispatch will immediately activate the Emergency Traffic Tone. Command will transmit his/her message,

All units operating on the Main Street Fire, we are changing the strategy to defensive. I repeat all units operating on the Main Street Fire, we are changing to a defensive strategy. Evacuate the structure and stand by for a roll call upon exit.

Dispatch will repeat this message one time, document it in the MDC call log, and begin channel markers with the prompting of the IC on the assigned Q-Channel.

## **28. Time Interval Markers**

After reporting a working fire, dispatch will begin providing the incident Commander with time interval markers in 10-minute interludes. The IC should utilize these markers to his or her favor by challenging the operational strategy each time the interval is provided through dispatch. Once prompted from dispatch, the IC should challenge the current operational strategy (ensuring the risk management profile fits the current strategy), and provide the next tactical benchmarks that the incident is working towards. Remember, it is best practice to always maintain a pessimistic outlook on the incident scene until the loss stop benchmark is achieved on the fire ground.

Example

Command from dispatch, you are now 10 minutes into your incident.

Command copies 10 minutes into the incident, we are still operating in the offensive strategy, working towards primary all-clear and fire under control.

## **29. Expansion of the Command function**

**29.1.** The response and arrival of additional chief/command officers strengthens the overall Command organization. As the incident escalates, the IC should use these command officers to fill Division or Group positions. Command should consider adding a command officer to any division with three or more operating companies. Strengthening the Command organization:

**29.1.1.** Improves safety

**29.1.2.** Decreases the span of control

**29.1.3.** Improves communication

**29.1.4.** Improves accountability

**29.1.5.** Improves management of the Division / Group

**29.2.** When the first arriving unit is a chief/command officer, efforts should be automatically directed towards establishing a Command Post and fulfilling the Command functions. A Command Post in a vehicle equipped for this purpose is a priority at all working incidents.

**29.3.** Local events that are of long duration or require long term evacuations may require a larger Command Staff, which may require the call back of additional chief officers

**29.4.** When an incident is so large or of such duration that State or Federal resources are called to assist, an Incident Management Team (IMT) may be assigned to manage these resources. In this case, the jurisdiction having authority (AHJ) will maintain Command or delegate authority for managing resources to the IMT. In either case the AHJ retains authority to set incident objectives and determine when the IMT, State and Federal resources are no longer needed.

### **30. Command Team**

The Command Team may consist of the Incident Commander (IC), Support Officer and Senior Advisor. A Command Team is an organizational response to quickly provide enough command and control to rapidly bring a significant incident under control. The incident scene is often dynamic and intense. As the incident grows into and past the capacity of an initial Incident Commander, the IC can become overwhelmed with information management, assigning companies, filling out and updating the tactical worksheet, planning, forecasting, calling for additional resources, talking on the radio and fulfilling all the other functions of Command. The immediate need of Command at this point is support. The IC may choose to utilize the next arriving command officer as a Support Officer. The IC may decide to assign the second command officer to a Division or Group if he/she feels the presence of a command officer in a particular Division or Group will improve safety and communications in that Division or Group by reducing the span of control.

The IC and the Support Officer are the first and second members of the Command Team.

#### **30.1. Roles and Responsibilities of the IC:**

**30.1.1.** Assume and announce Command and establish an effective initial command position (Command Post).

**30.1.2.** Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up).

**30.1.3.** Identify the incident strategy, develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) and assign companies and personnel consistent with plans and standard operating procedures.

**30.1.4.** Initiate, maintain and control effective incident communications.

**30.1.5.** Provide and manage a steady, adequate and timely stream of appropriate resources.

**30.1.6.** Develop an effective incident organization using Groups/Divisions to decentralize and delegate functional and geographic responsibilities.

**30.1.7.** Review and revise (as needed) the strategy to keep the IAP current.

**30.1.8.** Provide for the continuity, transfer and termination of Command.

**30.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Support Officer:**

**30.2.1.** Define, evaluate and recommend changes to the incident action plan.

**30.2.2.** Provide direction relating to tactical priorities and specific critical incident scene factors.

**30.2.3.** Become the Incident Safety Officer.

**30.2.4.** Evaluate the need for additional resources.

**30.2.5.** Assign logistics responsibilities.

**30.2.6.** Assist with the tactical worksheet for control and accountability.

**30.2.7.** Evaluate the fire ground organization and span of control.

**30.2.8.** Other duties as necessary.

The third member of the Command Team is the Senior Advisor. The Senior Advisor is typically the highest ranking member of the Command Team. The officer serving as the IC and the Support Officer will focus on the completion of the tactical priorities, the strategic and tactical plan and the other components of the incident. The Senior Advisor's focus is looking at the entire incident and its impact from a broader perspective and providing direction, guidance and advice to the IC and/or Support Officer.

**30.3 Role and Responsibilities of the Senior Advisor:**

**30.3.1.** Review and evaluate the incident action plan for any needed changes.

**30.3.2.** Provide on-going review of the overall incident.

**30.3.3.** Review the organizational structure, to help identify the need for change or expansion to meet incident needs.

**30.3.4.** Provide a liaison with other city agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants.

**30.3.5.** Forecast and react to the effect this incident will have on the surrounding community(s) or organizations.

**30.3.6.** Prepare to transition into a long-term operation by establishing operational periods.

In order to maintain continuity and overall effectiveness, the Senior Advisor and Support Officer must be in the Command Post with the IC. The Officer assigned to communicate directly to Companies, Groups, Divisions or Branches will use the radio designation "Command" and should be the only member of the Command Team talking on the radio channel.

### **31. Command Structure**

It is the responsibility of Command to develop an organizational structure that is compliant with NIMS, using standard operating procedures and Blue Card recommendations, to effectively manage the incident scene. The development of the organizational structure should begin with the first arriving unit and continue through a number of phases, depending on the size and complexity of the incident. The Command organization must develop at a pace which stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. In order for the Incident Commander to manage the incident, he/she must first be able to direct, control and track the position and function of all operating companies. Building a Command organization is the best support mechanism the Incident Commander can utilize to achieve a balance between managing personnel and incident needs. Simply put, this means:

Large scale and complex incidents = Big Command organization

Small scale and “simple” incidents = Little Command organization

The Incident Commander should have more people working than commanding. The basic configuration of Command includes three levels:

- Strategic Level – Overall direction of the incident
- Tactical Level – Objectives assigned to Divisions or Groups
- Task Level – Task objectives assigned to Companies

#### **31.1 Strategic Level**

This organizational level is designed around the IC and/or Command Team, operating in the (Fixed) Command Mode and working out of a stationary Command Post. The strategic level involves the activities necessary for overall operational control, considering critical fire ground factors and the risk management profile to develop an IAP, establish objectives, set priorities, allocate resources and think ahead. Strategic Level responsibilities include:

**31.1.1.** Determining the appropriate strategy: OFFENSIVE or DEFENSIVE

**31.1.2.** Establishing a strategic plan for the incident

**31.1.3.** Setting priorities

**31.1.4.** Obtaining and allocating resources

**31.1.5.** Forecasting outcomes and planning

**31.1.6.** Assigning specific objectives to tactical level units

#### **31.2 Tactical Level**

The first management “subdivision” of incident scene organization is accomplished by assigning Division or Group responsibilities. These officers are responsible for the tactical deployment of assigned resources, evaluation and communication with the IC. They are assigned by the IC and supervise directly

at the site of the assigned activity in order to meet the operational objectives given to them by the IC. Tactical level responsibilities include:

**31.2.1.** Managing D/G Accountability

**31.2.2.** Working within the approved IAP of the Incident Commander

**31.2.3.** Assigning tasks within the D/G to achieve tactical benchmarks

**31.2.4.** Managing work/rest cycles

### **31.3 Task Level**

The task level of the organization where the work is performed by assigned companies and other resources. The Strategic and Tactical levels are in place to support the task level. Task level activities are routinely supervised by company officers. The accumulated achievements of Task Level activities accomplish Tactical Objectives.

### **31.4. Command Structure – Basic Organization**

Incident organization is the function of Command that the IC uses to track, communicate with and account for resources in order to meet the incident objectives. The strategic objectives are:

- LIFE SAFETY
- INCIDENT STABILIZATION
- PROPERTY CONSERVATION
- CUSTOMER STABILIZATION

The most basic function of Command combines all three levels of the Command structure. The company officer on a single engine response to a vehicle fire determines the strategy, tactics and supervises the crew doing the task. Formal assumption of Command is not necessary.

The basic structure for a “routine” working incident involving a small number of companies requires only two levels of the Command structure. The role of Command combines the strategic and tactical levels. Companies report directly to Command and operate at the Task Level. For communications purposes companies operating in the hazard zone shall retain their primary radio call signs (Engine 201, Tower 202, etc.) until it is necessary to designate Groups or Divisions. Formal assumption of Command is necessary.

### **31.5 Command Structure - Incident Safety Officer**

On working incidents, Command should make an attempt to assign an Incident Safety Officer (ISO). Command's ability to accomplish this will be dependent on the amount of personnel available.

The Incident Safety Officer's role is to continually assess safety concerns within the hazard zone, as well as outside the hazard zone, to include:

- 31.5.1.** Risk management.
- 31.5.2.** Personnel accountability.
- 31.5.3.** Air management.
- 31.5.4.** Manage work/rest cycles and rehab.

### **31.6. Command Structure – Group/Division Basic Operational Approach**

**31.6.1.** Groups are assigned by their function (i.e. Ventilation Group).

**31.6.2.** Divisions are assigned by their geographic location (i.e. Alpha Division). Groups/Divisions are smaller more manageable units of incident scene organization.

**31.6.3.** A significant problem occurs when the IC requests and assigns additional companies, at a rate that exceeds the development of the incident organization. In short order, the IC will become overloaded with the details of managing a large number of companies scattered all over the incident site. The IC will soon be in the odd situation of being overwhelmed, yet still in need of more resources to accomplish tactical objectives.

**31.6.4.** Command must develop and build an organization that matches the deployment of resources to the incident scene. As divisions or groups are implemented, Command continues to operate at the strategic level, determining the overall strategy and Incident Action Plan to deal with the incident.

**31.6.5.** Whenever there are two or more companies assigned to a particular tactical objective (i.e. fire attack), Command shall designate a Group for that function/objective and assign a Group Supervisor.

Example: A company engaged in an (interior) offensive attack on a structure fire requests a back-up line to aid in suppression efforts. Command would designate a Fire Attack Group and assign a Group Supervisor. Both the initial attack company and the additional (back-up) company would operate under this single Group and Group Supervisor.

**31.6.6.\*\***Consider, from a rule of air management standpoint, assign the company officer who is backing up the initial company as the group supervisor. This is due to his or her ability to stay inside the hazard zone longer because of a longer lasting air supply.

**31.6.7.** Since Divisions are assigned by their geographic location, the IC must determine when it is appropriate to assign Divisions based on the incident type and complexity. As an example, the IC

may determine the need to assign Divisions on a mass casualty incident where victims are distributed over a large area. On multi-story structure fires, the IC shall designate Divisions whenever two or more companies are operating on the same floor.

Example: A company is engaged in fire attack on the third floor of a hotel. Command assigns an additional company to that floor for rescue. Command would designate the third floor Division 3 and assign a Division Supervisor to oversee both companies and any additional companies sent to operate on that floor.

**31.6.8.** Additionally, the IC should consider assigning Groups/Divisions when the incident presents special hazards and close control is required over operating companies (i.e. unstable structural conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load, marginal offensive situations, etc.).

**31.6.9.** The number of Groups/Divisions an IC can effectively manage is three to seven, with the optimum number being five, this is also known as span of control.

**31.6.10.** Once effective Groups/Divisions have been established the IC can concentrate on the overall strategy, incident action plan management, evaluation and resource allocation. Each of the Group/Division Supervisors becomes responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources assigned to his/her Group/Division and communicating needs and progress back to Command.

Utilizing Groups/Divisions provides the following advantages:

**31.6.11.** Reduces the IC's span of control – divides the incident scene into more manageable units.

**31.6.12.** Creates more effective incident scene communications – permits the IC to exchange information with a limited number of individuals (Group/Division Supervisors) who directly supervise teams of firefighters. This reduces overall radio traffic by allowing firefighters and Group/Division Supervisors to communicate face to face instead of by radio.

**31.6.13.** Provide a standard and logical system to divide expanding incidents into effectively sized units – allowing the IC and/or Command Team to concentrate on strategy from one standard Command Post location.

**31.6.14.** Provides an array of major support functions - these are to be selected and assigned according to the particular needs of each situation. The execution and details of these specific operations becomes the responsibility of the Group/Division Supervisor, not Command.

**31.6.15.** Improves firefighter safety – allows each Group/Division Supervisor to maintain more direct control of the position and function of the companies assigned to their Group/Division at all times. Supervisors concentrate on their assigned areas and are in a position to move personnel based on incident conditions and the IC's decisions.

When establishing a Division or Group, the IC will assign each Group/Division Supervisor:

**31.6.16.** Tactical Objectives.

**31.6.17.** A radio designation (Ventilation Group, Alpha Division, etc.).

**31.6.18.** The identity of resources assigned to the Group or Division.

**31.6.19.** Accountability location

**31.6.20.** Group/Division Supervisors will use the Group/Division designation in radio communications (i.e. Command from Alpha Division or Command from Ventilation Group).

**31.6.21.** In many cases, the initial Group/Division responsibility will be given to the company officer. As the incident expands, chief/command officers should be assigned Division/Group responsibilities.

**31.6.22.** In some cases, a Group/Division Supervisor may be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions and advise Command of needed tasks and resources. The assigned officer will proceed to the Group/Division, evaluate and report conditions to the Incident Commander, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.

**32.** The Group/Division Supervisor must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the Officer to be equipped with the appropriate personal protective equipment for his/her area of responsibility. The Group/Division Supervisor should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.

Group/Division Supervisors shall be responsible for the following basic functions:

- 32.1.** Monitor personnel safety, accountability and welfare.
- 32.2.** Directly supervise work in the Group/Division
- 32.3.** Monitor work progress.
- 32.4.** Redirect activities as necessary.
- 32.5.** Coordinate actions with related activities and adjacent Groups/Divisions.
- 32.6.** Request additional resources as needed.
- 32.7.** Manage MAYDAYS within the Group/Division.
- 32.8.** Advise the IC of situation status, changing conditions, and progress.
- 32.9.** Re-allocate resources within the Group/Division.
- 32.10.** Provide information for both formal and informal After Action Reviews (critiques).
- 32.11.** De-commit companies as operations are completed.
- 32.12.** The primary function of companies working within a Group/Division is to perform assigned tasks. Company officers will advise their Group/Division Supervisor of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a Group/Division must be directed to the Group/Division Supervisor. Group/Division Supervisors communicate with "Command".

**33. Command Structure – Expanding the Organization; Branch Directors**

**33.1.** When the number of Groups or Divisions exceeds the span of control that the Incident Commander can effectively manage, the Incident Organization should be divided into Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several Groups/Divisions and should be assigned a separate radio channel.

**33.2.** The Branch level of the organization is designed to provide COORDINATION between the Group/Division and Command. Adding Branches to the incident organization decreases the communication load on the IC. Branch Directors supervise and manage a number of Group/Division Supervisors and report to the Incident Commander.

**33.3.** As the incident organization grows in complexity, and the span of control with Groups/Divisions is maximized, the Command Team may determine that an additional level within the Command Organization is needed.

- Strategic Level – Incident Commander and/or Command Team
- Coordination Level – Branch Directors
- Tactical Level – Group/Division Supervisors
- Task Level – Companies

**33.4.** The Incident Commander may elect to assign Branch Directors as forward positions to coordinate the activities between Divisions/Groups.

**33.5.** Branch Directors will normally be utilized at very large-scale incidents that involve two or more major components. Examples of types of incidents where Branch Directors should be utilized include:

- 33.5.1.** A large-scale incident that requires a major evacuation.
- 33.5.2.** A large-scale incident spread over a wide/large geographic area.
- 33.5.3.** Any large-scale incident where the number of Groups/Divisions exceed the span of control that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander or Command Team.

**33.6.** Branch Directors manage and direct activities of Group/Division Supervisors.

When Command implements Branch Directors the IC will assign a separate radio channel (not the tactical channel, if possible) for communications within the Branch. Group/Division Supervisors should be notified by Command of their new Director. This information should include:

**33.6.1.** What Branch the Group/Division is now assigned to.

**33.6.2.** The radio channel the Branch (and Group/Division) is operating on.

**33.7.** Radio communications will then be directed from the Group/Division Supervisor to the Branch Director. The radio designation of Branch Directors should reflect the function or geographic location of the Branch (for example: Fire Control Branch, Law Enforcement Branch, North Branch,

etc.). Group/Division Supervisors will relay Branch and radio channel information to the companies working in their Group/Division. Note: When providing radio information to the companies in their Group/Division, Group/Division Supervisors should obtain a PAR and ensure that all members working in the Group/Division are operating on the assigned radio channel.

**33.8.** Branch Director positions should be assigned to chief/command officers (or comparable rank/experience). Branch Directors operate in forward positions. They should utilize a command vehicle as a Forward Branch Command Post (when feasible). In these situations, Command must assign personnel in the (primary) Command Post to monitor each Branch radio channel.

### **34. Command Structure – Expansion to Major Operations**

**34.1.** As an incident escalates into a major incident, additional organizational support will be required. As additional ranking personnel arrive on the scene, the Command Team may be expanded by filling section positions. Section Chiefs assist the Incident Command Team with the long-term management of the incident and operate at the strategic level. The Incident Commander implements Sections as needed, depending on the situation and needs (one incident may only require a Logistics Section while another incident may require all the Sections to be implemented.)

**34.2.\*\***Consider Cochise County resources to include County Emergency Manager, Incident Management Support Team, Emergency Operations Centers, and Mobile Command Post/Communications Support.

**34.3.** When the communication system permits, Section Chief should operate on separate radio channels and utilize the radio designation that identifies their section (Planning, Logistics, etc.).

**34.4.** During the initial phases of the incident, the Incident Commander and his/her staff normally carries out these four Section functions. They are:

- LOGISTICS SECTION
- PLANNING SECTION
- OPERATIONS SECTION
- FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION SECTION

### **35. Logistics Section**

This section provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. Command may assign the Logistics Section its own radio channel. The Logistics Section Chief may establish Groups/Divisions or Branches for his/her Section as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 35.1.** Provide rehab.
- 35.2.** Manage staging.
- 35.3.** Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment.

- 35.4.** Forecast and obtain future resource needs (coordinate with the Planning Section).
- 35.5.** Provide any needed communications equipment.
- 35.6.** Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment.
- 35.7.** Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per Command.
- 35.8.** Provide food and associated supplies.
- 35.9.** Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities.
- 35.10.** Provide any other logistical needs as requested by Command.
- 35.11.** Supervise assigned personnel.

### **36. Planning Section**

This section is responsible for gathering, assimilating, analyzing and processing information needed for effective decision-making. Information management is a full-time task at large and complex incidents. The Planning Section serves as Command's "clearing house" for information. Critical information should be immediately forwarded to Command (or whoever needs it). Information should also be used to make long-range plans. The Planning Section Chief's goal is to plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources before they are needed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 36.1.** Evaluate current strategy and plan with the Incident Commander.
- 36.2.** Refine and recommend any needed changes to the plan.
- 36.3.** Evaluate Incident Organization and span of control.
- 36.4.** Forecast possible outcome(s).
- 36.5.** Evaluate future resource requirements.
- 36.6.** Utilize technical assistance as needed.
- 36.7.** Evaluate tactical priorities, specific critical factors and safety.
- 36.8.** Gather, update, improve and manage information with a standard, systematic approach.
- 36.9.** Liaison with any needed outside agencies for planning needs.
- 36.10.** Supervise assigned personnel.

### **37. Operations Section**

This section supports the overall strategic plan, as directed by the IC, and works toward the accomplishment of the tactical objectives. The Operations Section Chief is responsible for supervising the activities and resources assigned under his/her span of control.

**37.1** The safety and health of the personnel operating within the hazard zone(s) should be a primary concern of the Operations Section Chief. He/she should utilize a tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to Group/Division Supervisors and/or Branch Directors.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 37.2.** Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander.
- 37.3.** Implement the Incident Management Plan.
- 37.4.** Assign units to Divisions/Groups/Branches based on tactical objectives and priorities.
- 37.5.** Build an effective organizational structure through the use of Divisions/Groups/Branches.
- 37.6.** Communicate tactical objectives to Divisions/Groups/Branches.
- 37.7.** Manage Operations Section activities.
- 37.8.** Maintain personnel accountability.
- 37.9.** Provide for life safety.
- 37.10.** Determine on-going needs and request additional resources.
- 37.11.** Consult with and inform other Sections and Command as needed.
- 37.12.** Collect and provide information for an After-Action Review.

Operations Section

The Operations Section Chief is located at the Command Post, he/she should use the radio designation of "Command". The majority of major incidents can be effectively managed with the Operations Officer located at the Command Post (this provides for continuity and overall effectiveness). If the Operations Officer is located away from the Command Post at a "forward" position, he/she should use the radio designation of "Operations".

**37.13.** Implementing an "Operations" radio designation in the middle of a major incident can create confusion during radio communications. It is absolutely essential that all personnel working at the incident be made aware of the activation of "Operations". All Group/Division Supervisors and Branch Directors must then direct their communications to the "Operations".

**38.** The Incident Commander – Role and Responsibilities after Activation of an Operations Officer

**38.1.** Once the Operations Officer is in place and functioning, the Incident Commander's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning and other components of the incident. This focus is to look at the "big picture" and the impact of the incident from a broad perspective. The Incident Commander should provide direction, advice and guidance to the Operations Officer in directing the tactical aspects of the incident by:

**38.2.** Reviewing and evaluating the plan and initiate any needed changes.

- 38.3.** Providing on-going review of the overall incident (THE BIG PICTURE).
- 38.4.** Identifying priorities.
- 38.5.** Providing direction to the Operations Chief.
- 38.6.** Reviewing the organizational structure and initiating change or expansion to meet incident needs.
- 38.7.** Initiating additional Section and/or Branch functions as required.
- 38.8.** Establishing liaison with other agencies, property owners and/or tenants.
- 38.9.** Collecting and provide information for an After-Action Review.

### **39. Finance/Administration Section**

**39.1** This section evaluates and manages the risk and financial requirements for the incident.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 39.2.** Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the local response system as requested by Command (coordinates with Logistics).
- 39.3.** Manages documentation of all financial costs of the incident.
- 39.4.** Manages documentation for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies.
- 39.5.** Analyzes and manages legal risk for incidents such as a hazardous materials clean-up.
- 39.6.** Serves as the Incident Commander's liaison with: County/City officials, Litigators and regulatory agencies (EPA, OSHA, DOT, etc.).
- 39.7.** Monitors and coordinates emergency service delivery to the rest of the community during major incidents to ensure adequate coverage.
- 39.8.** Manages investigations (arson, etc.)
- 39.9.** Manages the shift between automatic and mutual aid to extended support.

### **40. Command Structure- Unified Command**

**40.1.** An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the Unified Command, often the senior person from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the Unified Command, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan.

**40.2** The unified approach to ICS should be utilized in most incidents where Fire/EMS and Law Enforcement have a direct stake in the incident. These following incidents should be considered for a Unified approach to ICS:

- 40.3.** Major medical calls (i.e MCI's, Active Shooter/Active Killer, explosions, etc)

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- 40.4.** Haz-mat calls
- 40.5.** Natural disasters (major wildland fires)
- 40.6.** Any incident that requires participation from multiple agencies or jurisdictions.