

**FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION OF DELAWARE COUNTY, OHIO  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	<b>RESCINDS</b>
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**SCOPE:**

The Fire Chiefs Association of Delaware County has established an Incident Command System (ICS), now known as the Incident Management System (IMS). The IMS is a tool for managing emergency responses within Delaware County, but is expandable in nature to facilitate large disasters with numerous resources deployed. The IMS works into the National Incident Management System.

The IMS provides a management tool to enable officers to manage efforts to mitigate any incident, whether it be routine or of major disaster proportion. In order to effectively manage personnel and resources and to provide for personnel safety and welfare, all Departments will always operate within the IMS at emergency incidents. The Incident Commander (IC) or Command title applies equally well to a fire company officer or to the Department's Chief, regardless of the nature of the incident.

The IMS organization has the capability to expand and to contract to meet the needs of the incident, but all incidents, regardless of the size or complexity, will have an IC. A basic IMS operating principle is that the IC is responsible for on-scene management until command authority is transferred to another person, who then becomes the IC.

Management of an incident cannot and must not be left to chance. Upon the arrival of the initial company or fire officer, command procedures must begin. The analysis and handling of an incident must follow a well-defined and practiced system of incident command procedures.

## **INTENT AND PURPOSE**

Effective functioning at the scene of an emergency requires clear, decisive action and command responsibility. The Incident Management System will establish the procedures normally utilized in making decisions at the scene of a fire or other emergency situation. This system establishes guidelines that will be employed to control the majority of emergency situations.

The purpose of this guideline is to:

1. Provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergency incidents through improved command and control (or management of emergencies).
2. Improve the use of resources and tactical effectiveness.
3. To provide a template for the management of incidents set forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Incident Management System.
4. Meet the OSHA/EPA regulations requiring the use of an Incident Command System for hazardous materials incidents.
5. Meet the NFPA Standard 1500 recommendations for the use of an Incident Command System for operations at all emergency incidents.

The Incident Management System identifies the suggested operating guidelines to be employed in setting up the command post and establishing command responsibility at an emergency scene.

## **OVERVIEW**

*NOTE: It is the intent of this overview to assist first due company's' or fire officers with guidance when establishing command at an emergency incident. It is NOT the intent of this overview to exclude any information from the entire manual.*

### **I. INITIAL COMMAND**

The first arriving officer or fire department member must decide on an appropriate commitment for each assigned company, including his/her own. This decision will usually result in command being exercised according to the provisions of one of two general modes. They are fixed command or mobile command.

### **II. SIZE-UP**

- A. Type of structure.
- B. What is showing?
- C. Who is command, what will it be called, and location.
- D. If "A" side of structure is NOT street side, it shall be identified.
- E. Who is responsible for accountability and what their location is.
- F. Water supply/layout location (if not previously reported).
- G. Offensive or defensive mode.

### **III. ACTIONS BEING TAKEN**

It is vital to incoming companies and staff officers that the actions being taken are aired over the radio.

### **IV. SPAN OF CONTROL**

The command structure at any incident must correspond to the complexity of the situation. To effectively control an emergency, the incident should be divided into manageable units.

### **V. TRANSFER/TERMINATION**

When circumstances allow, the Incident Commander being relieved will brief the officer assuming command. After the transfer of command takes place, the officer assuming command shall announce such transfer over the radio.

# INCIDENT COMMAND PROCEDURES

## 1. Theory

The one function that shall be filled at every emergency incident, regardless of size, type, or jurisdiction that the incident occurs in, is the Incident Commander (IC) position. The IC has the responsibility for overall management of the incident.

Incident command procedures are designed to accomplish the following:

- Fix responsibility of command with a designated member through a standardized identification system, based on arrival sequence and other variables.
- Insure that visible, direct, effective command be established as early as possible upon arrival at the incident scene.
- Establish an effective framework within which the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander can be properly addressed.
- Provide a system for accomplishing the orderly transfer of command from the initial Incident Commander to later arriving officers.

## 2. Initial Command

It shall be mandatory that the officer or other fire department member arriving first on the scene of an emergency incident initiate the basic incident command function, establish a command post, and assume all related command responsibilities. This shall be performed regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. The initial Incident Commander shall retain these responsibilities until one of the following occurs:

- Command is passed to the next arriving officer (only once per incident).
- Command is officially transferred. (See Transfer of Command Procedures)
- The incident is terminated.

Passing command is not to be confused with Transferring command. Command is passed only when the situation requires the immediate active participation of the first member or officer on the scene which prohibits them from establishing a fixed command position. When this occurs, the next arriving officer or member shall be notified and will automatically assume command of the incident.

**Command can be passed only once!**

## 3. Command Responsibilities

Within the broad structure of the basic incident command function, certain command options are available to the Incident Commander. These options or “command modes” will be explained in detail below. However, it must be understood that regardless of the command option chosen, the initial Incident Commander retains responsibility for all command functions until relieved of them according to the standardized methods detailed in this guideline.

The person assuming command is responsible for the following:

- Assuming an effective command location when the fixed command mode is chosen.
- Calling on the scene and transmitting the initial radio report and size-up as outlined in Section 5 of this chapter. If it is a “working incident”, assign a name to the incident itself. For example, a working incident at 125 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street could be called “6<sup>th</sup> St. command”, “City Hall Command”, or “Genoa Command”, for the occupancy. A “working incident” is defined as any emergency situation that requires more than one company to be tied up. A “working incident” can be a fire, haz-mat emergency, water rescue, emergency medical operation, etc.
- Assessing the incident priorities.
- Determining the incident’s strategic goals and tactical objectives.
- Developing and implementing the incident action plan.
- Developing an incident command structure appropriate for the incident.
- Assessing resource needs and orders, deploying needed resources.
- Coordinating overall emergency activities.
- Serving as ultimate incident safety officer; responsible for preventing all personnel injuries and/or deaths.
- Coordinating activities of outside agencies.
- Authorizing information release to the media
- Returning companies to service.

#### **4. Command Modes**

The first arriving officer or fire department member must decide on an appropriate commitment for each assigned company, including his/her own. This decision will usually result in command being exercised according to the provisions of one of two (2) general modes. They are:

- Fixed Command Mode
- Mobile Command Mode

##### **A. Fixed Command Mode**

The fixed command mode is defined as a command structure that maintains a fixed command location which is usually outside of a structure and in which the Incident Commander devotes all of his/her energies to command. The fixed command mode is desirable and should be used unless conditions dictate otherwise.

***NOTE:** The location of the fixed Command Post should be easily identifiable. If the Incident Commander chooses to leave the interior of his/her vehicle, then he/she should be easily identifiable. Whenever possible, the command post should be placed where two sides of the incident are visible.*

## **B. Mobile Command Mode**

Incidents requiring immediate action in order to stabilize the situation, and where due to manning and/or experience factors, the Company Officer feels that it is necessary for him/her to accompany his/her crew in their initial efforts. This may include situations where there is “nothing showing” and the Company Officer assuming command accompanies his/her crew in order to investigate the situation.

WHENEVER THE MOBILE COMMAND MODE IS CHOSEN, IT SHOULD BE CONCLUDED VERY RAPIDLY, WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES:

- The situation is quickly stabilized by the initial offensive attack or the preliminary investigation reveals no problem requiring the Incident Commander’s active participation. In either case, the Company Officer should then return to a fixed command location and continue to discharge his/her command responsibilities.
- The situation is not likely to be quickly stabilized, or initial investigations indicate possible long term involvement. The Company Officer should recognize these situations and assign command of his/her company to a company member or another Company Officer, return to a fixed command location and continue to function as the Incident Commander until relieved of this responsibility.
- Command is passed to the next arriving company or officer.
- In addition, it must be understood that this command option is not to be used as a means of circumventing established incident command procedures or otherwise shirking required command responsibilities.
- When the first arriving member determines the need to “pass” command, the initial radio report will include an announcement that command should be assumed by the next arriving company.

## **5. Establishing Command and Initial Size-up**

The person establishing command should use the standard procedures outlined below. If the person assuming command is not an officer, or is not normally assigned to a company, then this transmission should be adjusted accordingly. When command is established, an initial radio report and size-up should be given:

- Type of structure and size.
- The apparent extent of the emergency – Example: “nothing showing, situation contained, working fire, second alarm, etc.”
- Identify transmission by giving company, name of Incident Commander, the location of the Command Post (if other than the front of the occupancy/incident), and the name assigned to the incident. Example: “Ladder 351 on the scene, Captain Doe in charge of 36 Command.” Until command is transferred or passed, the original Incident Commander will remain in charge of the incident.
- If “A” side of the structure is NOT street side, it shall be identified.
- Who is responsible for accountability and what their location is.

- Water supply/layout location.
- Offensive or Defensive mode.

***NOTE:** Decide early if there is a necessity to call for additional assistance. Additional help should be standing by at the scene, prepared to go into action if there is a possibility the incident may exceed the capabilities of the companies working on the incident.*

The following examples illustrate the initial establishment of Command:

- “Engine 361 on the scene, Lt. Doe in charge of XYZ command. We have an auto completely involved on the second level of a 3 story concrete block parking garage, using pre-connect and tank. Ladder 361 assisting. All other companies stand-by at the entrance.”
- “Engine 371 on the scene, Lt. Doe in charge, the command post is in the parking lot across the street and will be Main Street command. We have a working fire in a second floor bedroom of a two-story frame residence. Attacking with 1 ¾ and tank.”
- “Engine 441 on the scene, Lt. Smith in charge. We have a trash fire at the rear of a frame garage, situation contained tying up Engine 441.”
- “Engine 351 on the scene. We have a working fire in a two-story frame residence. I will be engaging in fire attack. Passing command to the next arriving company.”

Other company officers on the scene should be advised of existing situations, initial decisions made, and the action plan.

When only one company responds to an emergency such as an auto fire or trash fire, the company officer shall transmit a brief initial radio report upon arrival. As soon as it has been determined that no additional help will be required, a “situation contained” will be transmitted to the fire alarm dispatcher.

## **6. Transfer of Command**

When circumstances allow, the Incident Commander being relieved will brief the officer assuming command. This brief may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Incident priorities and strategic goals.
- Tactical objectives that have been assigned and that need to be assigned.
- Tactical objectives that have been achieved.

Should any higher ranking officer decide to officially assume command of the incident, the officer shall locate the Command Post, if established, and follow the transfer of command guideline whenever possible.

After the transfer of command has actually taken place, the officer assuming command shall announce such transfer over the radio, stating the name and rank of

the new Incident Commander. Example: DelComm this is Sandusky Street Command. Chief 300 is now in charge of the Sandusky Street incident.

At this time, the officer assuming command will assign the former Incident Commander to a new duty. This new assignment may be to assume a command or general staff function, to rejoin and take command of his/her company, or any other assignment deemed necessary by the new Incident Commander.

***NOTE:** If preceded to the scene by the companies of another department, the officer responding from the department having jurisdiction shall report to the Incident Commander. Regardless of rank, this officer is legally responsible for the incident and shall have the option of assuming command, or allowing the original Incident Commander to remain in – charge of the incident.*

## EXPANDING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

The command structure at any incident must correspond to the complexity of the situation. To effectively control an emergency, the incident should be divided into manageable units. In this section, we will examine some of the options the Incident Commander can use to manage an incident

While it is important to have a sufficiently large command structure at an incident, don't use more than the situation requires. The command structure should not contribute to the complexity of the incident. Consider the command options available as a toolbox full of tools. Use only the ones you need to fix the problem.

Remember that any command position can be held by any member. It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to assign the appropriate person to command functions.

*NOTE: Terminology to describe the work units may vary between different organizations. Common terms that are acceptable include branches, divisions, groups, and sectors. The recommendations of the National Fire Academy will be utilized for the purposes of this guideline.*

### 1. Divisions and Groups

Divisions and Groups are both commanded by supervisors. Divisions and Groups operate at the same command level. Divisions do not work for Groups and Groups do not work for Divisions. However, a Group's functional responsibility may cross established Division boundaries. For example, Ventilation Group may be working in the same area as the Interior Division. Once a specific assignment is given to a Group, the division is no longer responsible for that task, concentrating instead on all other tactical activity in that geographic area.

- A. Divisions: Divisions are an organizational level responsible for operations in a specified geographical area at an incident. You could have an interior division (within a building) or a division outside a building. Some examples are: Division C, Division 5, Roof Division, etc.
- B. Groups: Groups are an organizational level responsible for a specified functional assignment at an incident. Examples are salvage group, search and rescue group, fire attack group, water supply group, etc.

Divisions and Groups address the following three significant management principles:

- They reduce/solve span-of-control problems at an incident.
- They provide essential coordination at a designated area or for a specific function.
- They fix personnel accountability.

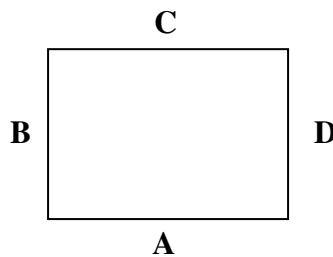
Division and Group Supervisors provide accountability and coordination of companies, ensuring maximum safety and survival of response personnel. They are also responsible for the implementation of their assigned portion of the overall incident action plan and they coordinate activities within their assignment. Division and Group Supervisors keep the next higher level of command informed of the status of resources within their area of responsibility and evaluate the resource needs, making adjustments as needed. It is essential that the next higher level of command be made aware of any needs for resource adjustment as early as possible. Each Division or Group Supervisor requires certain information from the Incident Commander. They must know their radio designation (Division A or Ventilation Group), their assigned objectives, and the resources under their command.

Each functional or geographical assignment does not need to be commanded by a Division or Group supervisor. An activity that only requires one unit to effectively handle the situation would not necessitate the implementation of a Division or Group; there is not a coordination problem and obviously the assignment does not cover a large area or require the deployment of several single resources.

**2. Dividing the Incident**

To insure uniformity, there needs to be a standard means of dividing an incident. The following designation system will be used whenever it is necessary to divide an incident:

There will be a letter designation for each exterior side of the incident area. Normally, the addressed or street side of the incident will be designated at Division “A” and the letter designations move clockwise around the incident. Exposures may also be identified with a similar system.



When operating in a multistory structure, it may be necessary to designate geographic locations by floor. This system of geographic designation uses the floor number to identify a Division. For example, the first floor would be designated as Division #1, the second floor Division #2, etc.

Division 3
Division 2
Division 1

### **3. Branches**

At large-scale or complex incidents, the number of Divisions and/or Groups may create a significant span-of-control problem. When this occurs consideration should be given to the implementation of Branches. Branches are also of great value when large numbers of resources are committed to a specific functional activity. A good example would be a fire incident with a major EMS problem. An EMS Branch could be implemented to alleviate these problems.

A Branch is an organizational level between Divisions or Groups and the Incident Commander. A Branch Director is responsible for implementing the portion of the incident action plan appropriate for that particular Branch. Branches are commonly used within the Operations and Logistic sections.

The specific responsibilities of a Branch Director are:

- Implements the portion of the incident action plan appropriate to the Branch function.
- Coordinates the activities of the units within the Branch.
- Evaluates goals and objectives and requests additional resources, if needed.
- Keeps his/her supervisor, whether the IC or the Operations or Logistics Section Chief informed of the status in the Branch's area of responsibility.
- Assigns specific tasks to Divisions or Groups within the Branch.
- Resolves logistical problems associated with the units deployed in the Branch.

### **4. Command Staff Positions**

At large-scale or complex incidents, consideration may have to be given to the functions of safety, liaison and information. If the Incident Commander cannot effectively handle any of these functions, they must be delegated.

These functions should be staffed when their demands begin to affect the IC's ability to perform his/her command functions.

#### **A. Safety Officer**

The individual given the Safety Officer's assignment must monitor and assess the safety hazards and unsafe situations and develop measures for ensuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer may be required to operate in an area(s) other than the Command Post.

The Safety Officer position is implemented to manage the safety of all personnel and to relieve the Incident Commander of direct involvement in this responsibility. The Safety Officer also keeps the IC informed of present problems and potential hazards. He/she should not only identify problems, but should also suggest solutions to minimize the risks. The Incident Commander will use the information provided by the safety Officer during development of the incident action plan.

The Safety Officer has the authority to bypass the chain of command when it is necessary to correct unsafe acts immediately, such as removing all personnel from areas of imminent danger. The IC must ALWAYS be informed of these corrective actions.

For the Safety Officer to be truly effective, he/she must have a broad knowledge of the risks associated with the incident.

#### **B. Liaison Officer**

A Liaison Officer is the point of contact for assisting or coordinating agencies. This function is assigned since the Incident Commander may become overloaded by questions from the number of assisting agencies that some incidents attract.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Liaison Officer is to coordinate the management of assisting or coordinating agencies. This is essential to avoid the duplication of efforts. It allows each agency to perform what it does best. Liaison management provides lines of authority, responsibility, and communication, and increases the control necessary to provide for the safety of personnel from all involved agencies.

#### **C. Public Information Officer (PIO)**

The information Officer is responsible for interface with the media and other appropriate agencies. This function is implemented to relieve the Incident Commander of needing to work with the media, taking him/her away from command responsibilities. The media needs are real and must be met. They need accurate and consistent information. When the IC is not able to handle both the incident and the media, the Information Officer's position should be implemented.

The Information Officer acts as a central clearing point for the dissemination of information, reducing the risk of generating conflicting information from multiple sources.

The Information Officer must coordinate all releases of significant information with the Incident Commander. The IC will decide on sensitive topics, such as the cause of the incident, victims' name, and any other information that should not be (and does not have to be) released immediately to the press.

### **5. General Staff Functions**

As incidents increase in complexity or size, it often becomes necessary for the Incident Commander to delegate major functional responsibilities to maintain an effective workload and span of control.

Effective incident management involves more than just putting water on a fire or merely stabilizing the incident. The IC needs to be aware of the full range of management tools that are available to handle the entire incident. If major functional authority for Operations, Planning, Logistics, and/or Finance is not delegated, the IC

must perform those functions. (Use only the tools necessary to safely and effectively manage the incident.)

### **A. Operations**

Operations is responsible for management of all tactical operations at the incident. The person in charge of Operations is called the Operations Section chief.

Operations is implemented when the Incident Commander is faced with a complex incident having major demands in one or more of the remaining major functional areas. For example, the IC may be faced with a rapidly escalating incident with a significant need to evaluate strategy and to develop alternative tactical options. Faced with a major functional responsibility in addition to management of tactical Operations, the IC may choose to staff Operations.

Another reason to staff Operations would be multiple functional demands placed on the Incident Commander, such as the Planning, Logistics and Finance workload generated by a hazardous materials incident. When several major functions have been delegated, the IC may need to staff Operations to maintain an effective span of control.

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the direction and coordination of all tactical Operations. As a part of this overall responsibility, Operations also:

- Assists the IC in developing strategic goals and tactical objectives for the incident.
- Develops operational plans
- Requests or releases resources through the IC.
- Consults with the IC about the overall incident action plan.
- Keeps the IC informed of situation and resource status within Operations.
- Supervises the staging area manager.
- The most common reason for staffing Operations is to relieve span-of-control problems for the Incident Commander. A complex incident, in which the IC needs assistance determining strategic goals and tactical objectives, may also require implementing Operations.

### **B. Planning**

Planning is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. The person in charge of Planning is called the Planning Section Chief.

When faced with a complex or rapidly escalating incident, the Incident Commander may require assistance with the Planning function. Planning must include an assessment of the present and projected situation. In addition to assessment of the situation status, there is a critical need to maintain information about resources committed to the incident and projected resource requirements.

The Planning Section Chief is responsible for managing information about incident status and resources. As a part of this major responsibility, Planning also performs the following functions:

- Collection of information regarding the incident and resources.
- Evaluation of information received from a variety of sources.
- Dissemination of information to the IC, Operations, and incident personnel, as necessary.
- Use of information in preparation of the incident action plan.

Planning assists the Incident Commander in:

- Developing an effective incident action plan based on projected needs.
- Modifying the incident action plan to meet changing needs
- Anticipating changing resource needs.
- Preparing alternate strategies and tactical options based on incident potential.

The Planning Section Chief may need to establish functional units to maintain an acceptable span of control. These units may include, but are not limited to, the following:

SITUATION STATUS UNIT (SITSTAT)  
RESOURCE STATUS UNIT (RESTAT)  
DOCUMENTATION UNIT  
DEMOBILIZATION UNIT  
TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

### **C. Logistics**

Logistics is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident. The person in charge of Logistics is called the Logistics Section Chief.

As incidents grow in size, complexity, and duration, the logistical needs of the operating forces also increase. Even in a relatively simple structure fire, there are requirements for breathing air supply, drinking water, and emergency medical care. Long duration incidents of any type require provisions for feeding personnel, toilet facilities, refueling of apparatus, and a myriad of other service and support resources.

The Logistics Section Chief manages service and support resources required for the incident. The Logistics Section Chief is responsible for all logistics functions needed for an incident. This individual should establish functional units when needed to maintain an acceptable workload and span of control. Branches may be required within Logistics to maintain span of control when several functional units are established.

SERVICE BRANCH  
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT  
MEDICAL UNIT (for emergency personnel, not civilians)

FOOD UNIT  
SUPPORT BRANCH  
SUPPLY UNIT  
FACILITIES UNIT  
GROUND SUPPORT UNIT

**D. Finance**

Finance is responsible for tracking all incident costs and evaluating the financial considerations of the incident. The person in charge of Finance is called the Finance Section Chief.

Financial considerations are not a major factor during most incident operations. However, when a department is involved in any incident that requires the use of private-sector resources, the financial considerations can be extensive.

The Finance Section Chief must provide for the documentation of all incident costs, and provide guidance to the Incident Commander on financial issues that may have an impact on incident operations. These responsibilities include:

- Future payments
- Future budgeting
- Payment of personnel costs
- Cost recovery

The Finance section is usually staffed in large-scale or complex incidents. A likely candidate for Finance Section Chief might be the chief financial officer of the jurisdiction in which the incident occurs.

The Finance Section Chief is responsible for all Finance functions needed for an incident. This individual should establish functional units when needed to maintain an acceptable workload and span of control. These units could include:

TIME UNIT  
PROCUREMENT UNIT  
COMPENSATION/CLAIMS UNIT  
COST UNIT

**Example of expanding the command structure on a medium sized incident:**

**Initial rundown:**

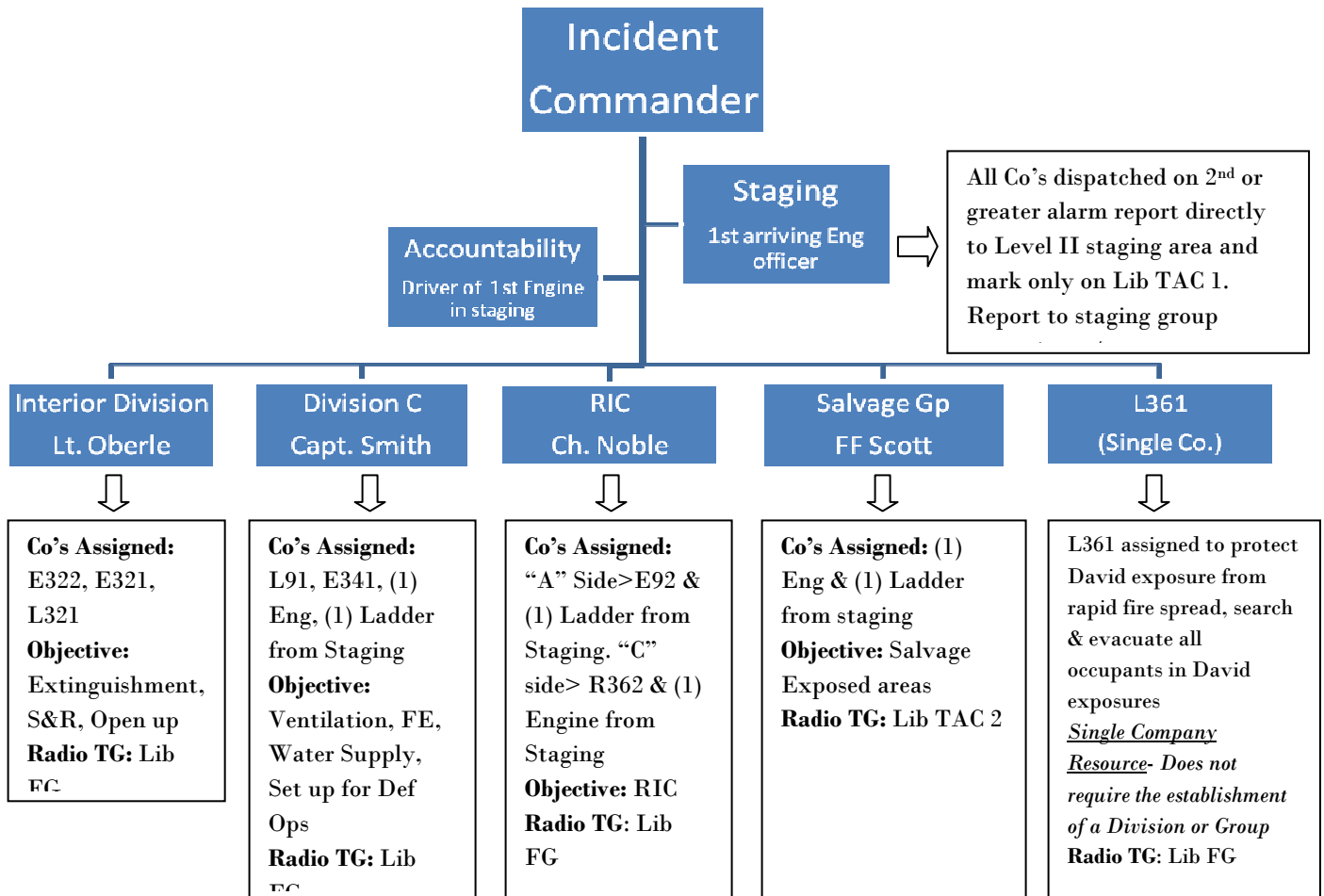
DelComm L321 o/s Lt. Price has a fixed command in the “A” side parking lot. We have a working fire in a single story type two constructed strip shopping center with exposures on both the “B Baker” and “D David” sides. Accountability will initially be at E322. We will be going offensive with E322 and 321 attacking with a 2 ½ ” handline and L321 conducting a primary searching on the fire building. E321 lay big into E322 then assist with attack. L361 come in and set up to protect the D David exposures on the “A” side. DelComm upgrade this incident to a second alarm and have the first arriving officer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm assignment set up staging on Liberty TAC 1 one block north of the scene.

**Expanding early:**

Command to all o/s companies, Lt. Oberle will be the interior division supervisor with E322, 321 and L321 and will operate initially on Liberty FG.

Lt. Smith of L91 will be the Division C Supervisor with his crew L91 and E341. Lt. Smith your division will also operate initially on Liberty FG.

(Assigned from staging) Lt. Jones from E441 will be the Salvage group supervisor with his crew E441 and L351. Lt. Smith your group will operate on Liberty TAC 2



## SUMMARY

The functional positions that are staffed depend on the needs of the incident. As a general rule, the larger or more complex the incident, the more need there is to delegate functional responsibilities. Functional responsibilities for any positions that are not staffed remain with the Incident Commander.

In situations where the IC needs to delegate functional authority and the functional considerations are not extensive, some functions may be combined. For example: Planning and Logistics or Information Officer and Liaison Officer. However, some functional assignments should not be combined in a complex incident due to their critical impact on safety or incident control.

The Incident Command system is a resource that can be applied on an as-needed basis. It is a practical, realistic approach to incident management. If fully understood, it will not only make your job easier, but it will also make it possible for all of us to become truly professional emergency incident managers.

Understand the entire system, but apply only what is necessary in your day-to-day incidents. Regular use of the ICS provides the training for future expansion. When the correct terms are used, relationships are established and guidelines are practiced so that the management of larger incidents will be built on a strong foundation. Except for the simplest incident, there is always more than one way to organize an incident. Be flexible and use your imagination.

Whether the incident is a small grass fire or the unique, one-in-a-career incident, your thorough knowledge of the Incident Command System will ensure a safer, more effective approach to emergency incident management.

### **A. Command Response Guidelines**

#### 1. Reasons for the Command Response:

- The Incident Commander of all incidents, regardless of that person's rank, has the responsibility of taking care of various duties. These duties are, but are not limited to: Life Safety, Incident Stabilization, and Property Conservation. During the course of the incident, the I/C may feel that the Emergency has escalated to an environment that may need additional support for command staff positions.
- These supervisory positions could be Operations, Staging, Water Supply, Safety, Public Information, Logistics, Accountability, Planning and Finance. These positions are the basic levels that are needed to fulfill the incident command structure.
- It may also be necessary to have Sector and Division Commanders included in this response.

## 2. Levels of Command Response:

- Special Call Response: this type of response would generally be used when the I/C feels that only a limited number of staff officers will be needed to handle the incident. Example: Chief 341 has a fire in Concord Township and feels with the equipment and personnel on the scene, he needs only a response from Liberty Township and calls for Chief 320 and Prevention 321.
- County Wide Response: this type of response would generally be used on a large-scale incident, when a great deal of command staff positions would need to be filled. Example: Chief 310 is on the scene of a downtown fire in Ashley. Due to conditions and limited manpower, Chief 310 feels that he needs as many command officers as possible to support him during this emergency. He notifies the DelComm to dispatch a county-wide command response.

## 3. Notification of Command Response by DelComm

- When the I/C has decided that a command response is needed, he shall notify the DelComm of this request.
- Depending on the type of request, the DelComm telecommunicator will set off the appropriate departments' tones and dispatch those department's command officers. If the department also has telephone or alpha-numeric pagers, these will also be activated.
- Upon notification, each command officer shall notify the DELCOMM of the following:
  - Who will be responding.
  - Response time to the incident.
- When the DelComm receives notification of response, they will by radio or if possible by telephone, advise the Incident Commander of all information regarding the command response.

## 4. Command Response Assignment

It should be understood by all participants of the Command response, that we will be used as a support resource and not as a replacement for the established Incident Commander.

## **GLOSSARY**

**BRANCH** - A supervisory level established to manage the span of control above the division, group, or sector level; usually applied to operations or logistics functions.

**DIVISION** - Companies and/or crews working on the same geographic area.

**FIXED COMMAND** - A situation where the incident commander maintains a fixed command location which is usually outside of a structure and devotes all of his/her energies to command.

**GROUP** - Companies and/or crews working on the same task or objective, although not necessarily in the same location.

**INCIDENT COMMAND** - Responsible for overall management of the incident and consists of the Incident Commander, either single or unified command, and any assigned supporting staff.

**MOBILE COMMAND** - A situation where manning and/or experience factors require the company officer to accompany his/her crew in their initial efforts.

**PASSING OF COMMAND** - An option that can be used by a first-arriving company officer, if there is a compelling reason that prevents that officer from assuming command of the incident. Passing command directs the next-arriving unit, whether it is a company or chief, to assume command. The initial radio report will include an announcement that command should be assumed by the next arriving company.

**SAFETY OFFICER** - A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations and for developing measures for ensuring personnel safety.

**SECTION CHIEF** - Used at complex incidents so that the incident commander can focus on overall strategy while the section chief focuses on the tactics that are required to get the job done. Examples of this could be “operations, logistics, or planning”.

**SECTOR** - Companies and/or crews that have been assigned on the basis of either geography or function.

**SIGNAL “O”** - Indicates last Fire Company or unit is leaving the scene. Last Engine, Ladder, Chief, Prevention, etc. transmits when leaving the scene.

**SITUATION CONTAINED** - Indicates the fire or emergency is contained or stabilized. Companies involved will be “tied up” unless designated as being “in service”.

**SPAN OF CONTROL** - The number of subordinates who report to one supervisor at any level within the organization. When speaking of emergency incidents, an individual who has command or supervisory responsibilities in an IMS normally should not directly supervise more than five people.

**TRANSFER OF COMMAND** - Whenever one person relinquishes command of an incident and another individual becomes the incident commander.

**WORKING INCIDENT** - Indicates the fire situation is of such seriousness that companies or units other than those initially arriving may be needed, and that those companies enroute should be prepared to go to work.