

Command Procedures

Overview and Endorsement

The Northeast Fire Chief's Association (NFCA) endorses the use of these command procedures to provide safe and efficient emergency incident operations. These procedures meet or exceed the requirements issued by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all governmental agencies and organizations to work together during domestic incidents. NIMS is a comprehensive approach to incident management that is applicable to all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines.

These command procedures are designed to provide a flexible framework and standardized organizational structure, to manage emergency scene operations and provide for scene safety, through the use of a comprehensive Incident Command System.

Purpose

In order to effectively manage personnel and resources and to provide for the safety and welfare of personnel, we will always operate within the Incident Command System at the incident scene. This procedure identifies the Standard Operating Guidelines to be employed in establishing Command and all the components of the Incident Command System.

Command Procedures are designed to:

- Fix the responsibility for Command on a certain individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies, and Command officers.
- Ensure that a strong, direct, and visible Command will be established from the onset of the incident.
- Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander and the other individuals operating within the Incident Command System.
- Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning, and decision-making.
- Provide a system for the orderly transfer of Command to subsequent arriving officers.

Responsibilities of Command

The Incident Commander is responsible for the completion of the tactical objectives. **The Tactical Objectives (listed in order of priority) are:**

- A. Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
- B. Stabilize the incident and provide for life safety.
- C. Conserve property.
- D. Provide for the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel. This priority is ongoing throughout the incident.

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The Incident Command System is used to facilitate the completion of the Tactical Objectives. The Incident Commander is the person who drives the command system towards that end.

The Incident Commander is responsible for building a Command structure that matches the organizational needs of the incident to achieve the completion of the Tactical Objectives for the incident. **The Functions of Command** define standard activities that are performed by the Incident Commander to achieve the Tactical Objectives.

of Command

The Functions of Command include:

- Assume and announce Command and establish an effective operating position (Command Post).
- Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up).
- Initiate, maintain, and control the communications process.
- Identify the overall strategy, develop an incident management plan, and assign companies and personnel consistent with plans and standard operating procedures.
- Develop an effective Incident Command organization.
- Review, evaluate, and revise (as needed) the Incident Management plan.
- Provide for the continuity, transfer, and termination of Command.

The Incident Commander is responsible for all of these functions. As Command is transferred, so is the responsibility for these functions. The first five (5) functions must be addressed immediately from the initial assumption of Command.

Establishing Command

The first fire department member or unit to arrive at the scene of a multiple unit response shall assume command of the incident. The initial Incident Commander shall remain in Command until Command is transferred or the incident is stabilized and Command is terminated.

One or two company responses that are not going to escalate beyond the commitment of these companies do not require a formal activation of the Incident Command System (as on-scene report with the assumption of Command). The first arriving unit or officer will, however remain responsible for any needed Command functions.

The first arriving fire department unit initiates the command process by giving an initial radio report. The **Radio Report** shall include:

- A. Unit designation of the unit arriving on the scene.
- B. A brief description of the incident situation, (i.e. building size, occupancy, Hazmat release, multi-vehicle accident, etc.)
- C. Obvious conditions (working fire, Hazmat spill, multiple patients, etc.).
- D. Brief description of action taken.
- E. Declaration of Strategy (for structural fires this would be declaring an offensive or defensive mode).
- F. Any obvious safety concerns.
- G. Assumption and identification of Command.
- H. Assume & Announce accountability location.

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I. Initial reports.

Example:

For an offensive structure fire -

"Engine 1 is on the scene of a large two story school with a working fire on the second floor. Engine 1 is laying a supply line and going in with a hand-line to the second floor for search and rescue. This is an offensive fire attack. Engine 1 will be Drive Command."

For an defensive fire -

"Engine 1 is on the scene of a medium size warehouse fully involved with exposures to the east. Engine 1 is laying a supply line and attacking the fire with a stang gun and a hand-line to the exposure for search and rescue and fire attack. This is a defensive fire. Engine 1 will be Huning Command."

For an E.M.S. incident -

"Engine 1 is on the scene with a multi-vehicle accident. Give me the balance of a 2 and 1 medical with three ambulances. Engine 1 will be Central Ave. Command."

Radio Designation

The radio designation "**COMMAND**" will be used along with the geographical location of the incident (i.e. "5th Street Command", "Elm Street Command"). This designation will not change throughout the duration of the incident. The designation of "Command" will remain with the officer currently in command of the incident throughout the event.

Command Options

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 Command Post should be a top priority. At most incidents the initial Incident Commander will be the Company Officer. The following Command options define the Company Officer's direct involvement in tactical activities and the modes of Command that may be utilized.

Showing - Investigative Mode:

These situations generally require investigation by the initial arriving company while other units remain in level one staging. The officer should go with the company to investigate while utilizing a portable radio to command the incident.

Fast Attack - Mobile Command Mode:

Situations that require immediate action to stabilize, requires the Company Officer's assistance, and direct involvement in the attack. In these situations the Company Officer goes with the crew to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Examples of these situations include:

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- Offensive fire attacks (especially in marginal situations).
- Critical life safety situations (i.e. rescue) must be achieved in a compressed time.
- Any incident where the safety and welfare of fire fighters is a major concern.
- Obvious working incidents that require further investigation by the Company Officer.

Where fast intervention is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the Company Officer's involvement in the attack without neglecting command responsibilities. The Fast-attack-mobile Command mode should not last more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

- A. Situation is stabilized.
- B. Situation is not stabilized and the Company Officer must withdraw to the exterior and establish a Command Post. At some time 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. No crew should remain in a hazardous area without radio communication capabilities.
- C. Command is transferred to another Company or Command Officer. When a Command Officer is assuming Command, the Command Officer may opt to return the Company Officer to his/her crew, utilize the Company Officer as staff support, or assign him/her as a Sector Officer.

Command Mode - Stationary Command Post:

Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate strong, direct, overall Command. In such cases, the Company Officer will initially assume an exterior, safe, and effective command position and maintain that position until relieved by a Chief Officer. The tactical worksheet shall be initiated and utilized to assist in managing these types of incidents.

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

- A. The officer may "move up" within the Company and place the Company into action with two or three members. One of the crewmembers will serve as the acting Company Officer and must be provided with a portable radio. The collective and individual capabilities and experience of the crew will regulate this action.
- B. The officer may assign the crew members to work under the supervision of another Company Officer. In such cases, the Officer assuming Command must communicate with the Officer of the other Company and indicate the assignment of those personnel.
- C. The officer may elect to assign the crew members to perform staff functions to assist Command, such as information reconnaissance, filling out the tactical worksheet, etc.

A Company Officer assuming Command has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in the tactical activities, but continues to be fully responsible for the Command functions. The initiative and judgment of the Officer are of great importance. The modes identified are guidelines to assist the

Officer in planning appropriate actions. The actions initiated should conform to one of the above-mentioned modes of operation.

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Transfer of Command

Command is transferred to improve the quality of the Command organization. When Command is transferred it should trigger upgrades in the Command structure. The following guidelines outline the transfer of Command.

- A. The first fire department member arriving on the scene will automatically assume Command. This will normally be a Company Officer, but could be any fire department member up to and including the Fire Chief.
- B. The first arriving Company Officer will assume Command after the Transfer of Command procedures have been completed (assuming an equal or higher ranking officer has not already assumed Command).
- C. The first arriving Command Officer should assume Command of the incident following Transfer of Command procedures.
- D. The second arriving Command Officer should report to the Command Post, to assume the Support Officer position. The first arriving Chief should report to the Command Post and assume the roll of Senior Advisor (overall Incident Commander).
- E. Assumption of Command is discretionary for Senior Staff.

In certain situations, it may be advantageous for the first arriving Incident Commander (i.e. Company Officer) to transfer Command to the next Company ON THE SCENE. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving Company requires a full crew (i.e., high-rise or an immediate rescue situation) and another Company or Command Officer is on the scene. When a Chief Officer arrives at the scene at the same time as the initial arriving Company, the Chief Officer should assume Command of the incident.

"Passing Command" to a unit that is not on the scene creates a gap in the Command process and compromises incident management. To prevent this "gap", **COMMAND SHALL NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO AN OFFICER WHO IS NOT ON THE SCENE.** It is preferable to have the initial arriving Company Officer continue to operate in the Fast-Attack mode until Command can be transferred to an arriving on-scene unit.

Should a situation occur where a later arriving Company or Command officer cannot locate or communicate with Command (after several radio attempts), they will assume and announce their assumption of Command and initiate whatever actions are necessary to confirm the safety of the missing crew.

Within the chain of Command, the actual transfer of Command will be regulated by the following procedure:

- A. The officer assuming Command will communicate with the person being relieved by radio or face-to-face. Face-to-face is the preferred method to transfer Command.
- B. The person being relieved will brief the officer assuming Command indicating at least the following:

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1. General situation status:
 - a. Incident conditions (fire location and extent, Hazmat spill or release, number of patients, etc.)
 - b. Incident Management Plan.
 - c. Completion of the Tactical Objectives.
 - d. Safety considerations.
2. Deployment and assignments of operating companies and personnel.
3. Appraisals of need for additional resources.

- C. The person being relieved of Command should review the tactical worksheet with the officer assuming Command. This sheet provides the most effective framework for Command transfer as it outlines the location and status of personnel and resources in a standard form that should be well known to all members.

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 outlined Transfer of Command process has been completed. The person being relieved of Command will be assigned to the best advantage by the Officer assuming Command.

A ranking Officer may elect to have a subordinate continue the role of Incident Commander. In cases where an individual is effectively commanding an incident, and satisfactory progress is being made to bring the incident under control. It may be desirable for that person to continue in an active Command role. The ranking Officer must determine that the Incident Commander is completely aware of the position and function of operating companies and the general status of the situation. In these cases, the arriving ranking Officer may assume a supportive role in the overall Command function. The ranking Officer will assume responsibility for the incident by virtue of being involved in the Command process. The decision to transfer and assume command lies with the ranking officer arriving on the scene.

Tidbits

The response and arrival of additional ranking Officers on the incident scene strengthens the overall Command function. As the incident escalates, the Incident Commander should use these Command Officers to fill Division or Group, Branch, and Section positions, strengthening the Command structure. Additional officers should be assigned to Accountability Officer positions as needed.

When the first arriving unit is a 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. A vehicle that provides appropriate work space for the Incident Commander and staff personnel, lighting, communications equipment, supplies reference items, and some isolation from outside distractions will make Command more effective.

Company and Command Officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding, unless such communications are required to ensure that Command functions are initiated and

completed. This requires the initial Incident Commander to give a clear on-the-scene report and continue to give updated progress reports as needed.

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Chief Officers and Staff Personnel should report directly to the Command Post to notify the Incident Commander of their availability to assume incident duties. These personnel should park their vehicles in a location that does not restrict access to the scene and report to the Command Post for assignment.

The Incident Commander is responsible for managing the incident. The fire department empowers that individual (the Incident Commander) with the authority to turn his/her decisions into actions (formulate a plan and assign companies). Simply stated, the Incident Commander outranks everybody*. If a higher ranking Officer wants to affect a change in the management of an incident, he/she must first be on the scene of the incident, and then utilize the Transfer of Command procedure.

*Anyone can effect a change in incident management in extreme situations relating to safety by notifying Command and initiating corrective action.

The Incident Command System never "sleeps". The I.C.S. is in a constant state of readiness.

Staff

The incident scene is often a dynamic, intense, and exciting place. As the incident grows into and past the requirements of a first alarm assignment, the Incident Commander can become overloaded and 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 in the incident, is support. The Incident Commander should utilize the next arriving Command Officer as a Support Officer. If the Incident Commander is still playing catch up with the functions of Command, the only reason to assign the second Command Officer to a sector is if safety is an extreme in that sector.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Support Officer:

- Define, evaluate, and recommend changes to the plan.
- Provide direction relating to tactical priorities, specific critical fireground factors, and safety.
- Evaluate the need for additional resources.
- Assign logistics responsibilities.
- Assist with the tactical worksheet for control and accountability.
- Evaluate the fireground organization and span of control.
- Other duties as necessary.

Senior Advisor

The Senior Advisor will normally be the highest-ranking Officer in the Command Post. The Officer serving as "Command" and Support Officer would 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 "fatherly" advice to the "Command" and/or Support Officer. In this role the Senior Advisor is essentially acting as the overall Incident Commander.

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Role and Responsibilities of the Senior Advisor

- Review and evaluate the plan, and initiate any needed changes.
- Provide on-going review of the overall incident (THE BIG PICTURE).
- Review the organizational structure, initiate change or expansion to meet incident needs.
- Initiate Section and Branch functions as required.
- Provide a liaison with other city agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants.
- Other duties as necessary.

In order to maintain continuity and overall effectiveness, the Senior Advisor and Support Officer must be in the Command Post with the Incident Commander.

When a Support Officer and Senior Advisor are supporting "Command" in the Command Post there are three people performing the functions of Command. They are working as a team to enhance the Command process and make the functions of Command more effective. The Officer assigned to communicate directly to Companies, Sectors, or Branches will use the radio designation "Command", and should be the only member of the Command Team talking on the tactical radio channel.

Command Structure

It is the responsibility of Command to develop an organizational structure, using standard operating procedures, to effectively manage the incident scene. The development of the organizational structure should begin with deployment of the first arriving fire department 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 the harmonious 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/Groups.

Task Level - Task objectives assigned to Companies.

The Strategic Level involves the overall Command of the incident. The Command Team is responsible for the strategic level of the command structure. The Strategic Plan defines where and when resources will be assigned to the incident and control the situation. This plan is the basis for developing a Command organization, assigning all resources and establishing Tactical Objectives by priority. The Strategic Level responsibilities include:

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- Determining the appropriate strategy: **OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE**
- Establishing a strategic plan for the incident.
- Setting priorities.
- Obtaining and allocating resources.
- Predicting outcomes and planning.
- Assigning specific objectives to tactical level units.

The Tactical Level directs activities toward specific objectives. Tactical Level Officers include Divisions/Groups Supervisors, who are in charge of specific geographic areas, grouped resources or functions, and supervising personnel assigned. A Division/Group assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments, within the boundaries of the overall plan and safety conditions. The accumulated achievements of Tactical Objectives should accomplish the Strategic Level goals.

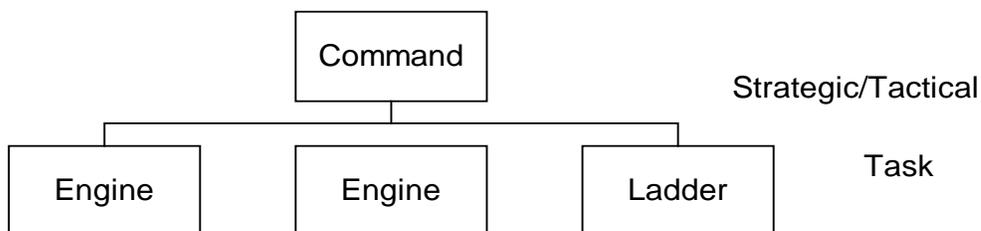
Command Structure - Basic Organization

The Task Level refers to those activities normally accomplished by individual companies or specific personnel. The task level is where the work is actually done. Task level activities are routinely supervised by Company Officers. The accumulated achievements of Task Level activities should accomplish Tactical Objectives.

Examples:

The most basic Command structure combines all three levels of the Command structure. The Company Officer on a single engine response to a dumpster fire determines the strategy and tactics, and supervises the crew doing the task.

The basic structure for a "routine" 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.



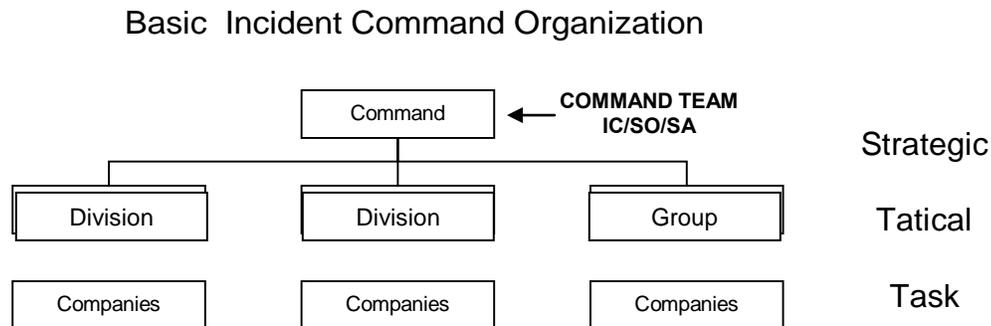
or Group Supervisors

Complex emergency situations often exceed the capability of one Officer to effectively manage the entire operation. The Incident Commander should group companies to work in Divisions or Groups. Divisions and Groups reduce the span of control to more manageable smaller sized units. Divisions and Groups allow the Incident Commander to communicate principally with Divisions and Group Supervisors, rather than multiple, individual Company Officers, thus providing an effective Command structure and incident scene organization. Generally, Divisions and Groups responsibilities should be assigned early in the incident, typically to the first Company assigned to an alpha-designated area (a

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Division) or function (a Group). This early establishment of Divisions and Groups provides an effective Incident Command organization framework on which the operation can be built and expanded.

As Divisions and Groups are implemented, Command continues to operate at the strategic level, determining the overall strategy to deal with the incident.



Command Structure – Divisions and Groups, Basic Operational Approach

Normally, at this type of incident, a company officer can effectively supervise his/her own crew and direct and coordinate the efforts of one or two additional companies assigned to his/her Division or Group. As operations expand in complexity and size, and as additional chief officers become available, the Incident Commander should assign them to relieve company officers and assume Division or Group responsibilities.

The use of Divisions or Groups in the Command organization provides a standard system to divide the incident scene into smaller subordinate Command units or areas.

The number of Divisions or Groups that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander varies. In fast moving complex operations, a span of control of no more than five Divisions or Groups is indicated. In slower moving less complex operations, the Incident Commander may effectively manage more Divisions or Groups.

Where the number of Divisions or Groups exceed the span of control that the Incident Commander can effectively manage, the Incident Organization should be divided to Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several Divisions or Groups and should be assigned a separate radio channel.

Division or Group procedures also provide an array of major functions that may be selectively implemented according to the needs of a particular situation. This places responsibility for the details and execution of each particular function on a Division or Group Supervisor.

When effective Divisions or Groups have been established, the Incident Commander can concentrate on overall strategy and resource allocation, allowing the Division or Group Supervisors to manage their assigned units. The Incident Commander determines strategic goals and assigns tactical objectives and resources to the Divisions or Groups. Each Division or Group Supervisor is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at his/her disposal in order to complete the Tactical Objectives assigned by the Incident Commander. Division or Group Supervisors are also responsible for communicating needs and progress to Command.

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Divisions and/or Groups reduce the overall amount of radio communications. Most routine communications within a Division or Group should be conducted in a face-to-face manner between Company Officers and their Division or Group Supervisor. This process reduces unnecessary radio traffic and increases ability to transmit critical radio communications.

The safety of fire fighting personnel represents the major reason for establishing Divisions and/or Groups. Each Division or Group Supervisor must maintain communication with assigned Companies to control both their position and function. The Division or Group Supervisor must constantly monitor all hazardous situations and risks to personnel. The Division or Group Supervisor must take appropriate action to ensure that companies are operating in a safe and effective manner.

Command Should Begin to Assign Divisions or Groups Based on the Following Factors:

- Situations which will eventually involve a number of Companies or functions, beyond the capability of Command to directly control. Command should initially assign Division or Group responsibilities to the first Companies assigned to a geographic area or function until Chief Officers are available.
- When Command can no longer effectively cope with (or manage) the number of Companies currently involved in the operation.
- When companies are involved in complex operations (Large interior or geographic area, hazardous materials, technical rescues, etc.)
- When companies are operating from tactical positions which Command has little or no direct control over (i.e. out of sight).
- When the situation 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.).

When establishing a Division or Group, the Incident Commander will assign each Division or Group Supervisor:

- A. Tactical Objectives.
- B. A radio designation (Division A, Ventilation Group, Division Bravo, etc.)
- C. The identity of resources assigned to the Division or Group.

or Groups Will Be Regulated By The Following Guidelines:

- It will be the ongoing responsibility of Command to assign Divisions or Groups as required for effective emergency operations.
- Command shall advise each Division or Group Supervisor of specific Tactical Objectives. The overall strategy and plan will and should be also provided (time permitting), so the Division or Group Supervisor has some idea of what's going on and how his assignment fits in.
- The number of Companies assigned to a Division or Group will depend upon conditions within that Division or Group. Command will maintain an awareness of the number of Companies operating within a Division or Group and the capability of that Division or Group Supervisor to effectively direct operations. If a Division or Group Supervisor cannot control the resources

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within the Division or Group, he/she should notify the Incident Commander so that Division or Group responsibilities can be split or other corrective action taken. In most cases five (5) Companies represents the maximum span of control for a Division or Group Supervisor.

- Divisions assigned to specific operating areas will be designated by directions (East Division, North Division, etc.). Where incident involve odd geographic boundaries, it may be confusing to assign directional designations to Divisions (East Division, etc.). An alternate use of Division A, B, C, or D may be used (see page 28). Division "A" would be the front of the building and the other Divisions would go clockwise around the building in alphabetical order. In multi-story occupancies, Divisions will usually be indicated by floor numbers (Division 5 indicates 5th floor). In some cases the floor sector identification may be subdivided into geographic areas such as "Division 15 East" or "Division 15 West" depending on stairwell and floor access.
- Functional Groups will be identified by the function (Loss Control Group, Safety Group, Ventilation Group, etc.).

Division or Group Supervisors will use the Division or Group designation in radio communications (i.e. "Division B to Command").

Divisions or Groups will be commanded by a Supervisor. Division or Group Supervisors can be Chief Officers, Company Officers, or any other Fire Department member designated by Command.

In many cases, the initial Division or Group responsibility will be given to the Company Officer who receives the initial assignment to a basic tactical position or function (Division A, Treatment Group, Roof Division, etc.)

Command will assign a Command Officer to assume Division or Group responsibilities as soon as possible.

Regular Transfer of Command procedures will be followed in transferring Division or Group Supervisor responsibility.

In some cases, a Division or Group 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 Division or Group, evaluate and report conditions to the Incident Commander, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.

The Division or Group Supervisor must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the Division or Group Supervisor to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for his/her area of responsibility. Division or Group Supervisors assigned to operate within the hazard zone must be accompanied by a partner.

Division or Group Supervisors will be responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their sector. This requires each Division or Group Supervisor to:

- A. Complete objectives assigned by Command.
- B. Account for all assigned personnel.

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- C. Ensure that operations are conducted safely.
- D. Monitor work progress.
- E. Redirect activities as necessary.
- F. Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent sectors.
- G. Monitor welfare of Division or Group personnel.
- H. Request additional resources as needed.
- I. Provide Command with essential and frequent progress reports.
- J. Re-allocate resources within the Division or Group.

The Division or Group Supervisor should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.

The primary function of Company Officer working within a Division or Group is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned task. Company Officers will advise their Division or Group Supervisor of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All request for additional resources or assistance within a Division or Group must be directed to the Division or Group Supervisor. Division or Group Supervisors will communicate with "Command".

Each Division or Group Supervisor will keep Command informed of conditions and progress in the Division or Group through regular progress reports. The Division or Group Supervisor must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.

Command must be advised immediately of significant changes, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous conditions, accidents, structural collapse, etc.

When a Company is assigned from Staging to an Operating Division or Group, the Company will be told what Division or Group and which Division or Group Supervisor they will be reporting to. The

Division or Group Supervisor will be informed of which particular companies or units have been assigned by the Incident Commander.

It is then the responsibility of the Division or Group Supervisor to contact the assigned Company to transmit any instructions relative to the specific action requested.

Division or Group Supervisors will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their Division or Group. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward the Division or Group objectives.

Division or Group Supervisors will insure an orderly and thorough reassignment of crews to Rehab Group. Crews must report to Rehab intact to facilitate accountability.

Structure - Expanding the Organization: Branch Officers

As the incident organization grows in complexity, and the span of control with Divisions or Groups is maximized, the Incident Commander may implement an additional intermediate level within the Command Organization. The Branch level of the organization is designed to provide COORDINATION between the Division/Group and Command. Branch Directors supervise and manage a number of Divisions or Groups, and report to the Incident Commander.

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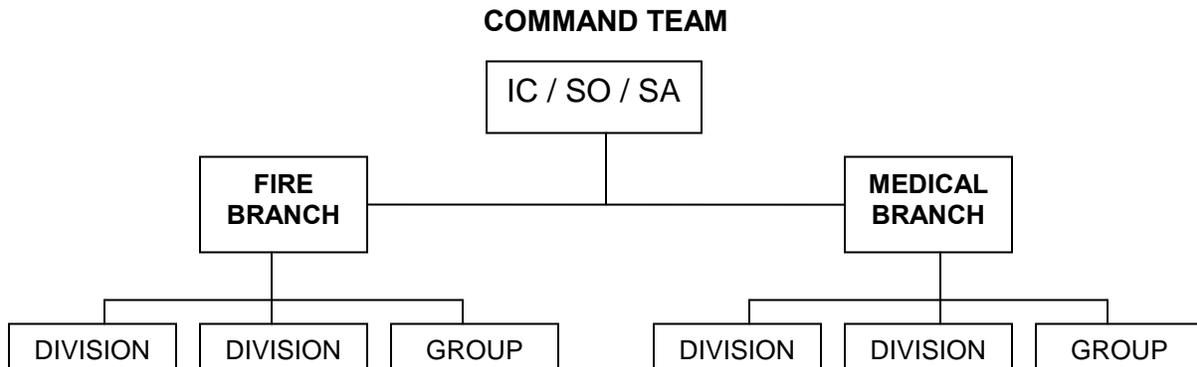
Strategic Level - Incident Commander

Coordination Level – Branch Director

Tactical Level - Division or Group Supervisor

Task Level - Companies

Branch Directors should be utilized at incidents where the span of control with Divisions and Groups is maximized, incidents involving two or more distinctly different major management components (i.e. a large fire with a major evacuation, a large fire with a large number of patients). The Incident Commander may elect to assign Branch Directors as forward positions to coordinate the activities between sectors.



The intent of the Branch Level of the Command structure is to split an incident into manageable components and reduce the span of control. Branch Directors will normally be utilized at very large-scale incidents that involve two or more major components. The following types of incidents are examples where Branch Directors should be utilized:

- A Haz Mat incident that requires a major evacuation.
- A large-scale incident spread over a wide geographic area.
- An incident with mass casualties and a significant hazard (for example: fire, Haz Mat, plane crash, floods, etc.)
- Campaign high-rise fires
- Any incident where the number of Divisions or Groups exceed the span of control that can be effectively managed by the incident commander.

Branch Directors manage and direct activities of Division or Group Supervisors. Branch Directors should operate on separate radio channels if possible. The radio designation of Branch Directors should reflect the function or geographic area of the Branch (for example: Fire Control Branch, Medical Branch, etc.). When Command implements Branch Directors, the Division or Group Supervisors should be notified by Command of their new Directors. This information should include:

- A. What Branch the Division or Group is now assigned to.
- B. The radio channel the branch (and Division or Group) is operating on.

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Radio Communications should then be directed from the Division or Group Supervisor to the Branch Director -- instead of Command. Division or Group Supervisors will relay this information to the Companies working in their Division or Group.

Radio Channel Assignments to Branches

Branch Director positions should be assigned to Chief Officers. They should utilize a Command Officer's vehicle as a forward Branch Command Post (when feasible). In these situations, Command must assign Officers in the Command Post to monitor each Branch radio channel.

Command may occasionally be faced with a situation where he/she has very little control over operational Divisions or Groups. This would include Divisions in conflicting positions (personnel blasting one another with hose streams), multiple Divisions spilling into each other, and defensive fire operations in one area and offensive operations in the adjoining fire area. Command should utilize a Branch Director in these types of situations to go to a forward position and coordinate the activities of these Division or Group.

Branch Directors are not limited to Operations. Any of the Sections may also implement Branches within their individual areas as needed.

Structure - Expansion to Major Operations

Sections

As a small incident escalates into a major incident, additional organizational support will be required. As additional ranking Officers arrive on the scene, the Command Post organization (Team) may be expanded through the involvement of Command Officers and staff personnel to fill section positions. Section Officers assist the Incident Command Staff with the overall management of the incident scene and operate at the Strategic Level. The Incident Commander implements Sections as needed, depending on the situation, and priority of needs (One incident may only require a Logistics Section while another incident may require all the sections to be implemented.)

Where the communications system permits, Section Officers should operate on separate radio channels and utilize the radio designation that identifies their section (Planning, Logistics, etc.).

During the initial phases of the incident the initial Incident Commander and his/her staff normally carry out these four section functions. The Fire Department's involvement and needs at the incident scene can be divided into four sections. They are:

LOGISTICS SECTION

PLANNING SECTION

OPERATIONS SECTION

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

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The Logistics Section is the support mechanism for the organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. The Logistics Section is also responsible for the accountability of all the personnel working in the hazard zone of the incident. Command may assign the Logistics Section its own radio channel. The Logistic Section Officer may establish sectors or branches for his/her section as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Manage rehab.
- Manage personnel accountability within the hazard zone.
- Manage staging
- Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment.
- Forecast and obtain future resource needs (coordinate with the Planning Section).
- Provide any needed communications equipment.
- Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment.

- Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per Command.
- Provide food and associated supplies.
- Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities.
- Coordinate immediate Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.
- Provide any other logistical needs as requested by Command.
- Supervise assigned personnel

The Planning 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 the Incident Commander's "clearing house" for information. This allows the Incident Commander to have a single person provide him/her with information instead of having to deal with dozens of information sources. 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

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

The Operations Section is responsible for the tactical priorities, and the safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Chief uses the tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to Division or Group Supervisors and Branch Directors.

Command Procedures

and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander.
- Implement the Incident Management Plan.
- Assign units to Sector/Branches based on Tactical Objectives and priorities.
- Build an effective organizational structure through the use of Branches and Sectors.
- Provide Branches, Divisions and Groups Tactical Objectives.
- Manage Operation Section activities.
- Provide for life safety.
- Determine needs and request additional resources.
- Consult with and inform other sections and the Incident Command Staff as needed.

If the Operations Section Chief is located at the Command Post, he/she should use the radio designation of "Command". The vast majority of incidents can be effectively managed without an Operations Section Chief, or with the Operations Section Chief located at the Command Post. If the

Operations Section Chief is located out of the Command Post at a "forward" position (i.e. in a high-rise building), he/she should use the radio designation of "Operations".

Implementing an "Operations" radio designation in the middle of a major incident can create some confusion with radio communications. It is absolutely essential that all personnel operating at the

incident be made aware of the activation of "Operations". All Division or Group Supervisors and Branch Directors must then direct their communications to the "Operations" Section Chief.

The Operations Section Chief will communicate with the Incident Commander to request additional resources, provide progress reports, etc. Once implemented, "Operations" becomes a forward Command Post. As such the Operations Section Chief will need some personnel assigned to assist as staff members to help with radios, tactical worksheets, etc.

The Incident Commander - Role and Responsibilities after Activation of an Operations Section Chief

Once the Operations Section Chief 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 Section Chief in directing the tactical aspects of the incident.

- Review and evaluate the plan, and initiate any needed changes.
- Provide on-going review of the overall incident (THE BIG PICTURE).
- Select priorities.
- Provide direction to the Operations Section Chief.
- Review the organizational structure, initiate change or expansion to meet incident needs.
- Initiate Section and Branch functions as required.
- Establish liaison with other city agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants.
- Other duties as necessary.

Command Procedures

In order to maintain continuity and overall effectiveness, the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief should normally be in the Command Post together.

The Administration Section evaluates and manages the risk and financial requirements for the Fire Department's involvement in the incident.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the Fire Department or City as requested by Command (coordinates with Logistics).
- Documenting all financial costs of the incident.
- Documenting for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies.
- Analyzing and managing legal risk for incidents such as, a hazardous materials clean up.
- Serves as the Incident Commander's liaison with: City officials, Litigators (and other lawyer types). Regulatory agencies (EPA, OSHA, DOT, FBI, etc.).
- Monitors and coordinates emergency service delivery to the rest of the community during major incidents to ensure adequate coverage.
- Serves as the E.O.C. representative in the Command Post and provides briefings to the E.O.C. staff.
- Manage investigations (arson, etc.).
- Manage critique preparations.