

Approved: 2-12-02

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

1. PURPOSE

1.1 These guidelines provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergency incidents through improved command and control, use of resources, accountability of resources, and tactical effectiveness.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This system shall be implemented at all incidents to which all Florence County fire departments respond regardless of size, complexity, or location. The use of the Incident Command System is required by OSHA (29 CFR 1910), South Carolina Law (6-11-1820), and NFPA 1500.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The **Incident Commander** at any incident shall be responsible for the following:

- A. Perform a Size-Up
- B. Assess Incident Priorities
- C. Select the Strategic Mode
- D. Define Strategic Goals
- E. Establish Tactical Objectives
- F. Implement the Incident Action Plan
- G. Develop an appropriate Organizational Structure
- H. Manage Incident Resources
- I. Coordinate overall emergency activities
- J. Ensure firefighter safety
- K. Coordinate activities of outside agencies
- L. Authorize release of information to media

3.2 Incident Command may decide, depending on the situation, to add functional positions to maintain a manageable span of control (3-7 number of personnel reporting to any given individual).

- A. A **Safety Officer** is designated to monitor the safety of all personnel, and to relieve the IC of direct involvement in this responsibility. The Safety Officer has the authority to bypass the chain of command, but only when it is necessary to correct unsafe acts or conditions, which place incident personnel in immediate danger. The IC must always be informed of these corrective actions.
- B. The **Liaison Officer** coordinates the management of the various agencies, and keeps them working together. This is essential to avoid duplication of efforts.
- C. The **Public Information Officer** relieves the IC of the responsibility for direct interface with members of the media. The Public Information Officer must clear all releases of significant information with the IC.
- D. The **Operations Section Chief** is responsible for the direction and coordination of all tactical operations. The Operations Section Chief reports to the IC.
- E. The **Planning Section Chief** is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. The Operations Section Chief reports to the IC.
- F. The **Logistics Section Chief** is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident. The Operations Section Chief reports to the IC.
- G. The **Finance/Administration Section Chief** is responsible for tracking all incident costs and evaluation the financial considerations of the incident. The Operations Section Chief reports to the IC.
- H. The **Staging Area Manager** is responsible for the operation of the Staging Area, accounting for incoming/available resources and dispersing resources as directed by IC or Operations Section Chief, if established.
- I. The **Branch Director** is responsible for direction and coordination of all operations appropriate to their branch. Branch directors are primarily used when large numbers of resources are committed to a specific function. Example: EMS branch, Law Enforcement branch, etc.

4. ESTABLISH COMMAND

4.1 The qualified member (per individual fire department guidelines) arriving at the scene of a fire or emergency will give a brief description of the situation found to advise all responding personnel and equipment what action may be needed to control the incident. The following standard radio reports should be used to describe the situation found.

A. Building Size:

Small Medium Large

B. Building Description:

One Story (or more)

C. Construction (Wood frame, brick veneer, cement block, metal, etc.):

House, barn, garage, store, industry, church, warehouse, etc.

D. Fire/Smoke Conditions:

a. Nothing showing

b. Smoke showing (indicate nature, extent, location)

c. Fire showing (indicate nature, extent, location)

d. Fully involved

4.2 Assume Incident Command by giving geographic location of incident, choose command mode, and identify fire ground channel(s).

4.3 Command Modes

A. Nothing-Showing Mode: These situations generally require investigation by the initial IC while other units remain in a staged mode. The IC should go with the company to investigate while using a portable radio to command the incident.

B. Fast-Attack Mode: Situations that must be stabilized immediately require the IC's assistance and direct involvement in the attack. In these situations, the IC goes with the crew to provide the appropriate level of supervision. When fast intervention is critical, using a portable radio will permit the IC involvement in the attack without neglecting Command responsibilities. The Fast-Attack mode should not last more than a few minutes.

C. Command Mode: Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate strong, direct, overall Command. In such cases, the IC initially will assume an exterior, safe and effective Command position, give location of Command Post, and maintain that position until relieved by another officer. A tactical worksheet shall be initiated and used to assist in managing this type of incident, if required by fire department policy.

4.4 A single command will be used unless there is an overlap of jurisdictional boundaries or large-scale incidents such as large woods fires, mass casualties, and etc. On these incidents, a Unified Command should be used.

a. Single Command – where there is no overlap of jurisdictional boundaries or the agency with overall management responsibility for the incident.

b. Unified Command – is shared responsibility for overall incident management as a result of a multijurisdictional or multiagency incident.

4.5 When possible, the command post should be identified with a green light, or the IC should wear a vest to aide in identifying location of the IC.

5. STANDARD GEOGRAPHIC DESIGNATION SYSTEM

- 5.1 Each exterior side of a structure shall be given a letter designation.
- 5.2 The side of the structure facing the street (address side shall be designated "A").
- 5.3 The remaining sides of the building shall be designated "B, C, and D", in a clockwise manner.
- 5.4 Exposures shall be designated in like manner, using the letter corresponding to the side of the fire building they face. Example: Exposure "A" would be on the adjacent side "A" of the incident structure, Exposure "C" would be on the adjacent side of the incident structure, & etc.
- 5.5 Floor number should be used in multi-story structures to designate geographic location.
- 5.5 The basement, attic, and roof shall be designated by name.

6. STRATEGIC GOALS

- 6.1 Strategic Goals are the major actions that need to be accomplished in order to control the incident. They are broad in nature, and are achieved by the completion of Tactical Objectives.
- 6.2 Examples of Strategic Goals for firefighting include:

- A. Rescue
- B. Exposures
- C. Confinement
- D. Extinguishment
- E. Ventilation
- F. Salvage
- G. Overhaul

7. TACTICAL OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 Tactical Objectives are the specific operations that must be accomplished in order to achieve Strategic Goals.
- 7.2 Tactical Objectives must be specific and measurable. For structure fires, some examples of Tactical Objectives might include:

- A. Conduct a primary search of the first floor.
- B. Place a handling in position to cool Exposure "B".
- C. Place salvage covers to protect contents.

8. INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

- 8.1 The Incident Plan includes the Strategic Goals, Tactical Objectives, and support requirements for the incident.
- 8.2 All incidents require an action plan. For simple incidents the action plan does not need to be written down. Large or complex incidents will require that the action plan be developed in writing.
- 8.3 If the incident lasts for several days, the incident action plan should be updated regularly.

9. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 9.1 When resources are assigned to perform tactical functions, the following options may be used:
 - A. Single Resource:
 - a. Crew – a specific number (not exceed span of control) of personnel, without apparatus, assembled for an assignment, and having a crew leader; usually identified by crew leader last name. Example: an interior hose line crew.
 - b. Company – a specific number (not exceed span of control) of personnel, with apparatus, assembled for a specialized assignment, and having a crew leader; usually identified by apparatus number. Example: a ladder company having an aerial truck assigned to ventilation.
 - B. Task Force – any combination of single resources put together for a temporary assignment. Example: two engine companies, one Ladder Company, one Rescue Company & etc.
 - C. Strike Team – a set number on resources of the **same kind and type**. Example:
 - 5 engines
 - 1250 gpm pumps;
 - 1000 gallon tanks, and
 - staffing level of four.
 - D. Divisions – an organizational level responsible for operations in a specified geographical area at an incident such as division C (the rear of the facility). Divisions do not work for groups and groups do not work for divisions.

E. Groups – an organization level **responsible for a specified functional (job) assignment** at an incident such as ventilation. Divisions do not work for groups and groups do not work for divisions.

F. Sectors – a generic term that can be used as a division or group.

10. FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

10.1 Ensure an accountability system is in place to account for all emergency personnel in the **HOT ZONE** of an incident scene.

10.2 Ensure a Rehab area is set up for firefighter rehabilitation during lengthy incidents, inclement weather conditions, stringency operations, or as deemed appropriate.

10.3 Request EMS services per the Florence County Fire Chiefs Association Communication Guidelines.

11. INFORMATION RELEASE

11.1 Incident information released to the news media must be approved by the Incident Commander.

11.2 Information released to the news media in large incidents **MAY** need to be coordinated with other appropriate representatives; i.e. industrial sites, major forest fires, and etc.