

Effective: 01-08-1998

Revised: 06-12-2006

Section: 101.01

Standard Operating Procedure

Incident Command System

Purpose:

To establish operating procedure and guidelines for the use of the Incident Command System as required by [Policy Manual Section 2-02](#).

To provide a standard format for Incident Command System procedures for both tactical and strategic considerations.

The effective utilization of Fire Department units and personnel at emergency incidents requires clear, decisive action on the part of an Incident Commander. These Guidelines identify the procedures to be employed in establishing Incident Command and operating a Command Post. The Guidelines also fix responsibility for Incident Command functions and associated duties on one specific individual during the operation.

Scope:

These Guidelines shall apply to all uniformed members of the College Place Fire Department; and

To all incidents to which the College Place Fire Department responds: fire, medical, or other.

Procedure:

The following Standard Operating Guidelines for the Incident Command System shall be initiated by personnel assigned to the first arriving CPFDP unit at all emergency incidents inside the City Limits, and by the first arriving emergency response unit outside the City of College Place.

1. The Incident Commander is responsible for the overall command function at any incident. As the identity of the Incident Commander changes, through transfers of command, this responsibility shifts with the title. The term "Command" in this procedure, refers jointly to both the person and the function.
2. Command procedures are designed to accomplish the following:
 - a) Fix the responsibility for Command on a specific individual through a standard identification system depending on arrival sequence of members, companies and officers.

- b) Ensure that strong, direct, and visible Command will be established as early as possible in the operations.
 - c) Establish an effective framework outlining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander.
 - d) Provide a system for the orderly transfer of Command to subsequent arriving officers.
3. Responsibilities assigned to Command include, but are not limited to, these specific functions:
- a) Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
 - b) Confine the fire where it is found.
 - c) Conserve property after fire control is achieved.
 - d) Provide for the safety of all emergency and other personnel.
 - e) Reassess the safety of structures and operations at least every 15 minutes.

Establishing Command

The first Fire Department personnel to arrive at the scene of multiple unit responses shall assume Command and remain in Command until relieved by another member, passing command to another, or until the incident is terminated.

Initial Report

1. The person assuming Command shall transmit a brief initial radio report including:
 - a. Identification of units on the scene and confirming assumption of Command.
 - b. Brief event description, e.g.: "fire in a two story wood frame single family residence", "MVA two cars, blocking, with three patients", etc.
 - c. Obvious fire or other emergency conditions.
 - d. Action being or to be taken, and objectives (brief-description).

Radio Designation

1. Incident Command will be named on all incidents as outlined in [Policy 02.02, Incident Command System](#).
2. The radio designation "COMMAND" will be used with a brief description of the incident location. (i.e., "7th Avenue Command": "Wal-Mart Command"). This designator will not change for the duration of the incident. "Command" is an acceptable designation unless more than one incident is occurring at a time.
3. Generally, the name assumed by command will be geographically related to the location of the Incident.

Tactical Considerations

1. At working incidents, the Incident Commander shall utilize the Tactical Work Sheet and Command Passport Board to outline and record assignments and to assist in the transfer of Command should it be necessary.
2. All units responding to multiple unit responses will follow standardized response guidelines and staging procedures.
3. Command procedures are designed to offer a practical framework for field operations and to effectively integrate the efforts of all members, officers, and companies. The time involved in performing the functions listed at the beginning of a tactical operation should produce ongoing time savings in the form of a more effective rescue and fire control outcome. An arriving officer, assuming Command, can quickly and efficiently perform the standard procedures. This will facilitate an organized and orderly tactical operation and a more effective effort. This is particularly important in more complex situations and when Command must be transferred to other responding officers.

Command Responsibilities

The Incident Commander is responsible for the following tasks as required by the circumstances of the situation or his/her judgment:

1. Obtain situation information.
2. Establish Command Post and Staging Area, advise Communications Center.
3. Don position identification vest.
4. REVIEW DUTY CHECKLIST. (Tactical Sheet and Command Passport Board)
5. Identify and prioritize immediate and potential problems and needs:
 - a. Fire, with trapped victims.
 - b. Fire, with probability of spread.
 - c. Mass casualties
 - d. Trapped victims
 - e. Hazardous materials.
 - f. Large fires, no spread potential.
 - g. Evacuation: Fire Department personnel or other agencies/liaison.
 - h. General assistance.
6. Establish radio call signs and frequencies for incident.
7. Appoint and brief staff, as needed:

- a. Aide(s)
 - b. Liaison Officer
 - c. Safety Officer
 - d. Planning Section Chief
 - e. Logistics section Chief
 - f. Information Officer
 - g. Operations Officer
8. Issue identification vest and checklist to staff.
 9. Direct staff to perform their checklist functions.
 10. Identify and communicate objectives.
 11. Authorize Incident Action Plan.
 12. Receive intelligence information (initial and continuous).
 13. Use appropriate tools, (Command Board, Tactical Sheet.)
 14. Approve and implement requests for additional resources.
 15. Develop incident strategy with staff:
 - a. Assess overall strategy.
 - b. Estimate time of containment.
 - c. Establish point of containment.
 - d. Assess evacuation needs.
 16. Assess availability of:
 - a. Manpower
 - b. Apparatus
 - c. Equipment
 - d. Emergency housing
 - e. Relief personnel
 - f. Citizen welfare
 17. Receive Incident Action Plan from Planning Section.
 18. Conduct Incident Action Plan briefing session with:
 - a. Planning Section Staff
 - b. Logistics Section Chief
 - c. Command Staff

- d. Operations Section Chief
- 19. Execute Incident Action Plan.
- 20. Establish and maintain liaison, as needed:
 - a. Other fire agencies.
 - b. Law enforcement agencies.
 - c. Medical facilities.
 - d. Public Works.
 - e. Military.
 - f. Coroner.
- 21. Evaluate progress of emergency efforts.
- 22. Revise Incident Action Plan, as needed.
- 23. Direct Planning Section Staff to develop mobilization plan should it be required due to the size of the incident, at appropriate time.
- 24. Approve mobilization and demobilization.
- 25. Release incident personnel, apparatus and equipment as planned.

Command Options

- 1. In cases where the initial arriving officer is the Command Officer, his or her efforts should automatically be directed towards establishing a Command Post and fulfilling the listed responsibilities.
- 2. An initial arriving company officer must decide on an appropriate commitment for his/her company. The Command Mode must be announced as a part of the brief initial report. This will usually fall into one of three general modes as listed below:
 - a) (Investigation) Nothing Showing Mode: These situations generally require investigation by the first arriving engine company while holding additional companies in staging. Normally, the officer will accompany his/her crew to check on the situation while utilizing the portable radio to continue Command.
 - b) Fast Attack (Tactical) Mode: Situations which require immediate action to stabilize the situation, such as interior fires in residences, apartments, or small commercial occupancies, require that the officer quickly decide how to commit his company. Where a fast interior attack is critical, he or she should turn command over to the driver/engineer in order to free him or herself up for attack functions. This mode would not last more than a few moments and should end with one of the following:

- 1) Situation is stabilized.
 - 2) Command is passed to next arriving officer.
 - 3) A Command Officer arrives and command is transferred.
 - 4) Situation is not stabilized, and the Officer must remove him/herself to a normal Command position.
- c. **Command Mode:** Situations that require principally a Command mode by virtue of the size of the fire, the complexity/potential of the occupancy, or the possibility of extension and which require strong, direct, overall Command from the outset. In such cases, the officer will initially assume a Command position and maintain that position until relieved by a higher ranking officer.
3. If a company officer assumes Command and elects not to join his company in action, he/she may operate within the following options with regard to the assignment of his/her crew:
- a. He/she can "move up" within this company and place the company into action. The individual and collective capability of this crew will regulate this action.
 - b. He/she can assign company members to perform staff and/or other functions.
 - c. He/she can assign company members to another company to work under the supervision of the officer of that company. In such cases, the officer must communicate with the receiving officer and indicate the assignment of his/her personnel.
4. While the company officer assuming Command has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in operations, he/she continues to be fully responsible for the identified tasks assigned to the Command function. In all cases, the initiative and judgment of the officer are of great importance. The modes identified are not strict rules, but general guidelines to assist the officer in planning appropriate actions. Deviations from the Guidelines are appropriate if they can be justified.

Transfer of Command

1. The first Fire Department unit officer to arrive on the scene will assume and retain Command until relieved by another ranking officer, or turning over command to another member within the following guidelines:
 - a. The first arriving Company Officer will automatically assume command except as noted below.
 - b. The first arriving Shift Commander may, at his/her discretion, assume command after Transfer of Command procedures have been

completed.

- c. Assumption of command is discretionary for Chief Officers.

NOTE: This does not preclude the option of the first arriving Company Officer having another member, or Company Officer arriving with or close behind him or her, take Command. This may be by prearrangement, or may be necessitated by circumstances. In either case, it shall be confirmed by both parties by radio, and is called "Passing Command".

- 2. Within the chain of Command indicated above, the actual transfer of Command will be regulated by the following procedures:
 - a. The arriving ranking officer assuming Command will communicate with the Officer being relieved, by radio or preferably face-to-face on arrival.
 - b. The Officer being relieved of duty will brief the Officer assuming Command, indicating the following:
 - 1) General situation status:
 - Fire location, extent, condition, extension.
 - Effectiveness of control efforts.
 - 2) Deployment and assignments of operating companies.
 - 3) Appraisal of needs for additional resources at that time.
- 3. Command Officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding, unless such communications are required to ensure that Command functions are initiated and completed.
- 4. The arrival (in itself) of a ranking Officer on the fire ground does not mean Command has been transferred to that ranking Officer. Command is transferred only when the outlined communication functions have been completed.
- 5. The officer ready to assume Command after being briefed of the situation will announce to Dispatch his/her intention to assume Command of the scene. Example: "1201 to Dispatch, 1201 will be College Street Command".
- 6. The response and arrival of ranking officers on the fire ground strengthens the overall Command function. All officers will exercise their Command prerogative in a supportive manner that will insure a smooth transition and effective ongoing function of Command.
- 7. The Officer relieved of Command will be assigned by and utilized to best advantage by the Officer assuming Command.
- 8. In cases where Command is effectively handling a strategic situation and is completely aware of the location and function of operating companies and the

general status of the situation, it may be desirable for that officer to continue in an active Command role. In these cases, the ranking officer may assume supporting roles in the overall Command function.

ICS Organizational Titles

1. For ease of reference and understanding, personnel assigned to manage at each level of the organization will carry a distinctive organization title:
 - a. Incident Command - Incident Commander
 - b. Command Staff - Safety Officer, Liaison, Information Officer.
 - c. Operations
 - d. Branch - Branch Director (optional level)
 - e. Division - Division Supervisor or Group Supervisor. A Division Supervisor and a Group Supervisor function at the same command level. A Division Supervisor commands a geographical division while a Group Supervisor commands a functional group. Both are known as Sectors.
 - f. Crew - 2 to 7 persons, one of whom is designated as Supervisor, who are assigned a task, also called a company.
2. In the ICS, the first management assignments by the initial attack Incident Commander will normally be Operations to manage the major functional areas. Operations will further delegate management authority for their areas only as required. If Operations sees the need, geographic Divisions and functional Groups may be established within the Command. Similarly each functional Division Supervisor will further assign individual tasks to groups under their supervision.

Unified Command Structure


1. The need for a Unified Command is brought about because:
 - a. Incidents have no regard for jurisdictional boundaries. Wildland fires, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes usually cause multi-jurisdictional major incident situations.
 - b. Individual agency responsibility and authority is normally legally confined to a single jurisdiction.
2. The concept of unified command simply means that all agencies that have a jurisdictional responsibility at a multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to the process of:
 - a. Determining overall incident objectives.

- b. Selection of strategies.
 - c. Ensuring joint planning for tactical activities will be accomplished.
 - d. Ensuring integrated tactical operations are conducted.
 - e. Making maximum use of all assigned resources.
3. The proper selection of participants to work within a unified command structure will depend upon:
 - a. The location of the incident - which political jurisdictions are involved.
 - b. The kind of incident - which functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s) are required.
 4. A unified command structure could consist of a key responsible official from each jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdictional situation or it could consist of several functional departments within a single political jurisdiction.
 5. Command objectives and strategy on major multi-jurisdictional incidents should be written. The objectives and strategies then guide development of the action plan. Under a unified command structure in the ICS, the implementation of the action plan will be under the direction of a single individual--the Operations Chief.
 6. The Operations Chief will normally be from the agency which has the greatest jurisdictional involvement. Designation of the Operations Chief must be agreed upon by all agencies having jurisdictional and functional responsibility at the incident.

Command Structure

1. It will be the responsibility of Command to develop an organizational structure utilizing these Standard Operating Guidelines as soon as possible after arrival and implementation of initial tactical control measures. The size and complexity of the organizational structure, obviously, will be determined by the size and complexity of the particular tactical situation.
2. The ideal structure of a complex incident should include four (4) levels:
 - a. Strategy Level (Command)
 - b. Control Level (Operations)
 - c. Tactical Level (Divisions and Groups)
 - d. Task Level (Companies)
3. The span of control for any command officer should not exceed 5 to 7 Branches, Divisions, Groups, Companies or people. Should an incident grow to a size where this span of control is exceeded, additional Divisions or

Branches should be added as required to reduce the direct span of control for the Incident Commander.

Approved: 	Date: Updated 06/12/2006
---	---------------------------------