Fireground Organization

Introductory Drill Night

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TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

NOTICE

This course is not designed to meet any certification requirements and is not intended to present comprehensive information. It is designed to present a brief introduction and overview of information for introductory use.

Texas A&M Forest Service recommends all firefighting personnel receive training that meets recognized standards before working in the fire ground environment.

Course Objective

Upon completion of this course, the student will have a basic introduction of the principles of fireground organization and the tools and strategies needed to operate in a safe and effective manner.

Course Outline

Unit 1	Incident Commander
Unit 2	Assume, Confirm & Position Command
Unit 3	Situation Evaluation (Size-Up)
Unit 4	Incident Communications
Unit 5	Deployment Management
Unit 6	Strategy & Incident Action Planning
Unit 7	Incident Organization
Unit 8	Review, Evaluation & Revision
Unit 9	Continue, Transfer & Terminate Command

Unit 1

INCIDENT COMMANDER

Unit Objectives

1. Describe the major responsibilities of the Incident Commander (IC).

2. Understand the need for centralized command.

3. Identify the eight basic command functions.

Incident Commander

Incident Commander

- Successful incident operations require the application of an effective overall management system and the skills of a strong Incident Commander (IC) starting from the very beginning of an event.
- The lack of understanding of this central command role still adversely affects more current emergency operational outcomes than any other single incident management challenge.

Incident Commander

The five major responsibilities of the IC are:

1. Provide for responder safety and survival.
2. Protect, remove and provide care to endangered customers.
3. Stabilize the incident.
4. Conserve property and the environment during and after incident operations.
5. Provide short-term services that stabilize and begin to normalize the customers' lives.

How is *your* scene commanded?

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No Command

Operating at the incident without central command usually produces

NO COMMAND AT ALL

Everyone operates in the “freelance” system where responders commit themselves independently with no central coordination.

Multiple, Competitive Commands

The incident site quickly becomes occupied by highly mobile officers, each with a different plan, and each wanting a piece of the action.

They generally circle the scene in opposite directions, each giving conflicting orders to everyone they encounter.

Need for Central Command

The only truly effective starting point to eliminate freelancing is to fix it at the top – ***the IC***.

Need for Central Command

Must balance command:

Too little command can create uncontrollable chaos.

Too much command can produce conflicting, over-controlled action that frustrates and underutilizes the skills of the personnel.

Command System

Eliminates freelancing through a standard plan that outlines everyone's accountability and responsibility:

- Command is directly responsible for Divisions/Groups.
- Divisions and Groups are responsible for the units assigned to them.
- Company officers are responsible for all crew members.
- Crew members always work in teams of two and are responsible for one another.
- Each individual member is responsible for his/her personal safety and operating within the system.

Command Functions

The eight basic command functions develop an organizational structure that drives the Incident Management System (IMS):

1. Assume, Confirm and Position Command.
2. Situation Evaluation (Size-Up).
3. Incident Communications.
4. Deployment Management.
5. Strategy & Incident Action Planning.
6. Incident Organization.
7. Review, Evaluation & Revision.
8. Continue, Transfer & Terminate Command.

Command Functions

The eight command functions provide a beginning, middle and end for command operations and form a standard IC job description that is:

- Short
- Simple
- Street Smart
- Standard
- Sensible
- Safe
- Nice

Effective Incident Commander

Traits of an effective Incident Commander:

- System Smart/Street Smart/People Smart
- Creates Standard Action
- Cool Head
- Sensible Risk Manager
- Strong Delegation
- Plays Well with Others
- Strong Ego Control
- Respect for the Task
- Logical Thinker/Decider
- Good Communicator & Personal Skills

Incident Commander Checklists

At the end of each Command Function unit in this course, an “IC Checklist” is added for your use as quick “takeaways” from each unit.

Unit 1 – Review

What is the first major responsibility of the IC?

Provide for responder safety and survival

What usually results from operating at an incident with no central command?

No command at all; everyone operates in the "freelance" system

What develops an organizational structure that drives the Incident Management System (IMS)?

The eight basic command functions

Unit 2

ASSUME, CONFIRM & POSITION COMMAND

Unit Objectives

1. Describe how to assume command.

2. Describe the three Command Modes.

3. Describe how to position command.

Assume, Confirm & Position Command

Assume, Confirm & Position Command

Major Goal: To quickly establish and confirm a single IC and place that individual in the effective initial command position.

Central Command

Active incidents can and do create confusion, dangerous and complicated conditions that can make setting up and operating the command system very difficult.

Central Command

How the incident command system “shows up” and gets started initially will always have a major impact upon the ongoing and ultimate success of the entire incident management operation.

Central Command

Command assumption must be natural, automatic and a regular organizational event.

Command should always start in a standard way upon arrival at an incident.

Central Command

Application of the command system ensures that the customer receives service-delivery response that is under effective command, from the very beginning.

First Arriving IC

Normally, the first arriving responder is responsible for initially assuming command.

First Arriving IC

This first IC retains command responsibility until command is transferred (within SOP/SOGs) to a:

- Higher-ranking officer
- Specially qualified person

or unit the incident is terminated.

First Arriving IC

- First arriver automatically becomes IC#1
- Responders who arrive after command is established by IC#1:
  - Follow staging SOP/SOGs
    - (park, announce position, listen, look, wait for orders)
  - Staged units receive and acknowledge orders from the IC
  - Go to work on the IC's order/work under the IC's command

First Arriving IC

- Sometimes, when there is such an uncommanded beginning, the responders quickly freelance their way to effective positions and solve the incident problem.

- While this may be a good thing for that incident, it can be fatal for the next one.

First Arriving IC

- The system requires the IC to be an order giver and the workers to be order takers.
- If everyone follows the plan, we have the basis for an Incident Management System (IMS).
- If not, we simply have freelancing.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

How the IC and the command team get set up during the beginning stages of the incident sets the stage for how effectively the event is resolved.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

We must integrate the local day-to-day organizational chain of command with the incident command organization that is quickly established for managing the incident.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

Challenges occur because we are essentially building a command and operational structure out “in the street” of regular department members of all ranks based on who shows up and when they get there.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

This requires, for the purposes of incident management, that ranks be replaced with roles.

Each system must decide how they will connect the regular chain of day-to-day organizational command with the incident organization for themselves and then consistently do it that way.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

The local details of ***how*** it is done are less important than ***if*** it is done in the agreed-upon manner and it effectively connects with the local responders from other agencies who routinely work together.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

Just because a higher-ranking officer arrives does not necessarily mean they have to assume command.

Ranking organizational leaders should fit themselves into the plan based on how they are needed during the incident.

Then, reinforce positive command and operational performance while effectively troubleshooting problems that may have occurred.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

If these leaders act well (smart, calm, nice) and follow the plan, the rest of the system acts well.

If they act goofy, everyone (below them) runs for cover, hides out, or freelances.

Ever heard, "Put it out before the bosses get here," or "Let's get it out before the second white helmet gets here?"

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

How a leader acts at "show time," when a lower-ranking responder is in command, sends the most powerful and authentic message about their actual commitment to the service.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

The objective of fast initial command assumption is for the first *arriver* who shows up on the scene to:

- Evaluate conditions
- Develop an incident action plan
- Then assign, place and support arriving resources within that plan

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

Assuming command at the very beginning of operations eliminates the “zero impact command period” (ZIP) caused by initial uncommanded confusion, roving, multiple commanders, freelancing or all of these.

Organizational Ranks/Incident Roles

Many times, how we manage (or mismanage) command at the very beginning of the incident sets the stage for how command and operations will occur for the rest of the incident.

Command Modes

The three standard command modes give first-arriving responders, who assume initial command, the capability to combine or separate command and action in a standard, predictable way based on applying SOP/SOGs to actual incident conditions.

The three standard command modes are:

- **Nothing Showing (Investigating) Mode**
- **Fast Action Mode**
- **Command Mode**

Command Modes

Having the IC select and announce one of the standard command modes becomes a quick way to easily communicate:

- Incident conditions
- Location of the IC
- IC's actions to responding team members.

Command Modes

NOTHING SHOWING (INVESTIGATING) MODE

Situations where no problem is visible from the IC's position generally require investigation by the first arriving response unit while other companies remain in staging.

Command Modes

FAST ACTION MODE

An active, dynamic problem is present upon the arrival of the first responder and requires immediate action to stabilize.

Command Modes

The Fast Action Mode should be concluded rapidly with one of the following outcomes:

- The situation is quickly stabilized by fast offensive action.
- Command is transferred from the fast action company officer IC to a later arriving company officer.
- If for whatever reason the situation is not stabilized, the fast action company officer IC moves to exterior (stationary) command position and is now in Command Mode.

Command Modes

Fast Action situations typically involve the beginning stages of scenarios where a first arriver decides that placing their own body directly in the action can quickly solve or stabilize the incident.

Command Modes

COMMAND MODE

Some incidents will demand early, strong, stationary command from the very onset. This can be because of the size/severity of the situation, the complexity of the occupancy, the hazards present or the possibility of the basic incident problem expanding.

Command Modes

In these cases, the first arriving IC will assume command and *from the very beginning* stay out of the hazard area in a stationary exterior command position.

Command Modes

These three basic front-end management modes were originally developed for structural firefighting.

We now apply the same approach to the other services that we deliver.

The three modes provide good direction for where the IC should be and what they should be doing in a variety of standard management situations.

Confirmation of Command

The first arriving responder who will assume the role of incident commander should advise dispatch of this fact by broadcasting a standard initial radio report including the unit designation, arrival, assumption of command, conditions and the name and location of the command post.

"Engine 1 on scene, north side of a medium-size commercial building, with a working fire. Engine 1 will assume Ajax Command."

Confirmation of Command

The initial announcement of command by the first arriving responder signifies the regular beginning of an operation by a definite act.

If no one has announced the assumption of command, the entire system knows that no one has officially, directly, visibly, or vocally begun the functions of command.

Command Positioning

The Command Post

Command Positioning

The Command Post

To a major extent, command effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) is directly connected to regular command positioning.

The entire system revolves around the rapid establishment of a stationary, remote IC operating in a standard command post.

Command Positioning

In the cases where a company level officer or member establishes an investigative/fast action mobile command, that IC must realize he/she is operating in a disadvantaged command position.

The IC should ensure upgrading to a stationary command position as soon as possible, using standard procedures.

Command Positioning

There is a temptation for the IC to assume an open-air command position outside the Command Post and to directly and personally deal face to face with responders, who all want to communicate up close and personal with the IC.

While this “friendly” approach is natural and probably feels good, it sets up an ongoing mob, which can quickly surround the IC with (typically) excited, high-energy characters.

Command Positioning

This direct group contact destroys any semblance of command awareness or control by overloading the IC with up close and personal face-to-face people, talk and confusion.

Command Positioning

The following fairly simple plan describes a set of standard command and operational moves:

- Typically, as quickly as possible, the system gets an IC up and working in a vehicle.
- The IC stays in vehicle – uses tactical worksheet, mobile radio and helpers, if available.
- Task-level and tactical-level responders radio their arrival in staged positions to the IC.

Command Positioning

- IC assigns responders to initial operational positions within the incident action plan and logs them on a worksheet.
- IC creates a geographic (Divisions) and functional (Groups) incident organization to fit the situation.
- Responders communicate directly (usually face-to-face) with and work for their organizational (Division/Group) supervisor and not directly with the IC

Command Positioning

Advantages of the Command Post

When a standard position inside a particular vehicle is assumed by the IC, it becomes the ICS's *field office* and, based on the size and design of the command vehicle, gives some advantages to the IC.

Command Positioning

Advantages of the Command Post may include:

- A stationary spot
- Comfortable, seated position
- A quiet place to listen, think, decide and maintain safety
- A vantage point to see from
- A place to write and record
- Radios
- Protection from the weather

Command Positioning

This up-front command approach fixes responsibility on a single individual, the IC, to manage in a way that the overall approach:

- Starts under control
- Stays under control
- Never loses control

Command Positioning

Effective control by the IC = Worker Safety

IC Checklist – Assume, Confirm & Position Command

- First arriver must quickly assume initial command in a standard manner (per SOPs).
- Use strong, quick, automatic, command assumption to eliminate any zero-impact period (ZIP).
- Confirm command assumption with a standard initial radio report.
- Use location/occupancy to name command.

IC Checklist – Assume, Confirm & Position Command

- Select the proper command mode (investigative/fast action/command).
- Correctly position command to match and support the current command mode.
- Set up a standard command post (stationary, remote, outside hazard area, inside vehicle) as quickly as possible.

IC Checklist – Assume, Confirm & Position Command

- Begin to “package” command for on-going operation and escalation:
  - Strong standard communication
  - Divisions/Groups
  - SOP/SOGs
  - Clear communication
  - Standard strategy/action planning
- Correctly accept/continue/transfer command.

Unit 2 – Review

What sets the stage for how effectively the event is resolved?

How the IC and command team get set up during the beginning

What are the three Command Modes?

Nothing Showing (Investigating) Mode, Fast Action Mode, Command Mode

Where is the command post usually positioned?

In a vehicle

Unit 3

SITUATION EVALUATION (SIZE-UP)

Unit Objectives

1. Describe what situation evaluation, or “size-up,” is.

2. Identify who performs size-up.

3. Identify when size-up begins.

4. Identify and describe the thirteen factors affecting size-up.

Situation Evaluation

Major Goal:

To develop a regular approach to situation evaluation using the standard forms of information management and critical incident factors.

The Size-Up

The second basic command function is the situation evaluation.

Known as “size-up.”

Systematic process consisting of rapid, yet deliberate, consideration of all critical incident factors, which leads to the development of a rational action plan based on these critical factors.

Size-Up

What is **Size-Up**?

- An *evaluation* of problems and conditions that affect the outcome of the fire.
- All firefighters and officers must perform size-up.
  - Different perspectives
  - Different responsibilities

Size-Up

Considerations

- Facts
- Probabilities
- Possibilities
- Resources

Size-Up

When do we Size-Up?

- Size-Up begins at the time the alarm is received!
- *Consider* information gathered during pre-incident planning.

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

Convenient acronym to help you remember all thirteen factors affecting size-up:

- **C**onstruction
- **O**ccupancy
- **A**pparatus & Manpower
- **L**ife Hazard

- **W**ater Supply
- **A**uxiliary Appliances
- **S**treet Conditions

- **W**eather
- **E**xposures
- **A**rea (Bldg Size)
- **L**ocation & Extent of Fire
- **T**ime
- **H**azardous Materials

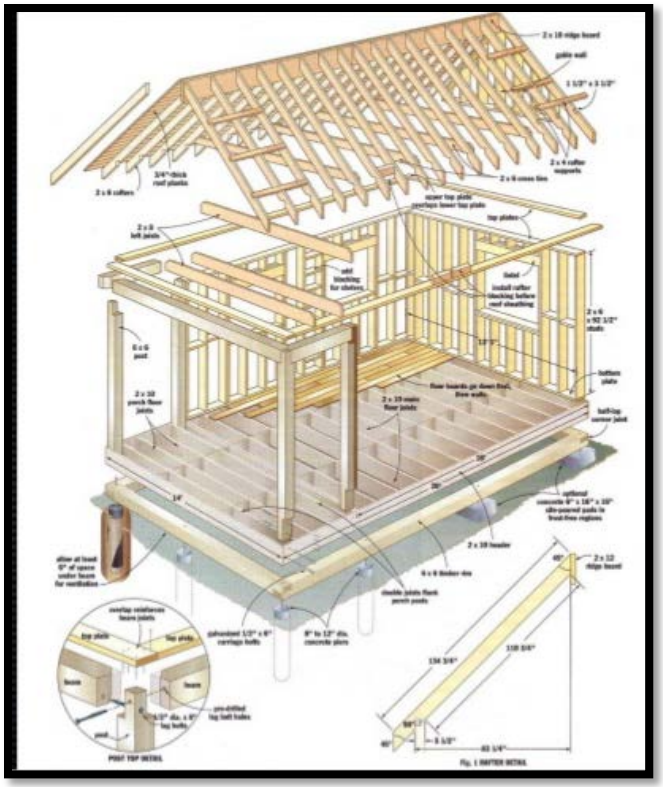
Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

Construction

O

A

L



C – Construction

- Degree of interior compartmentation?
- Does the structure contribute to the fire load?
- What “Type” building is it? (I, II, III, IV, V)
- Where are the *void spaces*?
- What is the building’s ability to resist collapse?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

C

Occupancy

A

L

O – Occupancy

- What is the *intended* use of the structure or occupancy?

- What is *actually* on the inside?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

C

O

Apparatus & Manpower

L

A – Apparatus & Staffing

- Plan your strategy on available resources.
  - How many engines and firefighters are responding?
  - What can you expect them to accomplish?
  - Do you have the equipment you need?
  - Are the firefighters on scene experienced?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

C

O

A

Life Hazard

L – Life Hazard

- PRIMARY FACTOR that will drive your tactical decision making!
- *Occupancy* & *Time of Day* are the two most critical factors when sizing up/evaluating potential life hazard.
- *Location and Extent of Fire* are also of great importance.

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

Water Supply

A

S

W – Water Supply

- Do you have a water system?
- Preplan potential problems.
  - Is water system able to supply enough water?
    - Available hydrants?
    - Is water shuttling needed?
- Fire flow estimates:
  - 10 gpm per 100 sq ft = light fire load
  - 20 gpm per 100 sq ft = medium fire load
  - 30 gpm per 100 sq ft = high fire load

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

Auxiliary Appliances

S

A – Auxiliary Appliances

- Does the building have:
  - Sprinkler System?
  - Standpipe System?
  - Fire Department Connections?

- Additional training is required to further understand auxiliary appliances.

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

A

Street Conditions

S – Street Considerations

- Can roadway support weight of apparatus?
- Is there enough space for the apparatus:
  - Accessibility?
  - Maneuvering room?
- Road construction?
- Can you get to the incident?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

Weather

E

A

L

T

H

W – Weather

Extreme weather conditions may have adverse effects on firefighting efforts.

- HOT: FATIGUE – greater toll on resources
- COLD: SLOW OPS – increased injuries, delayed responses
- WINDS: Serious/underestimated safety concern

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

Exposures

A

L

T

H

E – Exposures

- Second only to Life Hazards on list of priorities.
- You must verify the extent to which any exposure is threatened when determining the location and extent of the fire.
- Examination should include all six sides:

  Front and Rear Left and Right Top and Bottom

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

E

Area (Building Size)

L

T

H

A – Area and Height

Area of building helps indicate maximum potential fire area.

- What is around the building?
- How large is the building?
- Do you have enough hose line to reach where you need?
- What is the building shape?
  - L-shaped Buildings
  - H-shaped Buildings
  - Circular Structures

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

E

A

Location and Extent of Fire

T

H

L – Location and Extent of Fire

- Identify where the fire is.
- Is the fire confined to a room/rooms?
- How far has the fire spread?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

E

A

L

Time

H

T - Time

- What time of day is it?
- Are there people inside/away due to the time of day?

Size-Up – COAL WAS WEALTH

W

E

A

L

T

Hazardous Materials

H – Hazardous Materials

- Known locations should be pre-planned.
- *Occupancy* usually gives hints.
- Not always obvious:
  - Assume the worst and work from that mindset.

Size Up – Conclusion

- Size-up starts with the receipt of the alarm and continues until the fire is under control.
- The process is carried out many times and by many individuals during a fire.

IC Checklist – Size-up

- Pay attention to dispatch information.
- Conduct rapid, systematic, accurate size-up.
- Use command positioning for visual information management.
- Use map, preplans and reference material.
- Record information on a standard, tactical worksheet.

IC Checklist – Size-up

- Use Divisions/Groups as information, reporting and recon agents.
- Use a standard information inventory to identify critical known/not known incident factors.
- Quickly identify and react to safety “red flags.”
- Structure and time information management around tactical priorities.
- Evaluate current conditions and forecast future conditions along a standard scale.

IC Checklist – Size-up

- Continually reconsider conditions – stay current and stay connected to resources.
- Integrate/interact with owner, occupant, building engineers or technicians.
- Maintain a realistic awareness of elapsed incident time.
- Consider fixed factors and manage variable factors.

Unit 3 – Review

What is “size-up?”

An evaluation of problems and conditions that affect the outcome of the fire

Who performs size-up?

All firefighters and officers

When does size-up begin?

Size-up begins at the time the alarm is received

Unit 3 – Review

What is a convenient acronym to help you remember all thirteen factors affecting size-up?
COAL WAS WEALTH

What is the primary factor that will drive your tactical decision making?
Life Hazard

What are the two most critical factors when sizing up/evaluating potential life hazard?
Occupancy and Time of Day

Unit 4

COMMUNICATIONS

Unit Objectives

1. Identify aspects of incident communication.

2. Describe the Communications Order Model.

3. Identify how to communicate with operating units and use communication guidelines.

Communications

Major Goal:

To initiate, maintain and control efficient incident communications.

The third basic command function involves initiating, maintaining and controlling the communications process.

Standard Communications System Elements:

- Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines
- Communications Training
- Organizational Management
- Equipment Support
- Communications Channels
- Standard Language Text
- Communications Techniques

Basic Communication Activity

If you can't move important information, or create effective action, don't push the button.

Communications Participants

The major communications players include:

- Dispatch
- IC
- Command Support Staff
- Operating Units
- Other Agencies

Forms of Incident Communications

- Face-to-Face
- Radio
- Electronic Support (cell phones, email, etc.)

Communications Order Model

Before a message is sent, the receiver must indicate that they are ready.

After a message is sent, the receiver must briefly restate the message to verify understanding.

By using the communications order model, you can reduce the likelihood that a “handlight” will show up in the place where you need a “handline.”

The Initial Report

The IC conducts an initial size-up of the incident and communicates this to quickly extend a picture of what the IC sees.

The report is updated as conditions change or additional information is received, as discussed in Unit 3.

Communications with Operating Units

Operating units perform task-level work on the most action-oriented level.

Communications will usually involve the following:

- Assignment to a task
- Resources, support and reinforcement required/provided
- Supervision required/provided
- Safety issues
- Progress, exception and completion reports
- Reassignment when the current task is completed

Communications Guidelines

- Be short, specific and clear
- Listen critically
- Maintain self-control
- Avoid distracting mannerisms
- Prioritize messages
- Keep messages task oriented
- Be supportive
- Follow the order model

IC Checklist – Communications

- Use communications SOPs.
- Start/control communications upon arrival with initial radio report that describes conditions and actions.
- Use effective communications techniques to keep everyone connected.
- Use organizational chart as communications flow plan.

IC Checklist – Communications

- Use Divisions/Groups as communications partners.
- Maintain a clear, controlled, well-timed radio voice.
- Listen critically – understand communications difficulties from tough operating positions.
- Mix and match forms of communications (face-to-face, radio, computer).

IC Checklist – Communications

- Coordinate timely progress reports.
- Always maintain your communications availability – answer on the first call.
- Utilize the standard order model to structure communications.
- Keep communications simple: task/location/objective (use plain text).
- Utilize CP position and command staff to help communications.

IC Checklist – Communications

- Center communications around the tactical benchmarks – “all-clear,” “under control” and “loss stopped.”
- Project a good radio image.

Unit 4 – Review

What are some forms of incident communication?

Face-to-face, radio, electronic support

Using the Communications Order Model, what should the receiver do after the message is sent?

Briefly restate the message to verify understanding

True/False: When communicating, it is okay to give a lot of information and go on about several issues.

False. Be short, specific and clear

Unit 5

DEPLOYMENT MANAGEMENT

Unit Objectives

1. Identify the major on-scene deployment functions for the initial IC.

2. Understand resource inventory and tracking.

3. Describe staging.

Deployment Management

Major Goal:

To provide and manage a steady, adequate, timely stream of appropriate resources.

Deployment is the “most functional” aspect of command.

Deployment Management

The major on-scene deployment functions for the initial IC are directed towards getting the right type and amount of resources safely in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing.

Deployment Management

The functions include the following deployment activities:

- Quickly develop an event/response profile
- Determine how much and what kind of resources are needed
- Call for additional resources as required, or return unneeded resources

Deployment Management

- Assign resources to complete the incident action plan
- Maintain a current and accurate inventory and tracking of resources
- Operate an overall incident accountability system including personnel accountability and staging procedures

Deployment Management

1. Determine resource needs

2. Assign resources

The Order Model

When giving orders on an incident, the IC should use the “order model.”

The order model requires the IC to begin by identifying:

- the condition
- then needs
- then tasks

to produce an effective order that connects the task that must be performed.

The Order Model

This means that an order includes

- a work location
- a basic task description
- the task objective
- the resources allotted
- and any related details required to complete the task

The Order Model

The process of giving orders works a lot better if the IC knows:

1. There is someone available to give the orders to
2. Who that person/unit is
3. Their basic capability
4. When they will arrive on the scene
5. Their general direction of approach/travel

The Order Model

Once the order is acknowledged, the unit goes to work on the task. They must continue to use the order model format to issue brief, incremental progress reports.

The Order Model

Such reports should include:

- A basic description of how the work is going
- Requests for support activities or additional resources
- Requests for more command/division coordination
- Other actions needed to accomplish their assigned task

Resource Inventory and Tracking

The IC should keep track of:

- What units are assigned (dispatched) to the incident
- A check off as the units arrive, stage, and are ready to go to work

Resource Inventory and Tracking

- As units are assigned, the IC must record:
  - Work location
  - Tasks/functions/objectives
  - Supervision (who are they reporting to)
- A checklist of progress and times completing tactical priorities
- A rough sketch of the incident area and the location of responders
- A basic (fill-in) organization chart—who is assigned where, and to whom

Resource Inventory and Tracking

The IC should always be able to answer the following questions at all times:

- Who is on the scene?
- Where are they?
- What are they doing?
- Are they okay?
- Is the risk that we are taking worth what we are trying to accomplish?

Staging

Staging brings order and accountability to initial incident command by keeping units in one of four active modes:

1. Responding (on the way)
2. Staged (arrived on scene, ready to work)
3. Assigned to the standard work cycle by the IC
4. Completed work, going available

IC Checklist – Deployment Mgmt

- Call for resources based on the most rapid, accurate, current, and forecasted event profile you can develop, based on the tactical priorities.
- Maintain an awareness of local resource response, amount, and capability:
  - Personnel
  - Apparatus/equipment
  - Systems

IC Checklist – Deployment Mgmt

- Quickly assess and use the local dispatch and status keeping system.
- Monitor and manage within online response times.
- Use staging, assignment by the IC and accountability SOP/SOGs to get firefighters into the standard work cycle.

IC Checklist – Deployment Mgmt

- Maintain current, accurate, recorded resource inventory and tracking on a tactical worksheet.
- Balance resources with tasks.
- Always maintain an appropriate tactical reserve.
- Use command SOP/SOGs to manage and escalate operations.

Unit 5 – Review

Once the IC determines how much and what kind of resources are needed, what should the IC do?

Call for additional resources as required or return unneeded resources

As units are assigned, what must the IC record?

Work location, tasks / functions / objectives, supervision (who they are reporting to)

Staging can bring what to initial incident command?

Order and accountability

Unit 6

STRATEGY & INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING

Unit Objectives

1. Describe how to determine which strategic mode to use.
2. Identify basic risk management.
3. Describe standard safety SOPs.
4. Identify the basic order of development.
5. Identify the standard tactical priorities.

Strategy and Incident Action Planning

Major Goal:

To use a systematic method to make basic strategy decisions and to develop and initiate a tactical IAP.

The fifth command function describes how the IC develops and uses the incident strategy and IAP as the initial and ongoing evaluation, decision making and management framework.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

The IC identifies the strategic mode as either:

Offensive or ***Defensive***

throughout the analysis of an array of standard critical factors and their related characteristics.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

- **Offensive Mode**: taking direct action to mitigate the problem. This may involve personnel making an interior attack. *This should only be used with proper training.*

- **Defensive Mode**: isolating or stabilizing the incident to ensure it does not get any worse.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

The major factors and questions to consider in determining the correct mode include:

- **Fire extent and location**: How much and what part of the building is involved? This will determine where we can and cannot operate.
- **Savable occupants**: Is there anyone alive to save? We will not risk our lives for those who are already deceased.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

- **Fire effect**: What are the structural conditions? Don't get under stuff that will fall down on top of you.
- **Savable property**: Is there any property left to save? We will not risk our lives for property that is already lost.
- **Entry and tenability**: Can forces get in the building and stay in?
  Get in/stay in = offensive
  Can't get it/can't stay in = defensive

Identifying the Strategic Mode

- **Ventilation profile**: Roof operations become big strategic indicators – particularly where roof, attic and fire area are directly connected: Can't get on the roof = can't go inside
- **Special hazards**: HazMat, confined space, high/low angle, swift water, meteor showers? We must develop strategy/IAP to match the hazard.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

- **Local violence**: Social disorder, shooting/bullets/weapons, violent people or situations are present. Do we need law enforcement to stabilize before we can safely operate? We are basically a highly vulnerable, non-bulletproof “friendly force.”
- **Terrorism**: Chemical, biological, nuclear, explosives, etc.

Identifying the Strategic Mode

- **Resources**: Are sufficient resources available for the attack? We require adequate manual laborers to do incident work – either offensive or defensive. Do our firefighters have the hardware necessary to support their efforts?

Operational Benefits

Effective management of the overall strategy by the IC provides the following benefits:

- Structures decision making and evaluation
- Standardizes understanding and communications
- Provides operational control
- Improves overall effectiveness
- Supports incident safety

Strategic Control Questions

The IC must continually ask and answer the basic strategic control questions:

- Have I effectively evaluated incident conditions?
- Have I done a risk management evaluation?
- Have I made a conscious, offensive/defensive decision?
- Have I gotten the personnel into their positions based on my (IC) orders or SOP/SOGs…
  or have they freelanced into those positions?

Strategic Control Questions

- Am I in a position to observe and listen to progress/exception/completion/condition reports so that I can effectively evaluate changing conditions?
- Have I forecasted what will happen in the future (5/10/15 minutes ahead)?
- Do I know if my personnel are okay?
- Can I move the personnel, if conditions change?

Risk Management

A major foundation of our risk management approach is that every piece and part of our operational routine must be done within standard safety procedures, *all the time*.

The following is a risk management plan that effectively integrates into our regular Incident Management System (IMS).

Risk Management

The plan expresses a standard, three-level risk approach to our personnel performing dangerous, potentially fatal incident work.

1. **We will risk a lot to protect a savable life.**
2. **We will risk a little to protect savable property.**
3. **We will not take any risk to protect lives or property that are already lost.**

Personal Protective Equipment

A standard part of every occupational safety program involves the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ensemble that is used to protect the workers who come in direct contact with the incident hazards.

Personal Protective Equipment

It is critical that the strategic/ tactical/task levels operate with a realistic and accurate understanding of how PPE performs under actual incident conditions and what the equipment can and cannot do.

Safety SOP/SOGs

A common risk management reference is that we will conduct all safety operations in a “highly calculated manner.”

Incident safety SOP/SOGs generally involve the following basic activities:

Preparation – All team members must understand and be competent in their role and contribute to the capability of their unit.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Ready – Responders receive the call for service and must know where they are going, how to get there, who is going with them, and what radio frequency is assigned to their incident.

Get Set – Everyone who is going on the call is safely on the apparatus, seated and belted, the officer has checked with all crew members to verify they are physically in attendance, emotionally intact, mentally present and ready to respond.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Go – All warning devices are blinking, spinning, oscillating, blasting, yelping, shining, whining, reflecting and strobing. The overhead station apparatus door is all the way up and all the compartment doors on the truck are closed – now the rig can hit the road.

Driving/Riding – Everyone stays in seat belts, the officer gathers information, looks, listens, manages the radio and helps with navigation/acts as a traffic/access/routing lookout.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Standard Arrival – Unit goes into the regular staging/assignment/accountability cycle according to SOP/SOGs – IC enters them into logging/ inventory/tracking system that continually follows them on a tactical work sheet throughout the incident.

Hazard Zone ID/Entry – Officers evaluate the hot-zone perimeter and verifies that the crew is fully protected (PPE), intact (together), and assigned as a single resource with a specific task level job to do or to a division by the IC before they cross the hot-zone "line."

Safety SOP/SOGs

Continuous Communications Contact – Hazard-zone teams maintain portable radio contact with their Division/IC
– no contact with supervisor = no hazard-zone operations (simply, get out).

Incident Scene Hazard ID – Entire crew continually evaluates hazard profile around them and makes immediate location/function changes to protect themselves/others from current and changing conditions.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Safety Tactical Reserve – IC quickly establishes Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) who maintains continuous availability to respond to any hazard-zone safety issue.

Exit Rules – Crew goes in together/stays together/comes out together. Officer always evaluates crew condition, air management, fatigue level, and maintains awareness of exit profile.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Division Operations – Unit effectively connects (and stays connected) with division officer for direction/redirection/coordination based on incident conditions, work details, and hazards.

Safety Officer Support – IC assigns Safety Officer who provides active, on-line safety surveillance, supervision, and support of all incident personnel.

Safety SOP/SOGs

Rotation/Rehab – IC/Divisions continually audit fatigue profile based on manual labor time, weather/environmental conditions, and assignment time, as the basis for rotating work units through rehab.

Return to Quarters - Officer verifies attendance, welfare, sanity of crew members, thanks the Division/IC helpers for their support, and safely heads home.

Incident Action Planning

The IC develops and uses the offensive/defensive strategic decision to establish the overall operational approach.

The IAP must be directly related to the strategy, but not be a substitute for it.

Incident Action Planning

The distinction between the strategy and the IAP is simple. The strategic decision describes the overall approach (and position) of the operations, and drives the IAP.

The IAP provides the tactical assignments required to achieve the offensive/ defensive objective.

Incident Action Planning

The basic strategic decision (offensive/ defensive) always drives the planning process.

The basic order of development is:

1. Strategy
2. IAP

The IAP must be a reflection of the operational strategy – not the other way around.

Tactical Priorities

The IAP is based on the three standard tactical priorities that establish the major operational activities. They are, in order:

1. **Life Safety**
2. **Incident Stabilization**
3. **Protection of Property and Environment**

Benchmarks

The objective of each priority is reflected in the following benchmarks:

"All Clear" – the primary search is completed

"Under Control" – the fire is controlled (i.e., forward fire progress stopped, no additional units will be required)

"Loss Stopped" – property conservation is complete

IC Checklist – Strategy/IAP

- Apply the standard risk management plan throughout the incident.
- Decide on the overall offensive/defensive strategy using the critical factors.
- Declare the strategy as part of the initial radio report.

IC Checklist – Strategy/IAP

- Manage and control operations within the basic strategy.
- Use critical factors to develop the IAP
- Include strategy, location, function, and objective in the IAP.
- Do not combine offensive/defensive operations in the same fire area (compartment).

IC Checklist – Strategy/IAP

- Use the incident organization and communications to connect and act out strategy/plan.
- Use tactical priority benchmarks as the action planning road map.
- Re-announce ongoing strategy confirmation as part of elapsed time reports.

Unit 6 – Review

What strategic mode should be chosen if you do not have personnel trained to go inside?

Defensive

What risk should be taken to protect lives or property that are already lost?

No risk

Unit 6 – Review

Including safety procedures into what department documents can help ensure safe activities during incidents?

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP/SOGs)

The _____ must be a reflection of the _____.

IAP : operational strategy

What is always the first tactical priority?

Life Safety

Unit 7

INCIDENT ORGANIZATION

Unit Objectives

1. Describe divisions and groups.

2. Describe the Safety Officer and their responsibilities.

Incident Organization

Major Goal:

To develop an effective incident organization using the Incident Command System (ICS) to decentralize and delegate geographic and functional responsibilities.

Incident Organization

This course will not focus deeply on the ICS as additional ICS training is readily available.

Please visit tiwa.tamu.edu and contact your local Regional Fire Coordinator at

tfsweb.tamu.edu/RFC

for more information on ICS training.

One or Two Unit Reponses

The vast majority of our local incidents are one or two unit calls for service.

These incidents make up the foundation for expanded large scale operations.

The officer automatically becomes the IC.

The IC sizes up the situation and determines the single unit can handle it.

Operations are performed safely, and they go home.

Larger Scale Reponses

The IC will quickly become overloaded with the details of managing a large number of units scattered all over the incident site.

Command must develop and build an organization that matches the deployment of resources to the incident scene.

Larger Scale Reponses

The IC accomplishes this by breaking the incident into manageable “subunits” called *divisions* and *groups*.

Divisions and Groups

A division or group is a smaller, more manageable unit of an incident scene organization.

- **Divisions**: geographic areas – Division Alpha, Division Charlie, Roof Division, East Division, etc.
- **Groups**: functional areas – Ventilation Group, RIT Group, Rehab Group, etc.

Divisions and Groups

Advantages of using divisions/groups include:

- Reduces the IC's span of control
- Creates more effective incident scene communication

Divisions and Groups

- Provides a standard and logical system to divide large geographical incidents into effectively sized units
- Improves firefighter safety

Safety Officer

When possible, the IC should designate a Safety Officer.

Their focus is to monitor the safety and welfare of the personnel operating in the incident.

Safety Officers have authority to stop unsafe actions.

This does not diminish the IC's "authority" to run the incident; it simply makes the operation safer.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Evaluating aspects of the overall operations that affect safety.
- Monitoring the safety of the personnel operating in the incident.
- Evaluating changing incident conditions.
- Evaluating changing structural conditions.
- Stopping unsafe acts.

Safety Officer

- Setting up Rapid Intervention Teams.
- Managing accountability within the incident.
- Evaluating the operation as it relates to the risk management plan.
- Evaluating whether the strategy matches the conditions.
- Coordinating and providing technical assistance with the IC and Division/Group Supervisors.

IC Checklist – Incident Organization

- Quickly develop an incident organization to keep everyone connected.
- Match and balance the command organization to the size/structure/complexity of the operating resources.
- Forecast and establish geographical divisions and functional groups.

IC Checklist – Incident Organization

- Accomplish effective delegation and span-of-control management through use of ICS.
- Correctly name divisions and groups.
- Assign and brief Division/Group Supervisors – provide objectives.
- Limit units assigned to a division/group to 7 – optimum of 5.
- Serve as resource allocator to division/groups.

IC Checklist – Incident Organization

- Assign a Safety Officer.
- Build outside agency liaison and public information into the organization.
- Evaluate progress reports, assist, and coordinate division/group activities.
- Use the organization chart as the communications flow plan.
- Allow yourself to be supported in the process.

Unit 7 – Review

What designation is given to a geographically assigned area of operations?

Division; e.g., Div. A, Div. C, Roof Div., etc.

What designation is given to a functionally assigned area of operations?

Groups; e.g., Ventilation Group, Rehab Group, etc.

Whose primary focus is it to monitor the safety and welfare of the personnel operating in the incident?

Safety Officer

Unit 8

REVIEW, EVALUATION & REVISION

Unit Objectives

1. Identify the process of review, evaluation and revision.

2. Identify what the ongoing evaluation process must evaluate.

3. Describe the critical incident factors to be evaluated.

Review, Evaluation and Revision

Major Goals:

- To confirm that the current incident action plan is meeting the tactical requirements of the incident and adequately provides for the safety of the personnel.
- To identify and address any areas that are not covered.

Review, Evaluation and Revision

While the process of Review, Evaluation and Revision is the seventh function, it is something the IC does throughout the incident, beginning at the front end of incident operations.

The biggest reason we do never-ending size up (evaluation, revision, evaluation, revision…) is so our personnel can operate safely, complete the tactical priorities, and go home okay after the incident.

Review, Evaluation and Revision

The ongoing evaluation must address:

- Firefighter safety
- Tactical priorities

The first thing the IC must always evaluate is whether the current strategy is correct.

Review, Evaluation and Revision

Evaluation and revision for fire control efforts must be very dynamic and needs to answer the simple question, “How will we put the fire out and survive doing it?”

The answer to this question will be based on the following:

Review, Evaluation and Revision

Evaluation of the critical incident factors:

- **Correct action** – "Are all the correct key attack/operational/support points being covered, and is it safe to stay?"
- **Size of the attack** – "Is the response large enough to control the fire?"
- **Timing and amount of support** – "Is the fire attack receiving adequate support?"

Review, Evaluation and Revision

- **Adequate back up** – "Are adequate resources in place to reinforce the current operation?"

  The smart IC will always try to maintain additional resources in reserve.
  These tactical resources can be used to:
  - Reinforce current positions
  - Provide relief for firefighters in critical positions
  - Cover new positions or functions
  - Operate as a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)

Review, Evaluation and Revision

- **Operational control** – "Does the IC have effective command of the operation?"
- **Adequate resources** – "Has the IC balanced resources with tactical problems?"

IC Checklist – Review, Evaluation and Revision

- Regular command system elements established in the beginning provide the framework for midpoint review/revision:
  - Strong standard communication
  - Divisions/Groups
  - SOP/SOGs
  - Risk management plan
  - Strong communications
  - Standard strategy/action planning

IC Checklist – Review, Evaluation and Revision

- Carry out command functions (1 – 8) in a standard order.
- Receive, confirm and evaluate conditions – progress reports.

IC Checklist – Review, Evaluation and Revision

- Use standard strategy/action plan review as the checklist for revision:
  - Firefighter safety
  - Does strategy match conditions
  - First, second, third priority progress
  - Correct action
  - Location of attack
  - Size of attack
  - Timing and support
  - Adequate back up
  - Adequate resources
  - Have a Plan B

IC Checklist – Review, Evaluation and Revision

- Quickly make transitions based on the safety profile of changing/forecasted conditions:
  - Feedback from Divisions/Groups and Units
  - Quick evaluation
  - Move the personnel
  - Regroup – go to Plan B

Unit 8 – Review

When does the process of Review, Evaluation and Revision occur?

Throughout the incident, beginning at the front end of incident operations

What must the ongoing evaluation process evaluate?

Firefighter safety and tactical priorities

If after review, your evaluation of the incident identifies something lacking, what should you do?

Revise the strategy/IAP

Unit 9

CONTINUE, TRANSFER & TERMINATE COMMAND

Unit Objectives

1. Identify the major factors to consider when deciding how to provide continuing command.

2. Discuss transfer of command.

3. Discuss terminating command.

Continue, Transfer & Terminate

Major Goal:

To provide the required duration of command necessary to complete the tactical priorities, to standardize how command is transferred and upgraded, and to ensure that operations are safely concluded.

Continuation of Command

The IC considers the following major factors when deciding how to provide continuing command:

- **Incident Type** – Fire, medical, mass casualty, HazMat, technical rescue, etc.
- **Life Safety Characteristics** – Number, location and condition of victims or potential victims.
- **Fire Area Profile** – Size, nature, and arrangement of fire load and exposures

Continuation of Command

- **Firefighter Safety** – The position and function of the incident personnel, in relation to the standard risk management plan.
- **Special Factors** – Weather, social disturbances, not enough resources or the right type of resources.

Command Transfer

When a new person becomes IC, this is *transferring* command.

This may be a higher ranking officer, more experienced officer, or whomever your local SOP/SOGs allow for.

Regardless of the local chain of command used, it must be customer-centered, safety oriented, comfortable for the personnel, and must work for the organization.

Command Transfer

A good, basic command transfer rule is:

If you can't improve the quality of command, don't transfer it.

Terminating Command

When the IC comes to the end of the tactical priorities, he/she must decommit/demobilize the operating units and terminate command.

As the operation winds down, the IC can reduce the size of the command structure.

Similar to assuming command, in reverse, advise that command is terminated once all resources are demobilized.

IC Checklist – Continue, Transfer and Terminate Command

- Estimate the length of command required.
- Consider the time for completing each tactical priority.
- Consider life safety, incident profile, and incident/fire conditions.
- Develop and support an organization that outlasts the event.
- Use standard common transfer (both ways).

IC Checklist – Continue, Transfer and Terminate Command

- Assume, maintain, and upgrade effective command positioning.
- Develop and maintain effective fireground communications.
- Keep the incident action plan going (and growing, if necessary).
- Provide rehab, rotation, and relief for the IC and command staff.

IC Checklist – Continue, Transfer and Terminate Command

- Assure that all pertinent information is passed up and down the chain of command.
- Reduce the command structure as part of the ending stages of incident operations.
- Place resources back into service with a demobilization plan.
- Provide required critical incident support.

Unit 9 – Review

Considering major incident factors, such as incident type, life safety characteristics and firefighter safety, is part of deciding what?

How to provide continuing command

What is a good, basic command transfer rule?

If you can't improve the quality of command, don't transfer it.

True/False: As the operation winds down, the IC can reduce the number of resources without releasing everyone at the same time.

True

Conclusion – Safety Objective

Safety ***must*** be paramount.

The basic safety objective of each command function includes:

Function 1. ASSUMPTION/POSITION – establish IC at the very beginning of operations to insure that we start under control, stay under control, never lose control.

Function 2. SITUATION EVALUATION – create safe operations based on accurate initial and ongoing incident evaluation and information management.

Conclusion – Safety Objective

Function 3. COMMUNICATIONS – keep everyone linked together so that we can stay connected to get in/do our jobs/move quickly/get out quickly (if necessary).

Function 4. DEPLOYMENT – provide, manage, and protect our personnel with the timely dispatch of adequate, appropriate resources.

Conclusion – Safety Objective

Function 5. STRATEGY/IAP – safely position and move (where necessary) workers based on actual (and forecasted) conditions, within a standard risk management plan.

Function 6. ORGANIZATION – decentralized Division/Group Supervisors geographically and functionally manage incident operations and personnel welfare more directly.

Conclusion – Safety Objective

Function 7. REVIEW/REVISE – continually evaluate and revise (as required) operations to effectively connect the current incident action plan to changing conditions.

Function 8. TRANSFER/CONTINUE – continue to support the IC and command staff throughout operations and support safety, by strengthening command continuation through effective transfer, upgrade, and conditions.

For More Information

For information regarding
fire department training in Texas,
go to tiwa.tamu.edu and contact your local
Regional Fire Coordinator: tfsweb.tamu.edu/RFC

For suggestions or corrections for this course,
please contact
Texas A&M Forest Service
Incident Response Department
Training Section
training@tfs.tamu.edu