

Procedure	Effective Date	Rescinds
INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM	August 22, 1995	NEW

Reference

Franklin Co. Fire Chiefs

NFA Model Incident Command Systems

Page 1 of 31

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for the operation at incidents or situations that may arise during the course of an operation. Each member is expected to know, understand and operate according to this guideline as each situation arises.

Responsibility:

- I. All officers are responsible for the training of firefighting personnel and for ensuring proper compliance with this policy.
- II. All members have the responsibility to adequately learn these procedures and carry out this policy.
- III. All members shall show reasonable judgment in their use of this policy.

Guideline: Attached

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTENT AND PURPOSE

SECTION 2: INCIDENT COMMAND PROCEDURES

THEORY

INITIAL COMMAND

COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMAND MODES

FIXED COMMAND MODE

MOBILE COMMAND MODE

ESTABLISHING COMMAND AND INITIAL SIZE-UP

TRANSFER OF COMMAND

SECTION 3: EXPANDING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

DIVISIONS AND GROUPS

DIVIDING THE INCIDENT

BRANCHES

COMMAND STAFF POSITIONS

SAFETY

LIAISON OFFICER

INFORMATION OFFICER

GENERAL STAFF FUNCTIONS

OPERATIONS

PLANNING

LOGISTICS

FINANCE

SECTION 4: STAGING

THEORY

LEVEL I STAGING

APPARATUS PLACEMENT

LEVEL II STAGING

STAGING AREA RESOURCES

SECTION 1: INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

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

The purpose of this guideline is to:

1. Provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergency incidents through improved command and control (or management of emergencies).
2. Improve the use of resources and tactical effectiveness.
3. Meet the OSHA/EPA regulations requiring the use of an Incident Command System for hazardous materials incidents.
4. Meet the NFPA Standard 1500 recommendations for the use of an Incident Command System for operations at all emergency incidents.

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

Any place in this guideline where the masculine pronoun is used, it is intended to include both the male and female genders.

SECTION 2: INCIDENT COMMAND PROCEDURES

A. THEORY

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

Incident command procedures are designed to accomplish the following:

1. Fix responsibility of command with a designated member through a standardized identification system, based on arrival sequence and other variables.
2. Insure that visible, direct, effective command be established as early as possible upon arrival at the incident scene.

3. Establish an effective framework within which the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander can be properly addressed.
4. Provide a system for accomplishing the orderly transfer of command from the initial Incident Commander to later arriving officers.

B. INITIAL COMMAND

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

1. Command is passed to the next arriving officer (only once per incident).
2. Command is officially transferred. (see Transfer of Command procedures)
3. The incident is terminated.

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

C. COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The person assuming command is responsible for the following:

1. Assuming an effective command location when the fixed command mode is chosen.
2. Calling on the scene and transmitting the initial radio report and size-up as outlined in section "E" of this chapter. If it is a "working incident", assigning a name to the incident itself. For example, a working incident at 1280 N. Grant Ave. could be called "North Grant Command", or perhaps "Columbus Coated Command" for the occupancy. A "working incident" is defined as any emergency situation that requires more than one company to be tied up. A "working incident" can be a fire, hazmat emergency, water rescue, emergency medical operation, etc.

3. Assessing the incident priorities.
4. Determining the incident's strategic goals and tactical objectives.
5. Developing and implementing the incident action plan.
6. Developing an incident command structure appropriate for the incident.
7. Assessing resource needs and orders, deploying needed resources.
8. Coordinating overall emergency activities.
9. Serving as ultimate incident safety officer; responsible for preventing fire fighter injuries and/or deaths.
10. Coordinating activities of outside agencies.
11. Authorizing information release to the media.
12. Returning companies to service.

D. COMMAND MODES

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

Fixed Command Mode
Mobile Command Mode

1. FIXED COMMAND MODE

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

****NOTE****

The location of the fixed Command Post should be easily identifiable. If the Incident Commander chooses to leave the interior of his/her vehicle, then he/she should be easily identifiable. Departments who elect to utilize vests for identification should consider using the colors as described in Appendix B.

2. MOBILE COMMAND MODE

Included are incidents requiring immediate action in order to stabilize the situation, and where, due to

manning and/or experience factors, the Company Officer feels that it is necessary for him/her to accompany his/her crew in their initial efforts. This may include situations where there is "nothing showing" and the Company Officer assuming command companies his/her crew in order to investigate the situation.

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

- a) The situation is quickly stabilized by the initial offensive attack or the preliminary investigation reveals no problem requiring the Incident Commander's active participation. In either case, the Company Officer should then return to a fixed command location and continue to discharge his/her command responsibilities.
- b) The situation is not likely to be quickly stabilized, or initial investigations indicate possible long term involvement. The Company Officer should recognize these situations and assign command of his/her company to a company member or another Company Officer, return to a fixed command location, and continue to function as the Incident Commander until relieved of this responsibility.
- c) Command is PASSED to the next arriving company or officer. NOTE: The "Passing of Command" can occur only once during any given incident, and may be initiated only by the first arriving officer or fire department member, and should be confined to "Mobile Command Mode" operations.

In addition, it must be understood that this command option is not to be used as a means of circumventing established incident command procedures or otherwise shirking required command responsibilities.

When the first arriving member determines the need to "pass" command, the initial radio report will include an announcement that command should be assumed by the next arriving company.

E. ESTABLISHING COMMAND AND INITIAL SIZE-UP

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

1. Identify transmission by giving company, name of Incident Commander, the location of the Command Post (if other than the front of the occupancy/incident), and the name assigned to the incident.

EXAMPLE: "Ladder 101 on the scene, Captain Doe in charge of High Street command."

Until command is transferred or passed, the original Incident Commander will remain in charge of the incident.

2. The apparent extent of the emergency.

EXAMPLE: "Situation contained, working fire, 2nd alarm, etc."

NOTE: If the first arriving member gives no information as to smoke showing or working fire, etc., it will be assumed by incoming companies that nothing is showing.

IF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER DETERMINES THAT A WORKING FIRE IS IN PROGRESS, THE INITIAL RADIO REPORT SHALL INCLUDE:

3. General size of structure - one story, tow story, multistory, high rise, etc.
NOTE: If the location of the incident or complex is well known, the name will suffice.
4. Type of construction - ordinary construction, frame, brick etc.
5. Occupancy - residence, apartment, convalescent, hotel, business, etc.
6. Action being taken - laying supply line, attacking with 1-1/2 line and tank, etc.
7. Apparatus in use - Engine 3, Rescue 2, etc.
8. Additional assignment - extra company, stand-by alarm, second alarm, etc.

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

The following examples illustrate the initial establishment of Command:

"Engine 181 on the scene, Lt. Doe in charge of XYZ command. We have an auto completely involved on the 2nd level of a 3-story concrete block parking garage, using preconnect and tank. Ladder 6 assisting. All other companies stand-by at the entrance."

"Engine 26 on the scene, Lt. Doe in charge, the command post is in the parking lot across the street and will be Main Street command. WE have a working fire in a second floor bedroom of a two-story frame residence. Attacking with 1-1/2 and tank."

"Engine 81 on the scene, Lt. Smith in charge. We have a trash fire at the rear of a frame garage, situation contained tie up Engine 81."

"Engine 111 on the scene. We have a working fire in a two-story frame residence. I will be engaging in fire attack. Passing command to the next arriving company."

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

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

F. TRANSFER OF COMMAND

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

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

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

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

EXAMPLE: "Columbus fire this is Broad Street Command. Battalion Chief Jones is now in charge of the Broad Street incident.

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

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

SECTION 3: EXPANDING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

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

examine some of the options the Incident Commander can use to manage an incident.

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

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

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

A. DIVISIONS AND GROUPS

1. **DIVISIONS:** Divisions are an organizational level responsible for operations in a specified geographical area at an incident. You could have an interior Division (within a building) or a Division outside a building. Some examples are: Division C, Division 13, Roof Division, etc.
2. **GROUPS:** Groups are an organizational level responsible for a specified functional assignment at an incident. Examples are Salvage Group, Search and Rescue Group, Fire Attack Group, Water Supply Group, etc.

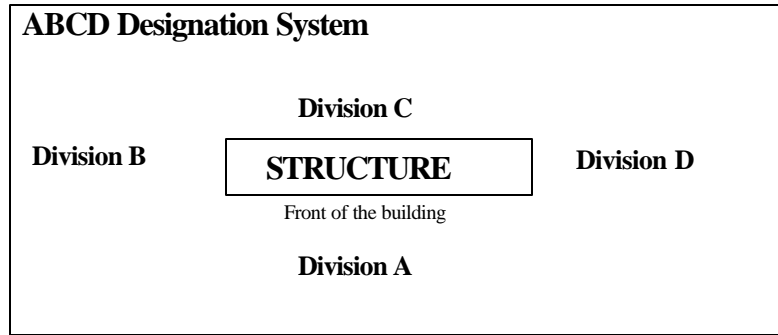
Divisions and Groups are both commanded by Supervisors. Divisions and Groups operate at the same command level. Divisions do not work for Groups and Groups do not work for Divisions. However, a Group's functional responsibility may cross established Division boundaries. For example, a Ventilation Group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

Divisions and Groups affect the following three significant management principles:

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

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

their assigned objectives, and the resources under their command.



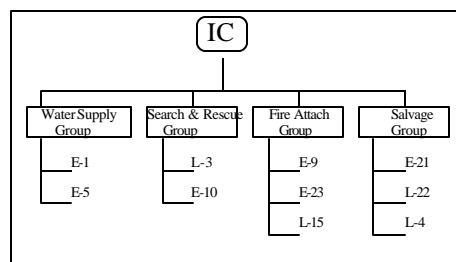
Each functional assignment be Division or An activity that

or geographical does not need to be commanded by a Group supervisor. only requires one

unit to effectively handle the situation would not necessitate the implementation of a Division or Group; there is not a coordination problem and obviously the assignment does not cover a large area or require the deployment of several single resources.

B. DIVIDING THE INCIDENT

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



There will be a letter the incident area. side of the incident will letter designations move Exposures may also be

designation for each exterior side of Normally, the addressed or street be designated at Division "A" and the clockwise around the incident. identified with a similar system.

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

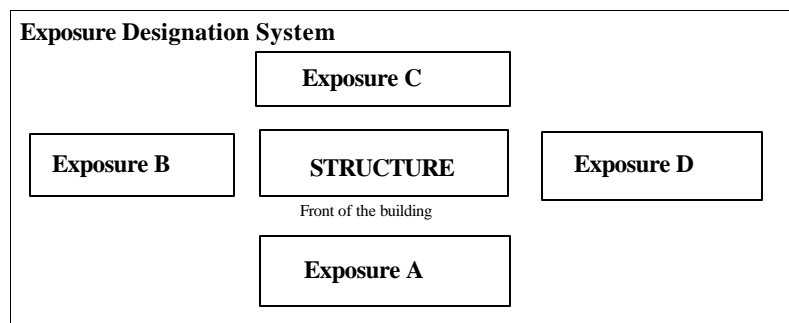
C.

At large-scale or complex incidents number of Divisions and/or Groups may create a significant span-of-control

problem. When this occurs, consideration should be given to the implementation of Branches. Branches are also of great value when large numbers of resources are committed to specific functional activity. A good example would be a fire incident with a major EMS problem. An EMS Branch could be implemented to alleviate these problems.

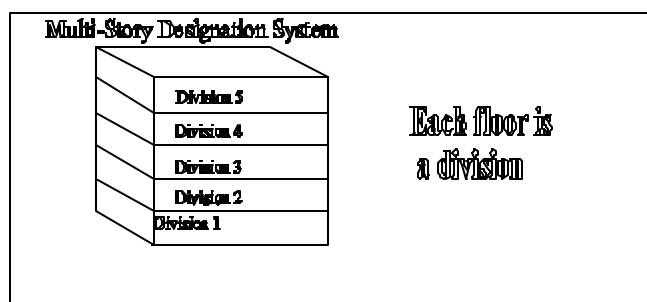
Branches are managed by a Branch Director.

A Branch is an organizational level between Divisions or Groups and the Incident Commander. A Branch Director is responsible for implementing the incident action plan for that particular Branch.



BRANCH

the



organizational level or Groups and the Incident Commander. A Branch Director is responsible for implementing the incident action plan for that particular Branch.

commonly used within the Operations and Logistic sections.

The specific responsibilities of a Branch Director are:

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

D. COMMAND STAFF POSITIONS

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

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

1. SAFETY OFFICER

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

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

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

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

2. LIAISON OFFICER

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

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

3. INFORMATION OFFICER

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

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

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

E. GENERAL STAFF FUNCTIONS

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

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

Use only the tools necessary to safely and effectively manage the incident. Functions not staffed must be performed by the Incident Commander.

1. OPERATIONS

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

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

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

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

- a. Assists the IC in developing strategic goals and tactical objectives for the incident.
- b. Develops operational plans.
- c. Requests or releases resources through the IC.
- d. Consults with the IC about the overall incident action plan.
- e. Keeps the IC informed of situation and resource status within Operations.
- f. Supervises the staging area manager.

The most common reason for staffing Operations is to relieve span-of-control problems for the Incident Commander. A complex incident in which the IC needs assistance determining strategic goals and tactical objectives, may also require implementing Operations.

Operations should only be implemented to improve the management of the incident.

2. PLANNING

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

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

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

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

Planning assists the Incident Commander in:

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

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

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

3. LOGISTICS

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

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

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

established.

SERVICE BRANCH

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

MEDICAL UNIT (for emergency personnel, not civilians)

FOOD UNIT

SUPPORT BRANCH

SUPPLY UNIT

FACILITIES UNIT

GROUND SUPPORT UNIT

4. FINANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIME UNIT

PROCUREMENT UNIT

COMPENSATION/CLAIMS UNIT

COST UNIT

SUMMARY:

The functional positions that are staffed depend on the needs of the incident. As a general rule, the larger or more complex the incident, the more need there is to delegate functional responsibilities. Functional responsibilities for any positions that are not staffed remain with the Incident Commander. In situations where the IC needs to delegate functional authority and the functional considerations are not extensive, some functions may be combined. For example: Planning and Logistics or Information Officer and Liaison Officer. However, some functional assignments should not be combined in a complex incident due to their critical impact on safety or incident control.

The Incident Command system is a resource that can be applied on an as-needed basis. It is a practical, realistic approach to incident management.

If fully understood, it will not only make your job easier but it will also make it possible for all of us to become truly professional emergency incident managers.

Understand the entire system but apply only what is necessary in your day-to-day incidents. Regular use of the ICS provides the training for future expansion. When the correct terms are used, relationships are established and guidelines are practiced so that the management of larger incidents will be built on a strong foundation.

Except for the simplest incident, there is always more than one way to organize an incident. Be flexible and use your imagination.

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

SECTION 4: STAGING GUIDELINES

A. THEORY

The objective of the staging guideline is to provide a standard system of initial placement for responding apparatus, personnel and equipment prior to assignment.

Effective utilization of this guideline:

1. Will prevent excessive apparatus congestion at the scene.
2. Will allow time for the Incident Commander to evaluate conditions prior to assigning companies.
3. Places apparatus in an uncommitted location close to the immediate scene to facilitate more effective assignment by the Incident Commander.
4. Produces more effective communications by virtue of reducing radio traffic during the critical initial stages of fire operations.

STAGING WILL INVOLVE TWO LEVELS

LEVEL I AND LEVEL II

B. LEVEL I STAGING

Level I staging applies to all multiple company responses on 1st alarm assignments. It dictates the standard apparatus response areas for both residential and high-risk properties.

The first arriving officer or member shall assume command and size-up the incident. If necessary, the standard apparatus placement of Level I staging may need to be adjusted. Unless otherwise directed, companies will be positioned at the incident as outlined below.

In Level I staging, all companies will report their company designation and their location upon arrival. The alarm office will acknowledge the radio transmission of these staged companies.

Staged companies, after receiving acknowledgement, will stay off the air until orders are received from the Incident Commander. If at the scene of a working incident, a staged company has not been given an assignment within a reasonable period of time, the company commander shall contact the Incident Commander and advise him/her of their standby status.

These staging guidelines attempt to reduce routine traffic, but in no way should reduce effective communications or the initiative of officers to communicate. If staged companies observe any situation that requires immediate action they will advise the Incident Commander of the condition of their actions.

LEVEL I STAGING FOR "A" ASSIGNMENTS

1. ARRIVAL OF CHIEF/COMMAND OFFICER

When first on the scene, the chief officer shall set up command, give the radio report, and give directions to the incoming companies. The chief's vehicle should be placed in a location where it will not interfere with the positioning of incoming apparatus.

When proceeded to the scene, the chief officer shall go to the Command Post, if established, and find out all the details of the incident. After the chief officer has been briefed, and a situation contained is not about to be announced, he/she may formally assume command of the incident by announcing via radio that he/she is in charge.

2. ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST ENGINE COMPANY

If the engine company is first on the scene, the company officer shall set up command, give the radio report, and direct incoming companies.

When first on the scene and nothing is showing, the engine company should proceed directly to the scene. If water may be needed, the officer in charge has the option of laying a line or going on in. If

there is any doubt about the ability of the engine's tank to control the situation, and it will be some time before the next engine company will be able to lay a line, good judgement may dictate laying a supply line as the engine goes to the scene. If possible, position the engine where it will not interfere with the operation of other arriving companies.

When preceded to the scene by a chief officer, ladder company, etc., the engine company should stop at the nearest hydrant or intersection. The engine company shall make this fact known to the Incident Commander and be guided by his/her orders.

3. ARRIVAL OF THE SECOND ENGINE COMPANY

The second engine company should position at the nearest hydrant or intersection. In either case, the company officer shall keep the crew with the apparatus and report their placement and that they are awaiting orders.

4. ARRIVAL OF LADDER COMPANY

If the ladder company is first on the scene, the company officer shall set up command, give the radio report, and direct incoming companies. If the ladder company is not first on the scene, it shall proceed to the scene unless directed to do otherwise by the Incident Commander. Ordinarily, the ladder company will go directly to the scene and occupy the front of the building. Being located in this position, the aerial ladder may be put into operation. The tools and equipment will be readily accessible and the ladder truck will be located where it will not interfere with the operations of other arriving companies.

5. ARRIVAL OF THE RESCUE COMPANY (when applicable)

If the rescue company is first on the scene, the fire fighter in charge shall set up command, give the radio report, and give direction to the incoming companies. If the rescue company is not first on the scene, it shall proceed to the scene unless directed to do otherwise by the Incident Commander.

If possible, the rescue company apparatus should be located close to the command post where it will not interfere with the operations of other operating companies and remain flexible so that if needed in another area the company will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

6. ARRIVAL OF THE SQUAD AND/OR MEDIC (when applicable)

When a squad and/or medic is dispatched to the scene, it should be located near the command post if possible and be prepared to care for injured personnel or citizens. These companies should remain flexible so that if needed in other areas they will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

Care should be taken by rescue, squad and medic companies that their apparatus does not block access to the incident scene or that their apparatus does not become blocked in at the scene.

LEVEL I STAGING FOR "B" ASSIGNMENTS

It will be mandatory for the first arriving company or officer to establish command, give the radio report, and direct incoming companies.

1. FIRST ARRIVING ENGINE COMPANY

The engine company should proceed directly to the incident. On all sprinklered buildings, unless it is known that the building is not so equipped, the first company to arrive shall send a person to locate and check the annunciator.

2. FIRST ARRIVING LADDER COMPANY

If the ladder company is not first on the scene, it shall proceed directly to the scene unless directed to do otherwise by the Incident Commander. Ordinarily, the ladder company will go directly to the scene and occupy the front of the building so that the aerial ladder may be put into operation. The tools and equipment will be readily accessible and the ladder truck will be located where it will not interfere with the operations of other arriving companies.

The command post ordinarily should be situated at the front of the building, but if the initial alarm states the fire is in the rear of the building or other information is gained (prior to the arrival of the second ladder company and the third engine company) indicating the command post should be set up at the rear of the building, the Incident Commander shall announce over the radio that the command post is at the rear of the building. Then the first arriving ladder and engine companies will cover the rear of the building and second arriving ladder and the third arriving engine will cover the front of the building automatically.

Consideration should be given to calling extra companies if necessary. The Incident Commander shall have at least one fully manned company in reserve at all times to be available to go to work immediately.

3. THE SECOND ARRIVING ENGINE COMPANY

The second arriving engine company shall take a position to attach to auxiliary firefighting accessories such as standpipe, sprinklers, etc., unless otherwise directed, and report to the Incident Commander when ready to operate.

4. THIRD ARRIVING ENGINE COMPANY

The third arriving engine company shall take a position that will enable them to operate at the rear of the incident. This company shall remain flexible so that if it is needed in other areas it will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

5. SECOND ARRIVING LADDER COMPANY

The second arriving ladder company shall take a position that will enable them to operate with the third engine company at the rear of the incident. This company shall remain flexible so that if it is needed in other areas it will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

6. ARRIVAL OF THE RESCUE COMPANY (when applicable)

If possible, locate the apparatus close to the command post where it will not interfere with the operations of other operating companies and remain flexible so that if needed in other areas they will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

7. ARRIVAL OF SQUADS AND/OR MEDICS

Squads and/or medics should, if possible, be located in the front of the building near the command post, and be prepared to care for injured personnel or citizens. They should remain flexible so that if needed in other areas they will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

8. FIRST ARRIVING CHIEF/COMMAND OFFICER

When first on the scene, the chief officer shall set up command, give the radio report, and give directions to the incoming companies. The chief's vehicle should be placed in a location where it will not interfere with the positioning of incoming apparatus.

When proceeded to the scene, the chief officer shall go to the Command Post, if established, and find out all the details of the incident. After the chief officer has been briefed, and a situation contained is not about to be announced, he/she may formally assume command of the incident by announcing via radio that he/she is in charge.

9. SECOND ARRIVING CHIEF/COMMAND OFFICER (when applicable)

The second arriving chief officer will report to the Incident Commander for assignment.

C. APPARATUS PLACEMENT

Apparatus function should regulate placement. Many times by virtue of poor placement we limit the options or eliminate functions we can assign to that unit.

The placement of all apparatus on an incident scene should be a reflection of one of the following:

1. A suggested operations guideline for first arriving companies.
2. A pre-arranged staging procedure.
3. A direct order from the incident commander.
4. A conscious decision on the part of the officer assigned to that apparatus based on existing or predictable conditions.

Effective apparatus placement must begin with the arrival of first units. The placement of the initial arriving engine and ladder companies should be based upon initial size-up and general conditions upon arrival. First arriving companies should place themselves to maximum advantage to go to work. Later arriving unit should be placed in a manner that builds on the initial plan and allows for expansion of the operation.

Avoid congestion! Later arriving companies should stage a minimum of one block short of the immediate incident area, and remain uncommitted until orders are received from the Incident Commander. Company officers should select standby positions that allow a great deal of response flexibility.

Fire hose (particularly large diameter) limits the general access to the incident. Lines should be laid with attention to the access problems they present. Lay lines on the same side of the street as the hydrant and cross over near the scene.

Apparatus is an expensive exposure. Position apparatus in a manner that considers the extent and location of the fire with a pessimistic evaluation of fire spread and building failure. Anticipate the heat which may be released with structural collapse.

Beware of putting fire apparatus in places where it cannot be repositioned easily and quickly, particularly operating positions with only one way in and out; i.e. yards, alleys, driveways, etc.

Beware of overhead power lines or other overhead obstructions, such as pedestrian walkways, when positioning apparatus. Do not park where lines may fall on apparatus.

Do not hook up to hydrants so close to the fire building that structural failure or fire extension will jeopardize the apparatus.

D. LEVEL II STAGING

Level II staging will relate to large, complex-type incidents requiring an on-scene reserve of fire companies, as well as other agencies, and will involve formal staging in an area designated by the Incident Commander. The staging area should be away from the command post and from the emergency scene in order to provide adequate space for the assembly and for safe and effective apparatus movement. When the Incident Commander announces a formal staging area, the fire dispatcher(s) should be notified and all responding companies will report to and remain in the staging area until assigned to the incident.

LEVEL II STAGING WILL BE AN AUTOMATIC PROCEDURE WHEN DISPATCHED TO A STANDBY ALARM OR MULTIPLE ALARMS

The Incident Commander may designate a staging area and Staging Area Manager who will be responsible for the activities outlined in this guideline. The fire dispatcher(s) should be notified of the location of the staging area. If this occurs, the companies dispatched on the standby or multiple alarm

will respond to the designated staging area, report to the Staging Area Manager in person and be guided by his/her directions.

EXAMPLE: "Columbus Fire this is Broad Street Command; have the responding companies stage two blocks south of the incident scene."

The first company commander to arrive at the approximate location shall become the Staging Area Manager. He/She will notify the Incident Commander of his/her arrival, designate the exact location of the staging area, and assume command of the staging area.

If no staging area or Staging Area Manager is designated, the officer of the first arriving engine or ladder company shall designate the location of the staging area. The officer of the first engine or ladder company to arrive at the staging area will automatically become the Staging Area Manager, will notify the Incident Commander of his/her arrival, and will assume command of the staging area.

The radio designation for the person in charge of staging area will be "Staging". All responding companies will respond directly to the designated staging area, and report in person to apparatus, crew intact, with warning lights off.

When requested by the Incident Commander, the Staging Area Manager will verbally assign companies to report to specific divisions or groups, telling them where and to whom to report. He/She will then advise the Incident Commander of the specific companies assigned.

The division or group supervisor may then communicate directly with the company.

The Staging Area Manager will give the Incident Commander periodic reports of available companies in the staging area. If requested to do so by the Incident Commander, the Staging Area Manager may communicate directly with the fire alarm office for additional resources.

The Staging Area Manager will also be responsible for the following functions:

1. Coordinate with the police department to block the streets, intersections and other access required for the staging area.
2. Assure that all apparatus is parked in an appropriate manner.
3. Maintain a list of companies available in the staging area and inventory all specialized equipment that might be required at the scene.
4. Review with the Incident Commander what resources must be maintained in the staging area and coordinate the request for these resources with the fire alarm office.
5. Assume a position that is visible and accessible to incoming and staged companies. This will be accomplished by wearing a reflective vest designated as "Staging Area Manager", or by leaving the emergency lights operating on his/her apparatus.

