

FIRE SERVICE REFERENCE BOOKLET 9

MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STANDARD OPERATING GUIDES

Updated April 13, 2011



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Chris Christie
Governor



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Lori Grifa, *Commissioner*

DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
William Kramer, *Acting Director*



FIRE DEPARTMENT

SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDES

- **Incident Management System**
- **Rehabilitation**
- **Rapid Intervention Crews**
- **Communication**
- **Personnel Accountability System**

The New Jersey Division Of Fire Safety

Prepared By

Edcon Associates

Bayonne, NJ

INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations and the National Fire Protection Association standard 1561 adopted by reference with amendments became effective February 17, 1998. These regulations mandate the establishment and use of a written Incident Management System for the fire service in the State of New Jersey. The health and safety of all firefighters on the scene of a fire or emergency is of utmost importance. These regulations establish a minimum performance standard necessary to meet these requirements. Standardization will enable single departments and multi-unit departments to work more efficiently and effectively. In order to comply with this law, the Department Of Community Affairs has developed standard operating guides that will enable a fire department to use as a basic document. Local procedures can be added as required.

The Standard Operating Guides cover the following areas:

- INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
- REHABILITATION
- RAPID INTERVENTION CREWS
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- COMMUNICATION

Additions to accommodate local conditions or practices can be added by insertion to a particular section or by addendum at the end of the document. The guides carefully address each issue in the NFPA 1561 while leaving enough flexibility for departments to consider their individual needs and capabilities.

The effectiveness of the fire service is based on teamwork. Having a standard set of operating guides enables departments to strengthen the training, command, and control of fire companies under their jurisdiction. The goal of every department and company is to ensure safety on the fireground. The ability of the Incident Commander to direct operations can be made easier when a standard operating system and its components on accountability, rapid intervention, communication, and rehabilitation are in place. The safe conclusion of every operation is the objective of the following guides.

**MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE**

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide |
|----------------------------|---|

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES III

THE COMMAND FUNCTION 1

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMAND..... 1

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER FOR EMS INCLUDE: 2

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMAND..... 3

COMMAND MODES 4

INVESTIGATION MODE:..... 4

FAST ATTACK MODE:..... 4

COMMAND MODE:..... 5

PASSING COMMAND: 6

TRANSFER OF COMMAND: 7

SITUATION AND STATUS REPORTS SHALL INCLUDE: 7

SINGLE COMMAND..... 8

UNIFIED COMMAND..... 8

FIRE AND EMS JOINT RESPONSE INCIDENTS:..... 9

EMS RESPONSIBILITIES AT NON-EMS INCIDENTS 10

COMMAND FACILITIES..... 10

COMMAND POST: 10

STAGING:..... 11

Level 1 Staging 11

Level 2 Staging 11

INCIDENT BASE: 12

EXPANDING THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM:..... 13

DIVISIONS 14

GROUPS: 14

STRIKE TEAMS AND TASK FORCES:..... 15

REQUIREMENTS FOR A STRIKE TEAM OR TASK FORCE: 15

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide |
|----------------------------|---|

A CREW AS A SINGLE RESOURCE..... 15

DESIGNATION OF THE INCIDENT SCENE: 16

EXTERIOR DIVISIONS 17

FLOOR DIVISIONS 18

GROUPS OPERATING WITHIN ESTABLISHED DIVISIONAL BOUNDARIES..... 19

EXPOSURES TO THE INCIDENT 20

BRANCHES 21

COMMAND STAFF 22

INFORMATION OFFICER 22

LIAISON OFFICER 23

SAFETY OFFICER: 23

GENERAL STAFF..... 25

OPERATIONS SECTION: 25

PLANNING SECTION:..... 26

LOGISTICS SECTION:..... 26

FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION SECTION: 26

THE USE OF SECTIONS:..... 27

COMMUNICATIONS:..... 28

INCIDENT PROGRESS REPORTS: 30

RESOURCE DESIGNATION (DEFINITIONS): 32

APPENDIX

ICS FORM 201 34

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide |
|----------------------------|---|

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Designation of Incident Scene.....16

Figure 2 – Exterior Divisions.....17

Figure 3 – Floor Divisions18

Figure 4 – Groups Working within Divisions19

Figure 5 – Incident Exposures20

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 1 |
|----------------------------|---|

Purpose:

- I. Provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergency incidents through improved command and control (or management of emergencies).
- II. Improve the use of resources and tactical effectiveness.
- III. Meet the Department of Community Affairs regulations requiring the use of the New Jersey Incident Management System by the Fire Service.

Scope:

All Fire Service operational personnel.

Responsibility:

All Fire Department officers and supervisors.

Safety:

Use of the Incident Management System at all incidents will enhance the safety of all personnel especially with regard to personnel accountability.

Implementation of IMS:

To meet these goals, the department shall implement the Incident Management System appropriately at all incidents for which it has management responsibility. The command function shall be filled whether or not an officer is on location in a command vehicle.

The Command Function

The command function (Command) is the area in which overall on-scene management takes place. Included within the command function is the development of incident priorities, size-up, strategy, tactical objectives and coordination of all emergency resources.

The Incident Commander will normally be located at the Command Post. The Incident Commander may be identified by wearing the INCIDENT COMMANDER vest. Officers commanding from other than a command vehicle shall be identified by taking a prominent position at the incident where they can be readily identified by incoming units.

Responsibilities of Command

Responsibilities of the Incident Commander for fire departments include the transmission of an initial report to the Communications Center.

The initial report shall include:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 2 |
|----------------------------|---|

- ◆ Command unit identification
- ◆ Building description as appropriate (e.g., occupancy, size, construction type)
- ◆ Obvious description of conditions (working fire, nothing showing, etc.)
- ◆ Action to be taken by incoming units (rescue occupants, raise ladders, establish a supply line, stretch an 1 ¾ hose line, conduct search)
- ◆ Identify the command mode selected
- ◆ Immediate additional resources needed

Responsibilities of the Incident Commander for EMS Incidents include:

The IC at an EMS incident shall transmit an initial report. The initial report shall include:

- ◆ Command unit identification
- ◆ Obvious description of conditions (MVA with 3 vehicles involved, full code, etc.)
- ◆ Action to be taken by incoming units (prepare for extrication, patient care, etc.)
- ◆ Identify the command mode selected
- ◆ Immediate additional resources needed

Establishment of Command

The first arriving emergency resource (command car, engine, ambulance, etc.) shall initiate the IMS by formally establishing command and shall continue in command until properly relieved as outlined within this procedure. The first arriving unit may elect to pass command but only as outlined within this procedure.

Example of an Effective Report –
“Dispatch from Engine 2
Go ahead Engine 2
Engine 2 is on location. We have a one
story, single family dwelling (SFD)
with nothing showing. We will be out
investigating. Engine 2 is Main Street
Command.”

Additionally, Command should give periodic progress reports to Dispatch, as indicated in the communication procedures of this manual.

Example:

“Dispatch from Engine 2
Go ahead Engine 2
We had unattended cooking, Engine
2 will be in service ventilating.
Recall all other companies.”

Command Modes

The initial IC may choose from several command modes

Investigation Mode:

When the first arriving unit finds “nothing showing”, it is generally necessary for the IC to enter the structure to investigate and control the incident by portable radio.

Investigation Mode Example:

**"Dispatch from Battalion 3.
Go ahead Battalion 3
Battalion 3 is on scene 22 Main Street, 2 story
commercial structure ordinary construction. The
fire alarm is sounding, nothing showing.
Battalion 3 is investigating. Battalion 3 is Main
Street Command."**

Fast Attack Mode:

Situations that require immediate action to stabilize or save a life may require the IC to enter the structure and have direct involvement with the operations, such as:

- ◆ Offensive fire attacks (especially in marginal situations)
- ◆ Critical life safety situations where a rescue may be achieved.
- ◆ Obvious working incidents that require further investigation by the IC

Where fast intervention is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the IC to continue fulfilling command responsibilities. The fast attack mode **should not last more than a few minutes** and will end with one of the following:

- ◆ Situation is stabilized
- ◆ Situation is not stabilized and the IC must withdraw to the exterior to establish a Command post. An apparatus officer must decide whether or not to withdraw the remainder of the crew based on the crew's capabilities and experience, safety issues, and the ability to communicate with the crew. No crew should remain in a hazardous area without radio communication.

Example:

“Headquarters from Engine 4-2.

Go ahead Engine 4-2

We are on location with a two story wood frame single family dwelling (SFD).

We have fire showing in Division 1B. We are stretching an 1 ¾ inch line and making a fast attack. Engine 4-2 is Valley Rd. Command. Have Engine 4-1 establish a water supply and Truck 3 perform outside vent upon arrival.”

- ◆ Command is transferred to another officer. The apparatus officer may then be returned to his crew or be assigned to a subordinate position.

Command Mode:

Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate strong, direct, overall command. This requires the IC to assume an exterior, safe and effective command position and maintain that position unless command is transferred. ICS Form 201 should be initiated and utilized to assist in managing these incidents.

Example:

A working fire which will require multiple resources, a major emergency, or a hazmat incident.

Passing Command:

On rare occasions, it may be necessary for first due companies to pass command to later arriving units. This may become necessary at situations in which the entire first arriving crew is required to initiate a fire attack, vehicle extrication, or perform a rescue. An example of such a situation might be a working dwelling fire with an occupant trapped or an MVA with victims trapped.

The officer has made a decision that his direct efforts are needed to make a substantial difference on the emergency scene. In this mode, the officer's involvement in mitigating the hazard prevents the proper exercise of the command function. The officer would then need to utilize Passing Command procedures.

To pass command the first arriving unit shall transmit a proper initial report and indicate that they are "Passing Command" and identify the unit to which they are passing Command, if known. Dispatch should confirm that the unit designated for Command has received the message.

The initial arriving command officer retains responsibility for the incident until such time as the designated receiver for Command arrives on the location.

Example:

"Headquarters from Engine 2-1.

Go ahead Engine 2-1.

We are on location with a two-story wood frame single family dwelling (SFD) with fire showing in Division 1 and a trapped occupant at a window in Division 2B. We are stretching an 1¾ inch line and conducting a rescue. Have Engine 5-1 assume command upon arrival."

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 7 |
|----------------------------|---|

Transfer of Command:

All senior officers arriving on the scene of an incident shall report to the Command post and notify the Incident Commander of their arrival.

Command shall only be transferred to another officer after a situation and status (sit/stat) report has been received by the relieving officer. Sit/stat reports should be via face to face communications whenever possible.

Situation and status reports shall include:

- ◆ An overview of the situation
- ◆ A description of the strategy and of the tactics employed to carry it out
- ◆ Assignments of resources on scene including command or staff assignments
- ◆ Suggested courses of action and contingency plans
- ◆ Major safety concerns
- ◆ A joint review of the ICS 201 form where applicable

After receiving a situation and status report, the senior officer will make a determination if he desires to take Command of the incident. In the event that the senior officer elects to do so, he shall take the Command position on the scene and notify Dispatch that a transfer of Command has taken place.

The officer assuming command may utilize the previous Incident Commander on the emergency scene to the best advantage. In many cases the relieved Incident Commander may be of most value within the Operations Section. The individual assuming command should operate in the command mode and stay outside the structure in a visible location.

The assumption of Command by a higher ranking officer is clearly an option and not a requirement. Initial commanding officers that are performing within department performance standards may be given the opportunity to continue to command. This will allow for an increase in confidence and competence. Higher ranking officers who arrive later in the operation may take a role as a coach to support the current Incident Commander.

Example:

**“Dispatch from 805
Go ahead 805
805 has assumed Command of this incident and will now be operating
as Main Street Command.
Okay, 805 is now Main St. Command.”**

**805 would facilitate all further communications as Main Street
Command.**

The senior officer on an incident scene shall be accountable even though a lower ranking officer may be in charge.

Single Command

At incidents where a single agency has sole jurisdiction for an incident, the Command function is filled by one individual. This individual is the Incident Commander.

Unified Command

At incidents where more than one responding agency has management responsibility, due to the nature of the incident or the kinds of resources required, a Unified Command shall be established. A representative from each agency, that is part of the Unified Command, shall jointly develop the incident objectives. A consolidated incident action plan should be developed. If a Unified Command is implemented, a single Operations Section Chief shall be appointed.

Note: Mutual Aid Departments do not normally become part of the unified command team as they are considered assisting agencies. The exception to this would be if the incident has the potential to affect another municipality or is in more than one jurisdiction. The affected municipality’s representative may become part of the unified command team.

Unified Command Example:

At a hazmat incident involving a rail-car leaking a toxic gas which will involve large scale evacuations, the ranking police and fire officials along with other officials designated in the emergency operations plan would join together at the command post and develop a consolidated incident action plan.

Fire And EMS Joint Response Incidents:

The incident commander may assign EMS units as single resources, groups, strike teams or task forces. At larger incidents, which involve numerous casualties, an EMS Branch may be established. The EMS Branch Director is identified by wearing an EMS Branch vest. All EMS units called into the scene, directly or from staging, shall report to the EMS Branch Director. The EMS Branch Director shall report to the Operations Section Chief (OPS), or, if the Operations Section has not been established, to the IC. If EMS has overall jurisdiction, EMS would fill the Incident Command function and the Fire Department would be an assisting agency.

Note: EMS units assigned to the medical unit within the Logistics Section would not report to the EMS Branch.

Responsibilities of the EMS Branch Director include:

- ◆ Coordinate with the Operations Section Chief regarding the EMS action plan, patient status, and resource requirements.
- ◆ Determine resources needed and make requests through Operations.
- ◆ Coordinate extrication efforts with Operations or others designated by the Operations Section Chief (e.g., Rescue Branch).
- ◆ Direct triage, treatment, and transportation efforts.
- ◆ The EMS Branch Director may establish Triage, Treatment or Transportation Groups as needed. The EMS Branch Director shall assign a group supervisor for each group established.

- ◆ The Triage Group Supervisor shall be responsible for establishing a method of prioritizing patients for treatment. This may also include prioritizing patients for extrication or other actions required for treatment to begin.
- ◆ The Treatment Group Supervisor shall establish a treatment area and coordinate patient care efforts as patients are released from the Triage area.
- ◆ The Transportation Group Supervisor shall coordinate the transport of patients from the treatment area to receiving medical facilities.

The Triage, Treatment and Transportation Group Supervisors shall report to the EMS Branch Director. The EMS Branch Director retains the responsibility for these functions whether they are filled or not.

EMS Responsibilities at Non-EMS Incidents

The EMS unit leader shall report to the Incident Commander on arrival at working incidents. Should the EMS unit be called out for patient transportation, the unit leader shall ensure that another EMS unit is dispatched to the incident scene, through the Incident Commander. At non-working fire incidents, EMS units shall report to staging. If staging has not been established, the EMS unit shall be positioned to best advantage. EMS units assigned to the medical unit, within Logistics, are for use by emergency responders only. They should not normally be utilized to treat or transport civilians.

Command Facilities

Command facilities are those areas that serve as focal points for specific supporting functions for emergency operations.

Command Post:

A designated physical area that serves as the center of all on scene emergency operations. Command posts are developed in proportion to the incident being managed. For instance, a vehicle fire may be managed from the cab of a fire apparatus, an MVA from an ambulance, a dwelling from a designated command vehicle, a multi-alarm incident from a sophisticated mobile command vehicle.

A Command Post shall be established anytime an incident will require the extended use of emergency services resources. Such incidents may be as small as a motor vehicle accident with victims trapped to a complex incident such as a major hazardous materials incident.

A single interagency Command Post shall be established at any working incident that more than one emergency response agency is used and a representative of each agency should report to the Command Post.

The Incident Commander shall establish the area to be used for the Command Post. The Command Post may be identified by displaying a green emergency light and/or command flag, whenever possible. There shall be only one Incident Command Post (ICP) per incident.

Mutual Aid departments shall not establish their own “Command Post” and shall not display a green light or command flag unless directed to do so by the IC.

Staging:

Staging areas shall be used to keep resources available within three to five minutes of the incident. The first arriving unit in staging shall become the Staging Area Manager. Resources assigned to staging shall retain their integrity by remaining with their apparatus and being available for immediate assignment.

Staging areas may be a location where emergency vehicles are located. (e.g., the parking lot 1 block from the fire incident). Staging areas may also be a location where personnel are staged without apparatus (e.g. two floors below the fire floor of a high rise fire, or at a triage area at a mass casualty incident.)

Level 1 Staging

In the absence of other orders or whenever incoming apparatus are ordered to “standby”, the next due apparatus officer shall select an area that is within the time parameters for staging and sign “on location” designating the staging area. All other apparatus will locate themselves accordingly and sign “on location -- staging”. Level 1 staging areas are usually located within one block of the incident.

Level 2 Staging

When an incident is escalating or has not yet been stabilized, sufficient resources to meet potential incident development should be available in staging until the incident has been stabilized. Level 2 Staging areas may be located a further distance from the incident than Level 1 Staging. Units in Level 2 Staging must be prepared to leave the staging area within 5 minutes. Level 2 Staging may be used to combine single resources into Task Forces and Strike Teams. Level 2 Staging areas may be located at the incident base.

During incidents that utilize mutual-aid resources the IC should assign a Staging Area Manager.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 12 |
|----------------------------|--|

All requested mutual-aid personnel and equipment shall respond to the staging area unless directed otherwise by the IC.

Note: Only one department representative per municipality should report to the Command Post for departmental assignments.

The Staging Area Manager shall be responsible for:

- ◆ The selection of a safe and large enough area for staging. The Staging Area Manager shall notify Dispatch as to the location of the staging area.
- ◆ Communications from the staging area to the Incident Commander.
- ◆ Check-in of all resources entering the staging area.
- ◆ Accounting for all resources and crews entering or leaving the staging area through the orderly parking of resources.
- ◆ Use of a Staging Control Sheet.
- ◆ The Staging Area Manager shall identify himself by leaving on warning lights and/or 4 way flashers on the vehicle. All other apparatus shall turn all emergency lights off unless required to provide safety. The Staging Area Manager may be identified by wearing the STAGING MANAGER vest.
- ◆ Staging areas shall be located off main highways and roadways whenever possible so long as the safety of the emergency personnel and apparatus are not compromised.

Incident Base:

At large or complex incidents an incident base may be established. The incident base is a location that places possible needed resources within five to ten minutes of an incident (e.g., forest fire task force staging areas, or a serious incident at a chemical facility. etc.) The base area may also provide eating, resting, sleeping facilities, etc., as determined by the IC.

A base area shall be established by order of the Incident Commander.

The base shall be supervised by a Base Manager.

The Incident Commander shall be responsible to announce the need for a base.

Expanding the Incident Command System:

Whenever an incident begins to escalate it may become necessary to begin the expansion of the IMS. The implementation of additional functions and positions within the system should be implemented to address the needs of the incident. Management assignments shall be filled with qualified individuals.

Division and Groups:

Divisions and groups are used to divide the emergency scene into manageable segments. Divisions and groups normally report to Branch Directors, or the Operations Section Chief. Prior to the implementation of branches or the Operations Section, groups and divisions report to the Incident Commander. It is also possible, in particularly large operations, to have a group or division report to one of the other functions. For instance an EMS Group may report to the Logistics Section Chief.

Resources that are assigned to divisions or groups will report directly to their respective unit or crew leader. Communications between such units shall be via face to face communications whenever possible. Communications between the Division or Group Supervisor to the Branch Director, Operations Chief, or Incident Commander shall also be face to face whenever possible.

Division and Group Supervisors are responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their division or group. The Division and Group Supervisors are specifically responsible to:

- Complete objectives assigned by command
- Account for all assigned personnel
- Ensure that operations are conducted safely
- Redirect activities as necessary
- Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent divisions or groups
- Monitor welfare of assigned personnel
- Request additional resources as needed
- Provide command with essential and frequent progress reports

Divisions:

Divisions are responsible for the tactical activities that are taking place in a specific geographic area. Division supervisors report to a Branch Director, the Operations Section Chief or, if Operations has not been established, to the IC.

Example:

Deputy Chief outside the structure as the IC. Battalion Chief, serving as Interior Division Supervisor, supervising two crews inside the building investigating the source of the alarm

Groups:

Groups are established to achieve specific tasks at the emergency scene. Groups report to a Branch Director, the Operations Section Chief, or, if neither has been established, to the IC.

Groups function as a unit on the entire emergency scene and are not confined to any geographical boundary.

Example:

**A fire in a three story structure. A Battalion Chief outside the structure serving as the IC.
A Captain directing the Search & Rescue Group consisting of two crews conducting search & rescue throughout structure. The Captain would be the Search & Rescue Group Supervisor**

Strike Teams and Task Forces:

Strike Teams

Strike teams are combinations of resources which are identical in their functions and are assigned to cover specific situations. Four Water Tenders may be assigned as a Water Supply Strike Team for a fire operation. Only the Strike Team Leader communicates for the strike team.

Task Forces

Task forces are combinations of resources which are varied in their functions and are assigned to cover a wide range of situations. An engine company, truck company and EMS unit may be assigned to a task force to investigate alarm system reports during severe weather. Only the Task Force Leader communicates for the task force.

Requirements for a strike team or task force:

- Must have common means of communications
- Must have a designated team leader
- Must have transportation
- Must be within span of control guidelines

A Crew As A Single Resource

Crews operating away from their apparatus or assembled without an apparatus may be used as a single resource. Crews will operate under one leader and shall conform to span of control limitations.

Designation of the Incident Scene:

The incident scene shall be broken down to facilitate coordination at the scene. The division of the incident scene shall be at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

Figure 1 shows an example of some typical schemes for dividing an incident scene.

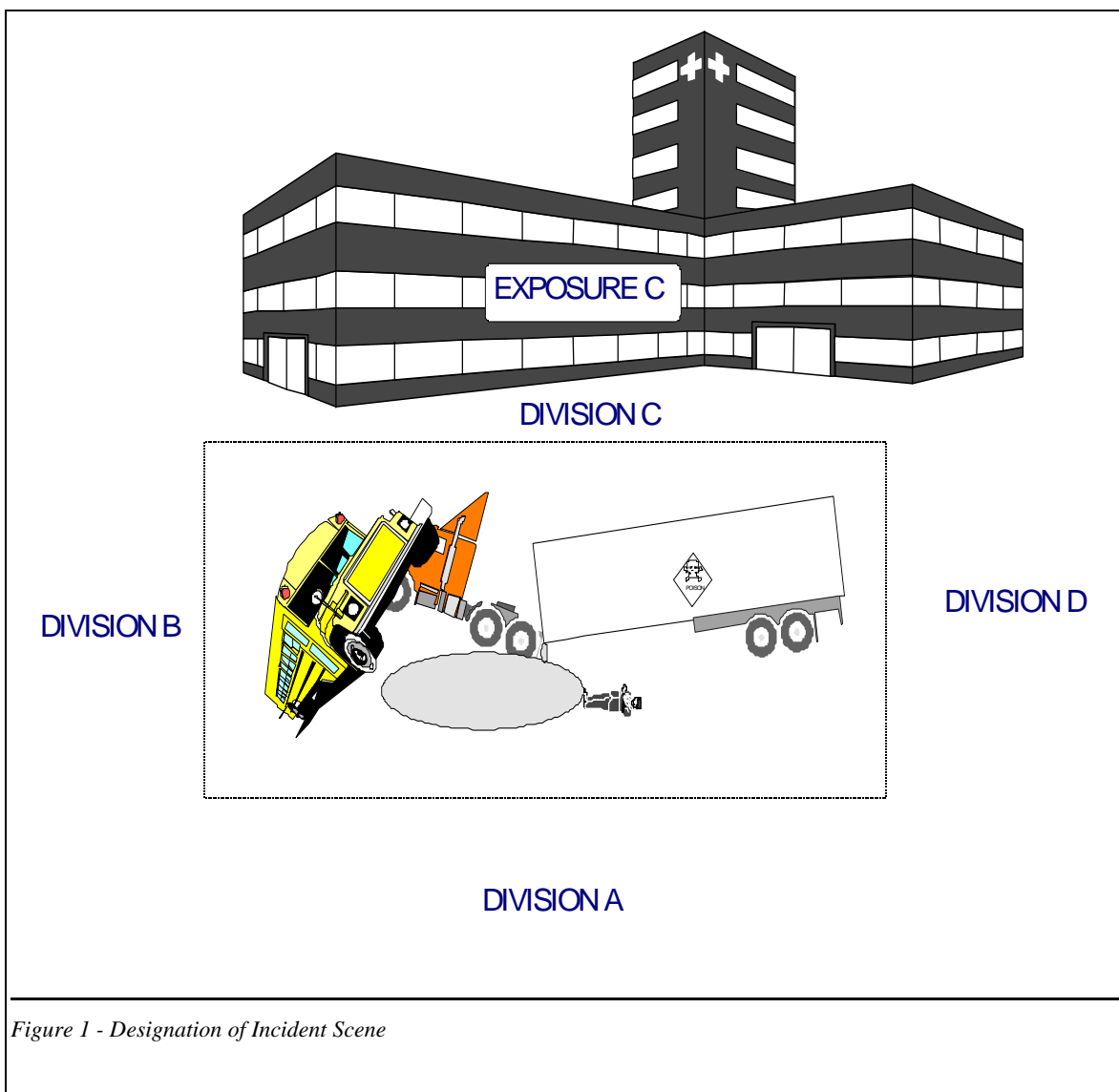


Figure 1 - Designation of Incident Scene

Exterior Divisions

The four sides of the incident site shall be designated as Divisions. Division designations proceed clockwise around the building, beginning with Division A as shown in figure 2 below. Division A shall be identified as the postal address side of the building. If an incident has no postal address, Division A shall be identified by the Incident Commander.

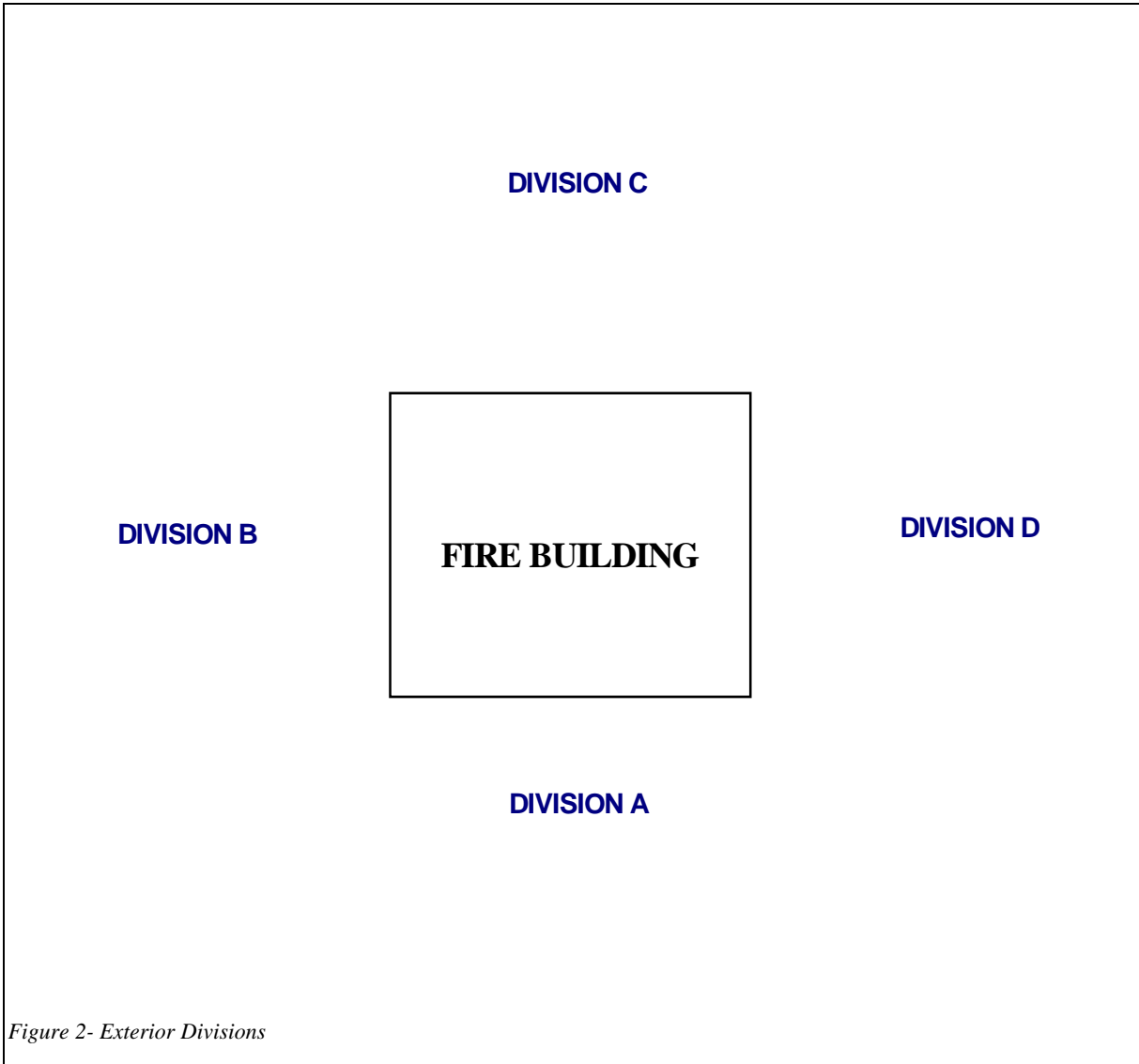


Figure 2- Exterior Divisions

Floor Divisions

Multistory buildings may be broken down by floor as shown in the figure. Each floor shall be designated as a Division using the floor number. The basement, roof, and lobby shall be designated using those names as Division names.

An individual assigned to oversee interior operations shall be designated as interior division.

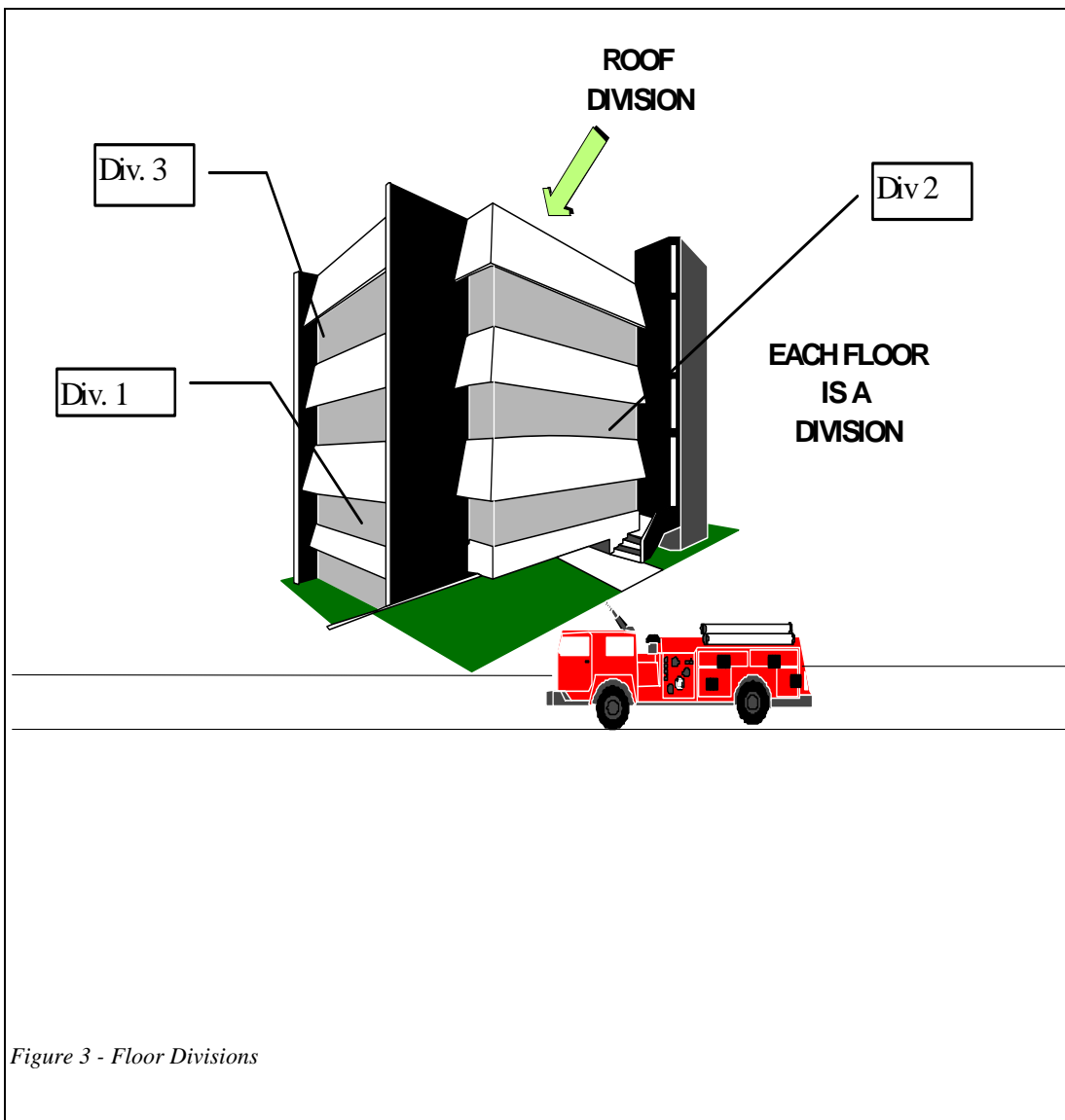


Figure 3 - Floor Divisions

Groups operating within established divisional boundaries

Groups may operate across several Divisional boundaries, as shown in the figure below. Groups shall be designated by the name of the function to be performed. The Ventilation Group may be assigned to perform ventilation on each floor of a multistory building.

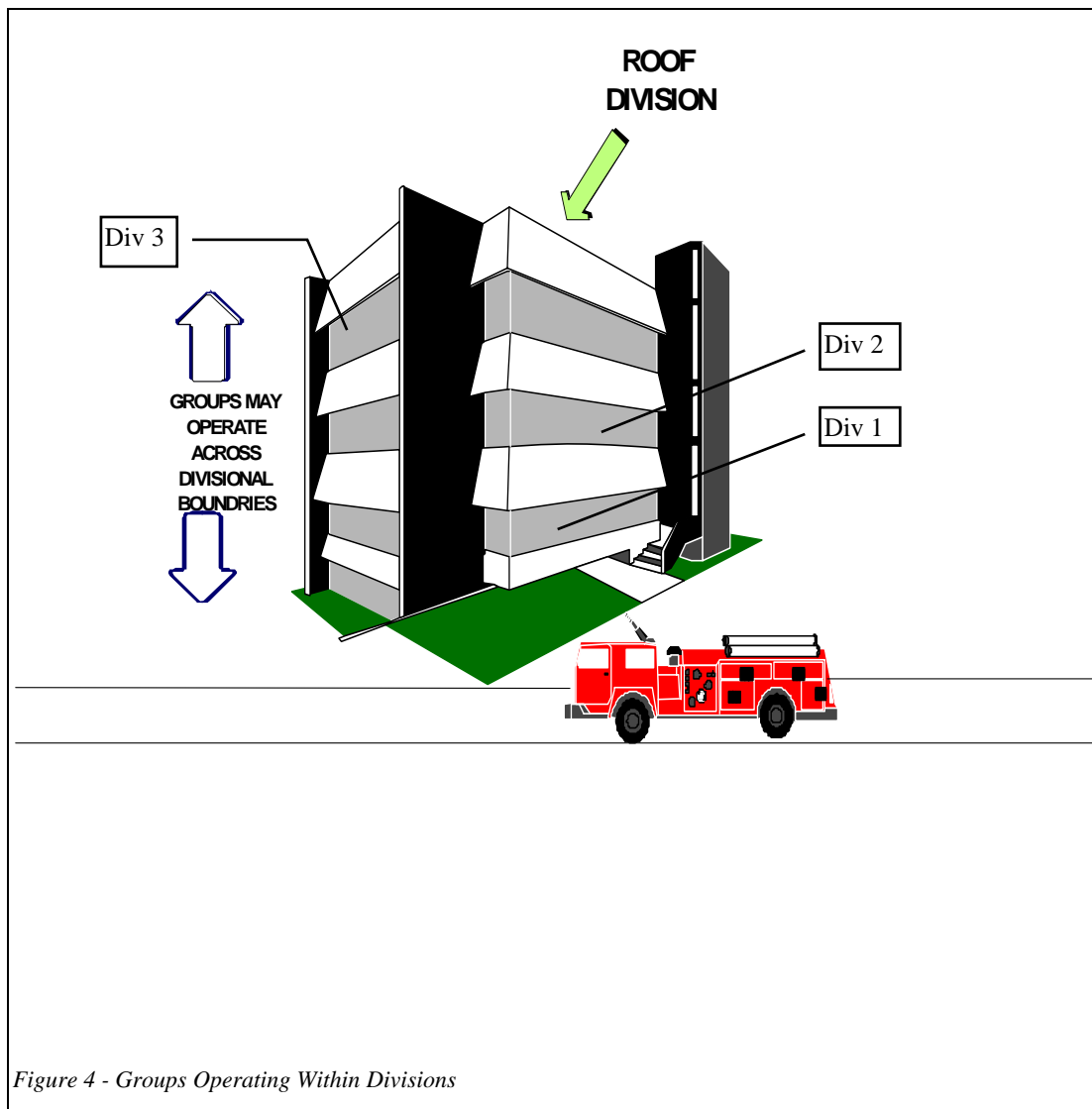


Figure 4 - Groups Operating Within Divisions

Exposures to the incident

Exposures to the incident site shall be designated similarly to the side of the building as shown in the figure below. Successive exposures moving away from the fire building shall be designated by adding a number to the exposure designation.

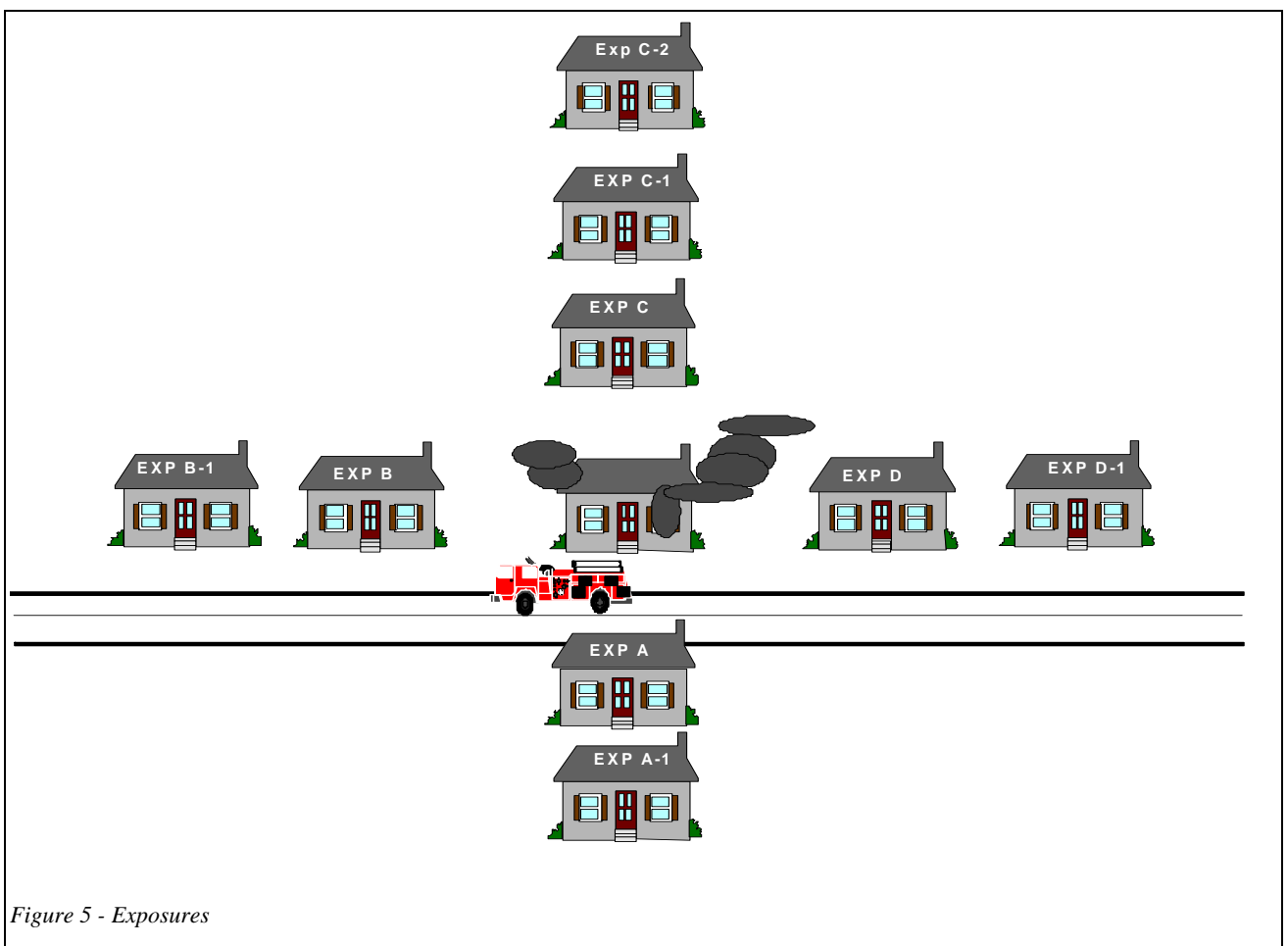


Figure 5 - Exposures

Ninety percent of a jurisdiction's responses can be effectively managed at the group / division level. However, some incidents will require additional functions to effectively manage the incident. Expansion of the IMS to include numerous Branches and Sections should be the exception rather than the rule.

The logical expansion of IMS shall be based upon accepted national principles. Such expansion may include the various Branches, Command Staff and General Staff functions. If the incident is growing in size or complexity, and/or reaching or exceeding span of control limits, it is important to rapidly establish the organizational framework necessary to manage it. This usually means filling essential General and Command Staff positions first.

It is better to overestimate the need for a larger organization than to underestimate it, as it is always possible to downsize the organization.

Branches

Where the number of divisions or groups exceeds the span of control that the IC can effectively manage, expand the incident organization by placing divisions or groups into branches. When establishing branches consider the span of control principles of 3-7.

Geographic divisions and functional groups may be used together on an incident.

Branches are managed by a Branch Director. Branch Directors may have deputy positions as required. In multi-agency incidents the use of Deputy Branch Directors from assisting agencies can be of great benefit to ensure enhanced interagency coordination.

If an incident is growing in size or complexity, consideration should be given to staffing branches early so that an effective management structure is in place as resources are arriving on scene.

Command Staff

The Command Staff Includes:

Information Officer (IO)

Liaison Officer

Safety Officer

Supplemental Personnel may include:

Deputy Incident Commander

Radio operator

Runner

Officer's Aid

Information Officer (IO):

An IO shall be assigned anytime the Incident Commander deems it appropriate. Such periods will generally be defined as those that require extensive amounts of time involvement with the press, or incidents which involve sensitive issues; e.g., civilian deaths. The IO shall report directly to the Incident Commander. The IO may be identified by wearing the INFORMATION OFFICER vest. Radio designations for major positions in the ICS are identified by position title.

Responsibilities of the IO:

Reviews and authorizes all news releases, as directed by the IC, processes requests for interviews with department personnel, and releases information concerning the departments actions, business affairs or positions.

Selects a suitable location which does not interfere with Command or Operations and which does not subject media representatives to any hazards.

Receives periodic briefings from the Incident Commander

Acts as the single point of contact between the emergency services and the news media.

Develops news releases in concert with the Incident Commander

Escorts the media and VIPs through the incident scene after the area has been declared safe by the IC.

Acts as the supervisor for others assigned to the IO function in the event that the incident requires such an effort.

Liaison Officer:

A Liaison Officer shall be assigned during those operations that require the use of multiple agencies. Such agencies may include any municipal agency, the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection, NJ State Police, County Health Dept., County Prosecutor's Office, United States Dept. Of Treasury, US Postal Service, Utility Company, etc. It is not anticipated that routine interaction with the local police dept. would necessitate the need for a Liaison Officer, however, the use of many police departments may require such a position to be established. The Liaison Officer shall report directly to the Incident Commander. The Liaison Officer may be identified by wearing the LIAISON OFFICER vest.

Responsibilities of the Liaison Officer:

Coordinates all responding non-fire dept. and non-EMS agencies. The Liaison Officer shall provide information on where and to whom to report.

Provides briefings regarding the situation to responding agencies.

Facilitates the needs of responding agencies.

Insures adequate communications between the Incident Commander and the appropriate agency representative by supplying radio equipment, runners, etc.

Safety Officer:

A Safety Officer shall be appointed by the Incident Commander during incidents which require such a function. A Safety Officer on an incident scene is not necessarily the company Safety Officer. The Safety Officer shall report directly to the Incident Commander. The Safety Officer may be identified by wearing the SAFETY OFFICER vest.

The Safety Officer has the authority to stop immediately, alter or suspend operations which may cause serious injury to emergency personnel on the incident scene. The Safety Officer must immediately communicate the cessation or change in the operation to the Incident Commander. The Safety Officer has no authority to change strategy, action plans, or tactics, but may suggest that the Incident Commander do so. The Safety Officer has the authority to order the sounding of the evacuation signal in the event of an imminent hazard.

The IC may establish Assistant Safety Officers when required to provide incident safety. Assistant Safety Officers may be designated when the incident is spread over a large area. This might prevent the Safety Officer from observing the entire incident. Hazmat incidents are another example where assistant Safety Officers can be utilized. A responding mutual aid hazmat team will have a Hazmat Safety Officer. This individual will have specialized expertise in safety issues related to hazmats. The Hazmat Safety Officer would become an Assistant Safety Officer, under the Incident Safety Officer, and be responsible for safety within hazmat activities.

Responsibilities of the Safety Officer:

- Surveys the entire incident from a safety perspective.
- Alters, terminates, or suspends unsafe acts which present an imminent hazard.
- Makes appropriate recommendations to the Incident Commander concerning safety aspects of the Incident.
- Is briefed by the Incident Commander on the incident strategy.

In the event that an Emergency Evacuation is necessary, the following procedure shall be followed:

Emergency Evacuation Signal Procedures

- 1. Air horns on all apparatus shall be blown continuously for one (1) minute.**
- 2. All personnel shall immediately exit the structure, abandoning all equipment, and report to their assigned supervisor (officer, group or division supervisor, crew leader, etc.) for the purpose of a roll call.**
- 3. The results of the roll call shall be relayed to the command post.**

General Staff

General Staff Functions:

The General Staff are assigned when it becomes necessary to begin delegating the various responsibilities of the emergency to others to facilitate effective on-scene decision making. Most incidents will not require the establishment of General Staff functions

The General Staff functions include:

Operations Section

Planning Section

Logistics Section

Finance/Administration Section

Operations Section:

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the implementation of strategic decisions, as outlined in the incident action plan, through application of tactical objectives. The Operations Section Chief reports to the Incident Commander or the Unified Command Team.

There shall only be one Operations Section Chief for an incident. The Operations Section Chief may have deputies to assist him with the Operations Section.

The Operations Section Chief will be assigned by the IC and is identified by wearing the OPERATIONS vest. The Operations Section Chief is commonly known as "OPS".

All tactical operations become the responsibility of the Operations Section Chief. Group and Division Supervisors will report to OPS. If branches are established Group & Division Supervisors would report to the Branch Directors who in turn report to OPS

Operations Responsibilities at Fires and Emergencies:

At fire emergencies, OPS will set and carry out tactical objectives based on the goals established by the IC. OPS will request additional resources through the IC unless he is authorized to order resources directly by the IC. At large scale emergencies, OPS may be located in a command vehicle.

Planning Section:

The Planning Section is established when there becomes a need on the emergency scene to develop complex or lengthy operational plans or when the need exists to process complex technical information. The Planning Section is managed by a Planning Section Chief.

The Planning Section is responsible for all information management as it pertains to the emergency. It is also responsible for the development of on going situation and status reports.

The Planning Section Chief assists in the development of the incident action plan and contingency plans and shall brief the IC as to the advantages and disadvantages of each plan. Planning shall coordinate through the IC with Logistics and Liaison to ensure the availability of any special resources. The Planning Section Chief shall report directly to the IC.

Logistics Section:

The logistics section is established and is responsible to supply the incident with supplies or services to maintain an effective emergency response force. Examples include, but are not limited to communications unit, food unit, and medical unit. A medical unit assigned to Logistics Section provides emergency medical treatment to emergency personnel. This unit does not supply treatment for civilians. The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistics Section Chief shall report directly to the Incident Commander.

Finance/Administration Section:

The Finance/Administration Section is established when the need is developed to track the financial impact of emergency operations or project and track the cost of various non-public resources. The Finance/Administration Section is managed by the Finance/Administration Chief.

These resources may be tracked by: item cost, quantity, man-hours expended, equipment rental, etc..

The Finance/Administration Section Chief shall report directly to the Incident Commander.

The Finance/Administration Section Chief may be involved in recovering costs due to emergency operations from responsible parties after the incident has concluded.

The Use of Sections:

The Operations Section Chief will be the most normal expansion of the Incident Command System.

At larger incidents the Operations Section Chief will deal with a wide variety of on-scene tactical operations that require constant monitoring and coordination. This will allow the IC to focus on overall incident management and operational strategic planning.

The Planning Section is the next most likely command function to be utilized. The planning function would be particularly helpful during extended or complex incidents.

The Logistics Section is normally only expanded during major campaigns and is developed to support on scene resources and those that may be used in the future.

The Finance/Administration Section is rarely used and would most probably not be set up unless the incident was to develop to a scale where actual dollars were required to manage the incident.

The word “chief” as added to the command function title is for title purposes only. A person assigned to this task does not necessarily have to be an officer or a member of an emergency response organization. (e.g., Fire District Administrator, Mayor, Public Safety Director, etc.)

Communications:

During mutual-aid incidents all unit designations will be preceded by the town.

Example:

Anytown Borough sends an engine to Mayberry on mutual aid.

“Anytown Engine 4-2 from Macopin Road Command.

Go ahead Macopin Road Command.

Anytown Engine 4-2 pump the hydrant at Macopin Rd. and Union Valley Rd. You will be supplying Mayberry Engine 1.

Anytown Engine 4-2 received, taking the hydrant at Macopin & Union Valley. Will supply Mayberry Eng. 1.”

Reasons to Communicate

One of the first and most common system failures at an emergency incident is the communications system. The volume of radio traffic overwhelms the available channels which prevents important messages from reaching the Incident Commander. In order to reduce the volume of radio traffic all units shall respect the five reasons to communicate. All communications should be face-to-face whenever possible. Units should only use the radio for the following:

- 1) Additional resources are required
- 2) The assignment is completed
- 3) You are unable to complete an assignment
- 4) An immediate safety hazard exists
- 5) If you have information that has a direct bearing on the incident

If these criteria are consistently adhered to there will be a tremendous reduction in the amount of communications on the emergency scene and a noticeable improvement on the efficiency of communications.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 29 |
|----------------------------|--|

Upon the establishment of command or the formation of a formal Command Post, all further communication between the incident and Dispatch shall be through that unit.

Assigned Radio Frequencies:

During large scale incidents the IC or Dispatch may assign frequencies to specific functions.

Examples of these functional networks (nets) include:

Fireground tactical operations: (Tactical net)

All fireground communications shall be on the assigned frequency. This includes all fire units responding to and operating at emergencies.

Incident command functions: (Command net)

All messages from a formal command post to Dispatch shall be on the channel assigned by the IC.

Medevac Helicopters to Landing Zone Coordinator (LZ)

Incident Progress Reports:

The following provides suggested protocols for incident progress reports from incident resources.

Command to Dispatch:

A report should be given upon the arrival of the unit assuming the Command Function.

A progress report should be given from the emergency scene to Dispatch at least every ten to fifteen minutes. This report shall include the current situation and status. Dispatch should request a progress report if no updates have been given within fifteen minutes.

“Incident Under Control” or “Fire Under Control” should be issued by the IC at anytime that the incident is stabilized. Stabilization would include, the forward progress of the fire has been stopped, all victims have been extricated, the flow of a toxic substance has been stopped, etc.

Staff Officers to Command:

Staff officers shall report directly to the Incident Commander. There should be no routine need to do so by radio.

General Staff Officers;

Command officers, with the occasional exception of the Operations Section Chief, shall report directly to the Incident Commander and should require very little, if any, radio traffic between the Incident Commander and the functional officers.

In the case of the Operations Section there may be a considerable amount of radio traffic between both OPS and the Incident Commander depending upon the dynamics of the situation. Reports should be given every ten to fifteen minutes.

Groups and Divisions:

Group and Division Supervisors may be required to utilize extensive radio communication to report to their appropriate supervisor. As always, face to face communication shall be the best option when relaying large amounts of technical information or transmitting lengthy reports. Reports should be given every ten to fifteen minutes.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 31 |
|----------------------------|--|

Strike Teams and Task Forces:

Strike teams and task forces shall report to their division or group supervisor. Only the leader shall transmit to division or group supervisor. Additional frequencies may be assigned to these units to act as a tactical communications channel. The strike team or task force leader shall give a progress report to the unit's supervisor every ten to fifteen minutes

Single Resources:

Single resources shall give a progress report every ten to fifteen minutes.

Resource Designation (Definitions):

Resource designations for the purposes of the Model Fire Department Incident Command System shall be known as the follows:

Advanced Life Support (ALS) -- a unit equipped to supply advanced life support services but incapable of supplying patient transportation.

Brush Fire Unit -- (BFU) a unit equipped with four wheel drive for accessing wildland fires or other off-the-roadway incidents.

Command Car -- a passenger vehicle utilized to transport command officers to the scene of emergency incidents. These vehicles are frequently utilized as the Command Post.

Company -- The term company may be applied to all of these resources to define that units are staffed to the emergency service minimum standards for manning. (e.g., Engine Company, Truck Company, EMS Unit, Marine Company, etc.).

Crew -- 3 to 7 persons who are assigned a specific task on the emergency scene, such as search, ventilation, etc., without their physical apparatus being committed. Such crews shall always have a supervisor and the designation of the crew shall be the apparatus utilized to respond to the scene (e.g., Eng. 2), another option is to use the crew leader's last name or radio # (Crew Jones or Crew 805). A crew operates under the direct supervision of a crew leader.

EMS Unit -- an ambulance unit capable of providing basic life support (BLS) care and transportation.

Engine -- apparatus utilized to apply water to the fireground and equipped with hose and standard engine company equipment. Engines may also perform Truck or Rescue Company functions.

Ladder Company-- apparatus designed specifically for the purpose of providing firefighting access to elevated positions and/or placing an elevated master stream device in service and equipped with a full compliment of ground ladders, as well as large amounts of forcible entry and ventilation equipment. Ladder Companies may also perform Rescue Company functions.

Marine Unit -- a unit which is capable of performing emergency operations on water or ice.

Medical Unit -- A BLS unit assigned to support firefighting or other hazardous situations. The Medical unit is reserved for emergency services personnel injuries.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Incident Management System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 33 |
|----------------------------|--|

Pumper -- See Engine

Rapid Intervention Crew -- Firefighting personnel assembled and ready to rescue members operating at emergency incidents.

Rehab Unit -- A vehicle capable of carrying the necessary equipment to provide for the rest and rehabilitation of members operating at emergency incidents.

Rescue -- a unit equipped to respond to extrication assignments and carrying a vast array of heavy extrication equipment. Rescues also carry limited Hazardous Materials resources.

Tanker -- Aircraft used to deliver water.

Truck Company -- see Ladder Company

Water Tender -- a unit of at least 750 gallons which delivers large quantities of water to an emergency scene.

Index

A

Assigned Radio Frequencies, 29
Assuming Command, 7

B

Base, 12
Branch Director, 9, 10, 13, 14,
21, 25
Branches, 9, 10, 13, 14, 21, 25

C

Command, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
10, 11, 13, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27,
29, 30, 32
Command Mode, 5
Command Modes, 4
Command Post, 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11,
12, 29, 32
Command Staff, 21, 22
Communications, 2, 7, 8, 12, 13,
15, 23, 28, 29
company, 15, 23, 32
Company, 32
Crews, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 24, 32

D

Deputy, 14, 21
Divisions, 6, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18,
20, 21, 24, 25, 30, 31

E

Emergency Evacuation Signal,
24
EMS, 2, 9, 10, 13, 15, 23, 32
Engine, 3, 15, 28, 32
Establishing Command, 3
Exposures, 20

F

Fast Attack Mode, 4
Finance Section, 26, 27
Finance Section Chief, 26

G

General Staff, 21, 25, 30

Groups, 9, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 24,
25, 30

I

Incident Commander, 1, 2, 4, 5,
7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16,
21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28,
29, 30
Information Officer, 22, 23
Interior Division, 14

L

Ladder, 32
Logistics Section, 13, 26, 27
Logistics Section Chief, 26

M

Medical Unit, 32
Mutual Aid, 8, 11, 24, 28

O

Operations Section, 4, 7, 9, 10,
13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27,
29, 30, 32
Operations Section Chief, 4, 7, 9,
10, 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,
27, 29, 30, 32

P

Passing Command, 6
Planning Section, 26, 27
Planning Section Chief, 26
Progress Reports, 3, 30
Pumper, 32

R

Resources, 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
12, 13, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32,
33

S

Safety Officer, 22, 23, 24
Staging, 9, 10, 11, 12
Staging Officer, 11, 12
Strike Teams, 15, 31

T

Tactical Objectives, 1, 25
Tanker, 33
Task Forces, 15, 31
Transfer of Command, 7
Truck, 5, 32

U

Unified Command, 8, 9, 25

**MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT
REHABILITATION
SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE**

Purpose:

- I. The intent of this policy is to establish a reasonable procedure to lessen the risk of injury to firefighters resulting from extended field operations at emergency incidents.
- II. Meet the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations requiring the use of Rehabilitation of firefighters at emergency incidents.

Scope:

All Fire Service operational personnel.

Responsibility:

All Fire Department officers and supervisors.

Safety:

Use of rehabilitation will enhance the safety of all personnel. It will be utilized to evaluate and assist personnel who may be suffering from the effects of continuous exertion at emergency incidents.

Implementation of Firefighter Rehabilitation

To meet the goals of the NFPA 1561 and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations the department shall implement firefighter rehabilitation at all incidents of long duration.

Command Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of Command to make an early determination of situations requiring the implementation of a Rehab Unit/Group.

Procedure:

A Rehab Supervisor will be assigned and a Rehab area designated at any incident that personnel are subject to sustained physical exertion or extended field operations under adverse conditions. (working fires, large brush fires, hazardous incidents, large area searches, weather extremes, etc.)

The Rehab area will provide :

- Revitalization – rest, refreshments, etc.
- A physical assessment
- Treatment for injuries
- Continuous monitoring of physical condition
- Transportation of those requiring treatment at medical facilities

The Rehab area boundaries will be defined with fire line tape whenever possible, with one entry point. Rehab will be divided into two sections, one for immediate rehab, and one for ready firefighters.

Companies/crews reporting to rehab will do so as intact units whenever possible. All personnel reporting to the rehab area will retrieve their accountability tag and check in with the Rehab Supervisor at the entry/exit point.

Personnel entering Rehab should also be logged in on a control log. The log will indicate the arrival time, names of individual firefighters, their medical evaluation, and the time of release to ready status. The Rehab Supervisor should have the authority to hold fire personnel from returning to service if his/her medical condition indicates.

Rehab Unit/Group Supervisor:

Responsible for placing firefighters/companies on a list for re-assignment as soon as they are able. The Rehab Supervisor will update Command throughout the operation with pertinent information including the identity of crew/companies in Rehab, and the status of injured members.

Personnel returning to the incident:

Personnel returning to the incident site shall retrieve their accountability tags from the Rehab Supervisor and report to the Command post.

MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

RAPID INTERVENTION CREW

SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE

Purpose:

- I. Provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergency incidents. The main objective of the Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) is to locate and rescue trapped or missing firefighters. The Crew will also be used for rapid intervention to any incident situation which places members in distress.
- II. Meet the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations requiring a Rapid Intervention Crew.

Scope:

All fire Department operational personnel.

Responsibility:

All Fire Department officers and supervisors.

Safety:

Use of the Rapid Intervention Crew at all incidents will enhance the safety of all personnel with regard to firefighter rescue.

Implementation of Rapid Intervention Crews:

To meet these goals the department shall implement the Rapid Intervention Crew concept appropriately at all incidents.

Procedure:

1. A Rapid Intervention Crew shall be implemented at all working fires or other situations that place members in a hazardous area. (i.e., confined space rescue, trench rescue, large area brush or forest fire)
2. In the initial stages of an incident the crew may be on-scene members performing outside functions but ready to re-deploy to perform Rapid Intervention Crew functions. Members performing outside functions (ex. IC, safety officer, pump operator) shall not be used as Rapid Intervention crews if by abandoning their critical outside functions jeopardizes any firefighter working at the incident.
3. As the incident expands in size or complexity, the Rapid Intervention Crew shall be a designated crew of at least 2 firefighters.

4. The Rapid Intervention Crew shall be fully equipped with:

Portable radio/s
Appropriate protective clothing
Protective equipment
SCBA
Any specialized equipment that might be needed given the specifics of the operation underway.

Location:

1. The members of the designated Rapid Intervention Crew shall upon arrival report to the Command Post with all equipment. The crew officer/leader shall report to the IC for instructions and relay any information to the Crew.
2. The RIC shall remain in close contact with the IC, verbal or visual.
3. High-Rise Operations: the RIC will report to the operations post, one floor below the fire.
4. At incidents covering large geographic areas or unusual operations, the IC may request additional RIC's.

Tools:

1. Forcible entry tools
 - Prying
 - Striking
 - Cutting
2. Power saw (metal/wood)
3. Search and rescue tools
 - Hydraulic
 - Airbags
4. Search rope
5. Portable radio
6. Any other equipment specific for the incident

Tasks:

1. The RIC shall begin a size-up of the building or area in which members are operating in.
2. The RIC shall assist the IC with monitoring the radio for emergency fireground transmissions.
3. The RIC shall evaluate the need for portable ground ladders to assist firefighters with emergency evacuation and escape.

Replacement:

1. If the RIC is needed for tactical fireground operations, the Crew shall be replaced immediately.
2. If the RIC is assigned to a rescue operation, a second RIC shall be established.
3. The RIC may be used to provide relief for units operating at the incident only after the situation is placed under control and with the explicit approval of the IC.

MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNICATION

SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE

Purpose:

This procedure has been established to provide for the safety of personnel operating at emergencies through improved communication.

Scope:

All Fire Service operational personnel.

Responsibility:

All Fire Department officers and supervisors.

Safety:

Communication between officers and members is critical to safety of all personnel in an emergency situation.

Procedure:

Radio communication is an essential tool for personnel operating during an emergency. Communication must be maintained between units on the scene and dispatch, operating personnel and the incident commander, and between members of an operating unit. Transmitted messages must be clear, concise and use plain language and uniform terminology. Messages and responses should be thought out completely before they are relayed over the airwaves. Members must respect that unnecessary radio traffic will overburden the communication system. Communication between parties should always follow the following format:

1. Originator identify unit and request the attention of the receiver.

Engine 3 from Dispatcher*

2. Receive the recipients attention.

Engine 3, go ahead Dispatcher*

3. Convey your message, using simple English, clearly and concisely.

Engine 3 respond 123 Main St., report of a structural fire

4. Get acknowledgment that the message was received and understood.

Engine 3 responding 123 Main St.

5. Confirm reply.

Acknowledged Engine 3

*"Dispatch" can be whatever is used locally. For example: "Central," "County Radio," etc

Communication at Incidents:

Clear communication is the primary means to relay orders and ensure that they are carried out. To ensure members safety, communication with personnel working in remote locations must be maintained. Radio designations for all major positions are identified by the position. For example, "Operations," "Logistics," "Safety," etc.

Orders are issued:

Main Street Command: Truck 4 from Main Street Command

Truck 4: Truck 4

Main Street Command: Truck 4 check exposure B for extension of fire

Truck 4: Truck 4 enroute to exposure B to check for extension

Main Street Command: Main Street Command received

Orders are carried out:

Truck 4: Main Street Command from Truck 4

Main Street Command: Main Street Command

Truck 4: Exposure 2 is clear

Main Street Command: Received. Exposure 2 is clear

Communication on Arrival:

Units must immediately notify the dispatcher when they arrive at the scene of a reported emergency. The first arriving unit shall report to the incident commander on the location and condition of the fire or emergency, possible extension and need for additional companies or hose lines.

Preliminary Report:

The officer in command shall provide dispatch with a preliminary report of the situation. This report should include:

1. The location of Command and the location of all units working
2. A description the structure; size, occupancy, construction and exposures
3. A description of the fire or emergency, life hazard and unusual conditions
4. The need for additional assistance (i.e. Police, Utility Company, EMS)

Progress Reports:

Throughout a working fire the Incident Commander shall provide the Dispatcher with a narrative on operations in progress, control, and extinguishment of the fire. Periodic updates should be given on the status of the incident at least every 10 to 15 minutes. The progress report should include a description of the fire building or emergency area, exposures, life hazard, search results, tactics and strategy, and resource deployment. “Fire Under Control” or “Under Control” should be transmitted by the Incident Commander when the incident has stabilized.

Staging Area:

Staging units in a position close to the scene of an emergency reduces congestion and thereby reduces radio traffic. Units reporting to a staging area as requested by the Incident Commander must report to the Staging Officer upon arrival. The Staging officer will maintain communications with the command post on the scene.

Mutual Aid and Interagency Response:

The communication system must be flexible in order handle mutual aid responses and coordinate inter-agency communication if the need arises. A direct communications link must be established between companies. Unit designations must be preceded by the locality to avoid confusion. Alternate radio frequencies must be provided when faced with an escalating incident or changing conditions at the scene.

Emergency Communication at Incidents:

The need may arise during an emergency to gain control of the communications frequency to relay or correct a life threatening situation. The terms “Mayday” and “Urgent” are reserved and may be used only for this purpose. Upon transmission of “Mayday” and “Urgent” all communication must halt with the exception of the member that transmitted the message and the Incident Commander. Communication may resume after transmission of the message.

Mayday and Urgent

Mayday Radio Message

A Mayday radio message is used when a life threatening situation is developing or has occurred.

They can be used in the following situations:

- An imminent collapse is possible
- A structural collapse has occurred
- A firefighter is discovered unconscious
- A firefighter has a life threatening injury
- A fire department member is missing
- A fire department member is trapped or lost

Firefighters who find themselves lost or trapped must immediately use "Mayday" to announce their situation while they continue to find a way out. Firefighters should not delay notification of distress. Delay compromises the small amount of survivable time. Lost or trapped firefighters should give command the following information:

- Who is in distress
- How many
- Where you think you are (front, rear, 3rd floor, etc.)
- Describe surrounding area
- Sounds of nearby activities (vent saws, chopping, etc.)
- Any other information that might direct the Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) to their location.
- Activate Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device

Urgent

Used to report a change in conditions or a serious injury that requires medical care.

The Urgent message can be used for:

- Discovery of a structural problem
- Fire is spreading to exposures
- Loss of water that may endanger an operating engine company
- An interior attack is going to be discontinued and an exterior attack instituted
- A member has been seriously injured and requires medical care

Examples of Urgent

Command from Engine 6 - Urgent
Engine 6 from Command, proceed
Command from Engine 6 -- the rear wall is beginning to crack
and smoke is coming through.
Engine 6 from Command-received.

Example of Mayday

Command from Interior Division--Mayday.
Interior Division from Command, proceed.
Command from Interior Division - the ceiling has collapsed in
Division 2 rear and we are cut off.
Interior Division from Command, received.

**MODEL FIRE DEPARTMENT
PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM
SAMPLE STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE**

Purpose:

- I. This procedure identifies a system of incident site firefighter accountability.
- II. To account for all fighters, at any time, within the most dangerous zone of an incident.
- III. Meet the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations requiring the use of the New Jersey Incident Management System
- IV. Use of an Personnel Accountability System will provide enhanced personnel safety for the individual firefighter, and will provide the incident command organization staff an improved means to track and account for all personnel working in the danger area.

The danger area will be defined as any area that requires an SCBA, charged hose line, and special protective clothing or in which a firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure. This would include entering a structure reported to be on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations, brush/forest fire, confined space or trench rescue, etc.

Scope:

All Fire Department Personnel

Responsibility:

All Fire Department officers and supervisors

Safety:

Accountability involves a personal commitment to work within the safety system at an incident. It will be the responsibility of individual firefighters and other personnel at the incident to keep their supervisors informed of their activities and whereabouts. Freelancing of activities will not be permitted and can lead to injury and death of the firefighter and others.

Implementation of the Fireground Accountability System:

To meet the goals of the NFPA 1561 and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations the department shall implement the Personnel Accountability System at all incidents as described above.

Procedure:

To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of firefighters in the danger area, a two (2) tag system will be used.

Tags will have, as a minimum, firefighters name and department.

One tag will remain with the firefighter and can be utilized for identification purposes at medical facilities.

One tag shall be affixed to a collection ring on the apparatus prior to leaving the station.

Upon arrival the collection ring shall be turned into an accountability officer or designated accountability location.

The collection ring will identify the department and apparatus ID (Dumont Engine 201) and contain the tags of all personnel presently assigned to that apparatus.

The initial accountability location may be the first arriving apparatus.

For example: "Dispatch this is Engine 501 on the scene 33 Jersey Ave. smoke showing from an occupied 2 story private house. Engine 501 will be Command".
(Engine 501 will be initial accountability location.)

As additional equipment and crews arrive and prior to entering the danger zone, accountability collection rings will be turned in to Engine 501 (placed in a designated area on the apparatus i.e. cab or compartment.)

Chief Officers after assuming command will collect the accountability rings and as the incident escalates place the collection rings on a status board.

The status board will contain only the tags of those crews in the danger zone. Crews/companies or individuals exiting the danger zone will retrieve their accountability tags or collection ring .

Member arriving via personal vehicle:

Individual firefighters arriving via personal vehicle shall report to the Command Post and have their ID tag affixed to the company or area they are assigned to.

No member shall enter a danger area without first reporting to the IC or designated accountability officer. An accountability ID tag must be submitted prior to being assigned.

Accountability Supervisors/Division Supervisors:

Accountability Supervisors will be responsible to track and account for all personnel working in their division/exposure or danger area.

Division Supervisors will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews/individual firefighters assigned to them. This will require the Division/Exposure Supervisor to be in his/her assigned area and maintaining close supervision of crews assigned.

Accountability Equipment:

The accountability equipment shall include;

Two (2) ID tags

The tags should be large enough to be handled with gloves and brightly colored to be easily recognized

Each apparatus shall have one (1) collection ring with apparatus/department ID tag affixed

A status board should be available to the incident commander

Blank tags should be available for other agencies i.e. Police, Public Works, EMS, and firefighters arriving via personal vehicle (marked with grease pencil)

Terminating the accountability system

Accountability will be maintained at least through a report of “fire or situation under control”, at which time a roll call for all crews should be obtained.

Command will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with the accountability procedure.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Personnel Accountability System | Model Fire Department Standard Operating Guide Page 4 |
|---------------------------------|---|

If visibility is still impaired or a significant hazardous condition still exists, command may choose to extend the accountability system beyond “situation under control”.

Upon termination or release from the incident, the Supervisors or crew leaders will ensure that the tags are returned to the firefighters.