

**MIAMI VALLEY FIRE/EMS ALLIANCE
SUGGESTED OPERATING GUIDELINE**

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SUBJECT

EFFECTIVE DATE

Incident Command System

1/18/96 (Revised 8/29/01)

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REFERENCE

NUMBER- 1

NFA Model Incident Command System

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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:

1. All officers are responsible for the training of firefighting personnel and for ensuring proper compliance with this guideline.
2. All members have the responsibility to adequately learn this guideline and to carry out this policy.
3. All members shall show reasonable judgment in the use of this guideline.

GUIDELINE: Attached

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SECTION 1: INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The Incident Command System is part of a national emergency management program developed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prepare all levels of government for disasters. The national program has evolved to the point where there is a shift in process from the Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS) to the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The NIMS program is being constructed and reviewed for future use throughout the nation. The general objective of the NIMS approach is to improve program implementation and development of emergency management capabilities at the state and local levels. It is designed to apply comprehensive emergency management concepts to working emergency plans and capabilities. The national plan formally recognizes the full range of emergencies encountered at a local level during a disaster.

When examined from the perspective that there are certain characteristics and requirements that are common across the full spectrum of emergencies---evacuation, sheltering, provision of food, shelter and medical supplies, etc.--- the link between a local or state disaster plan and the organizational model used by the fire service at emergencies, becomes readily apparent.

The IEMS, or NIMS, program identifies the need for a fundamental fire incident command system to provide for a predictable, coordinated, effective and acceptable response to emergencies of all types. The basic organizational theory used at a fire incident is consistent with the theory used in the national programs. Large scale fire service managed emergencies have been known to duplicate the national organizational models. The Incident Command System will assure that the scene management used by the local fire service can be expanded to become the community's disaster plan for a given incident. At the very least, the Incident Command System will provide the local fire service with the ability to readily assume an integral role in the community's operation should a disaster occur. 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 and 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.

5. Meet the NFPA Standard 1561 provisions for assuring that necessary elements of an Incident Command System are included in this guideline.

Design requirements for the IC System are:

- Can provide for the following kinds of operations:
 - a single jurisdiction/single agency involvement
 - a single jurisdiction with a multi-agency involvement
 - a multijurisdiction/multi-agency involvement
- Organization structure can be adapted to any emergency or incident to which fire protection agencies would be expected to respond.
- Can be applicable and acceptable to users.

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

At any emergency one person must be in command; assessing the situation and available resources, determining an appropriate incident action plan, monitoring the plan's effectiveness, and continually modifying the plan to meet the realities of the situation.

Emergency management is carried out in a constantly changing environment. The dynamics of a constantly changing environment present additional challenges. A dynamic situation may require frequent shifts from offensive to defensive mode.

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. GENERAL INFORMATION

The complexity of an incident complicates emergency management. Command activities include:

- Strategic goal setting
- Developing and implementing action plans
 - Life safety
 - Incident stabilization
 - Property conservation
- Controlling/coordinating incident operations
- Comprehensive use of all available resources
 - Single resources – engines, ladders trucks, rescue squads, etc.
 - Strike Team – a specified combination of the same kind and type of resource(s) with common communications and a leader
 - Task Force – a group of any type or kind of resource(s) with common communications and a leader (normally temporarily assembled for specific tactical missions)

- Safety of personnel
- Providing logistical support
- Evaluating the action plan
- Receiving timely progress reports
 - Operational location
 - Assignment completed
 - Additional resources needed
 - Unable to complete the assignment
 - Special information
 - Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)
- Managing or delegating medical treatment
- Liaison with other agencies
 - Mutual aid departments
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Other local affected agencies (health, building services, etc.)
 - State and Federal agencies
- Media requests

APPARATUS STAFFING FOR MUTUAL AID RESPONSES

The following is the minimum apparatus staffing standard throughout the Alliance. Minimum staffing is significant when responding to mutual aid requests. Departments obviously would have the ability to alter staffing for responses within their own jurisdiction.

All personnel shall meet minimum state certification for firefighters, EMS, Haz/Mat, etc. as it relates to the response/apparatus. The exception would be when staffing meets the suggested minimum and there is seating for additional personnel who may be in training.

Engine Company	3
Tanker	2
Tanker/Engine	3 (2, if functioning as a Tanker)
Ladder Company	3
Brush	2
Rescue	2
Attack	2
Medic	2 (at least 1 Paramedic)
Ambulance	2 (2 EMTs, as state requires)
Boat	3
Air Supply Unit	1

See APPENDIX 1, “A Guide for an Initial Attack Response Capability Assuming Interior Attack and Operations Response Capability” for reference information relative to this subject.

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. Assessing the incident priorities.
 - Life Safety
 - Incident stabilization
 - Property conservation
2. Determines the incident's strategic goals and tactical objectives.
3. Develops and implements the Incident Action Plan.
 - Writes an IAP if large scale and/or extended operational time period
4. Developing an incident command structure appropriate for the incident.
5. Managing incident resources.
 - Implements the G. M.C.F.C.A. Accountability System.
6. Coordinating overall emergency activities.
7. Serving as ultimate incident safety officer, responsible for preventing firefighter injuries and/or deaths.
8. Coordinating activities of outside agencies.
9. Authorizing information release to the media.

D. 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.

Command Post

The Command Post shall provide a central, stationary location. Many incidents may be mitigated by command working from a Command Post located in a vehicle. Due to size, complexity and/or long-term nature of incidents, a Command Post may have to be re-located to a command trailer, or other similarly designated unit.

Establishment of a command post shall be performed regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. If a chief officer, member or unit without tactical capabilities (such as in a staff vehicle with no equipment) arrives first, that person shall initiate Command. If tactically capable equipment (an engine, ladder, etc.) arrives first, then the Company Officer (leader/supervisor of that crew) shall function in one of the following:

Modes of Operation

Nothing showing Mode – this situation will require further investigation by initial arriving company while other units remain in a staged mode. The Company Officer should go with the company to investigate while maintaining communications to command the incident.

Fast attack Mode – situations that must be stabilized immediately and require the Company Officer's assistance and direct involvement. The Company Officer will not neglect command responsibilities knowing that this Mode will not last for more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

1. The situation is stabilized.
2. The situation is not yet stabilized and the Company Officer withdraws to the exterior to establish command at a fixed location.
3. The situation is not yet stabilized and the Company Officer remains inside with the crew knowing that his/her presence can make a difference in the effectiveness of the crew.
4. Command is transferred to another officer.

Command Mode – situations that by virtue of their size, complexity or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate, strong, direct, overall command. In such instances, the Company Officer will assume an exterior, safe and effective command, and maintain that position until relieved by another officer.

It is possible that while in one of the command modes of operation the IC may operate as:

1. **FIXED COMMAND** - Fixed Command 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, he/she should be easily identifiable.

2. MOBILE COMMAND - Included are incidents requiring immediate action in order to stabilize the situation, and where, due to staffing 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 accompanies 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 transferred to another officer.

E. TRANSFER OF COMMAND

When command is being transferred to another officer, the Incident Commander being relieved will brief the officer assuming command. This briefing will be done on a face-to-face basis and 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 a higher ranking officer decide to officially assume command of the incident, the officer shall locate the Command Post, and follow the transfer of command protocol.

After the transfer of command has actually taken place, the officer assuming command shall announce such transfer over the radio, stating the identification of 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.

F. INITIAL SIZE-UP

When Command is established, an initial radio report and size-up should be given:

1. Identify transmission by giving company, identity 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 6 on the scene, Captain in charge of High Street command."

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

2. To report the apparent extent of the emergency.

EXAMPLE: Nothing showing, working fire, 2nd alarm, etc.

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, two-story, multi-story, 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, nursing home, hotel, business, etc.
6. Action being taken - laying supply line, attacking with 1 3/4" line and tank, etc.
7. Apparatus in use - Engine 8, Medic 2, etc.
8. Additional assignment - extra company, 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 41 on the scene, Lieutenant in charge of XYZ command. We have an auto completely involved on the 2nd level of a 3-story concrete block parking garage, using 1 3/4" line and tank. Ladder 6 assisting. All other companies stand-by at the entrance."

"Engine 26 on the scene, Lieutenant 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 3/4" line and tank."

"Engine 43 on the scene. Lieutenant in charge. We have a trash fire at the rear of a frame garage at 718 Yancey St. We can handle it with Engine 81. Engine 43 will be Yancey Command - cancel rest of response."

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 message so stating will be transmitted to the fire alarm dispatcher.

SECTION 3: 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 dispatcher will acknowledge the radio transmission of these staged companies. Staged companies, after receiving acknowledgment, 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 and their actions.

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 preceded 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 the situation is not under control, 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. On all sprinklered buildings, the company shall send a person to locate and check the

annunciator. 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 judgment 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. The first engine company arriving is considered the attack engine and will usually provide first water on a fire through the use of an attack line. Procedures performed are to be consistent with the OSHA 2 in/2 out rule for immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) atmospheres.

When preceded to the scene by a chief officer, ladder company, etc., the engine company should be guided by the instructions of the Incident Commander.

3. ARRIVAL OF THE SECOND ENGINE COMPANY

The second engine company should position itself so that it can provide a continuous supply of water. The company officer shall keep the crew with the apparatus until the supply is completed. The officer and remaining crew should then report to the Incident Commander for further 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. Procedures performed are to be consistent with the OSHA 2 in/2 out rule for immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) atmospheres.

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.

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 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 the remainder of the response will automatically stage at the intersection one block away, or a related significant distance from the incident scene.

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

5. ADDITIONAL ARRIVING FIRE COMPANIES (when applicable)

Other fire companies (such as a third engine, second truck, foam unit, etc.) shall stage one block away, or related significant distance, from the incident and in the direction of travel to the address of the alarm. This staging status shall be reported to the Incident Commander. Crews and apparatus are to remain intact and shall stand by to await further instructions from the Incident Commander.

6. ARRIVAL OF THE RESCUE COMPANY (when applicable)

If the rescue company is first on the scene, the individual in charge shall set up command, give the radio report, and give directions 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.

7. SECOND ARRIVING LADDER COMPANY

The second arriving ladder company shall stage one block away, or related significant distance, from the incident and in the direction of travel to the address of the alarm. This company shall remain flexible with its assigned crew so that if it is needed in other areas it will be able to respond with a minimum of delay.

8. ARRIVAL OF THE MEDIC OR AMBULANCE (when applicable)

When a medic and/or ambulance 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, medic, and ambulance companies that their apparatus does not block access to the incident scene or that their apparatus does not become blocked in at the scene.

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

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

C. 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 AN EXTRA COMPANY 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. Mutual aid/assisting resources will normally be guided by the host jurisdiction that has provided a person to serve as Staging Area Manager.

EXAMPLE: "Dispatcher, this is Oak Avenue 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 has been 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 the Staging Area Manager. Companies will stand by their 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.

In some cases, the Staging Area Manager may have to indicate the best direction of response and routing for responding companies to get into the staging area.

See Appendix 2 for Apparatus Placement suggestions.

STAGING AREA RESOURCES

Unless otherwise instructed, the Staging Area Manager will advise the IC when the level of resources in the staging area is depleted to two engines and one ladder or less. The Incident Commander will make a decision whether or not to call additional units or to call for an additional alarm.

The Incident Commander may instruct the Staging Area Manager to maintain a base level of resources until further advised. In such circumstances, the Staging Area Manager will communicate directly with the fire alarm office to request additional units.

Separate and/or multiple staging areas may be required for some incidents. Examples include: Medical Staging Area, Haz/Mat Staging Area, Support Staging Area, etc. In such cases, the Staging Area Manager will so designate and relay this information to the Incident Commander and the fire alarm office.

SECTION 4: 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.

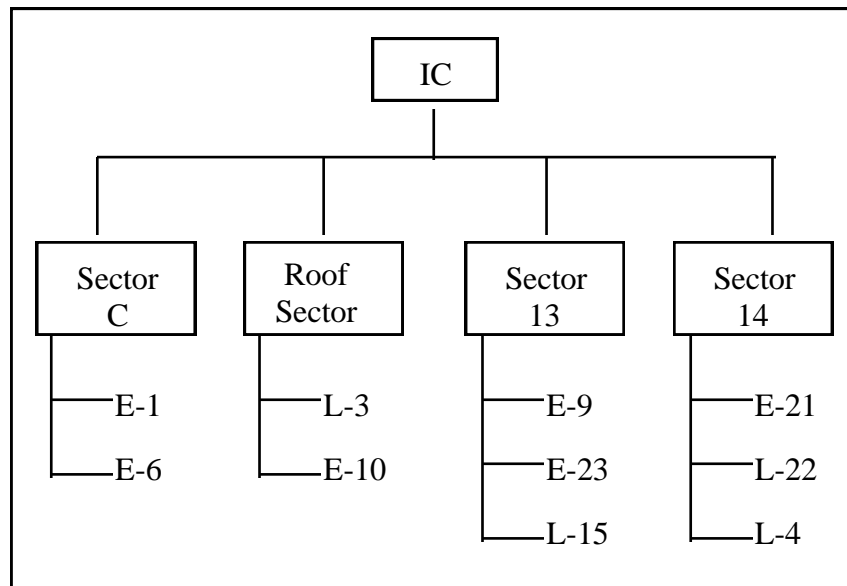
While it is important to have a sufficiently large command structure at an incident, don't use more command than the situation requires. The command structure should not contribute to the complexity of the incident. Consider the command options available as a tool box full of tools. Use only the ones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

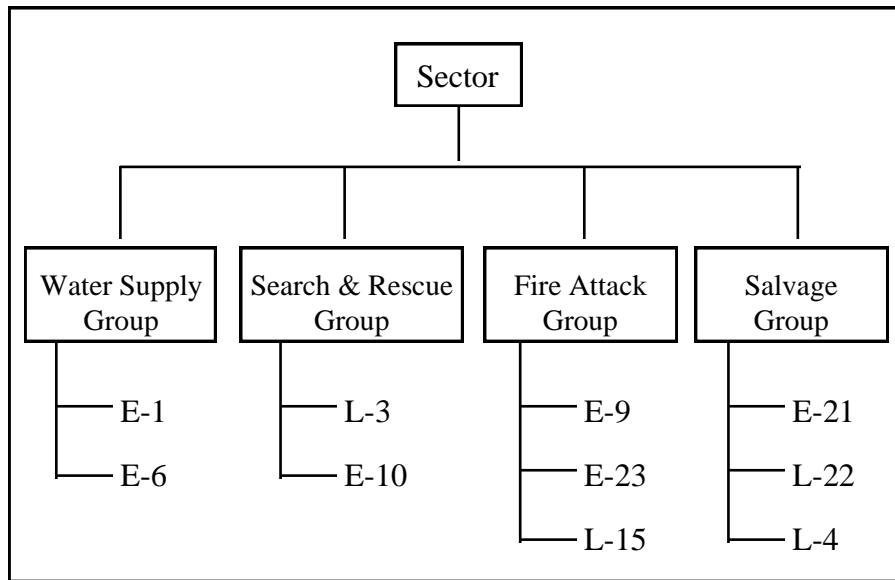
*NOTE - Terminology to describe the work units may vary between different organizations. The recommendations of the National Fire Academy will be utilized for the purposes of this guideline.

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 are commanded by Supervisors. Divisions operate at the command level below Branch level. Divisions do not work for Groups and Groups do not work for Teams. However, a Group's functional responsibility may cross established Division boundaries. For example, a Search & Rescue Group may be working in the same area within two Divisions. Once a specific assignment is given to a Group, it is to keep in contact within the Division that formed it.

Divisions and Groups affect the following three significant management principles:

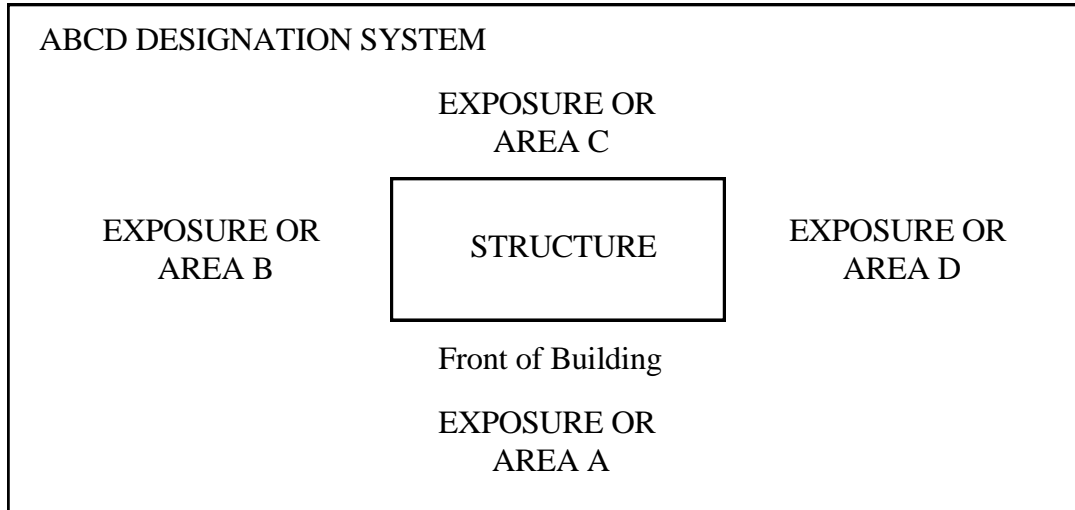
1. They reduce/solve span-of-control problems at an incident.
2. They provide essential coordination at a designated area or for a specific function.
3. They fix personnel accountability.

Division and Group Supervisors provide accountability within the M.C.F.C.A. Accountability Program. They are responsible for 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 Salvage Group), their assigned objectives, and the resources under their command.

Each functional or geographical assignment does not need to be commanded by a Division or Group supervisor. An activity that 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.

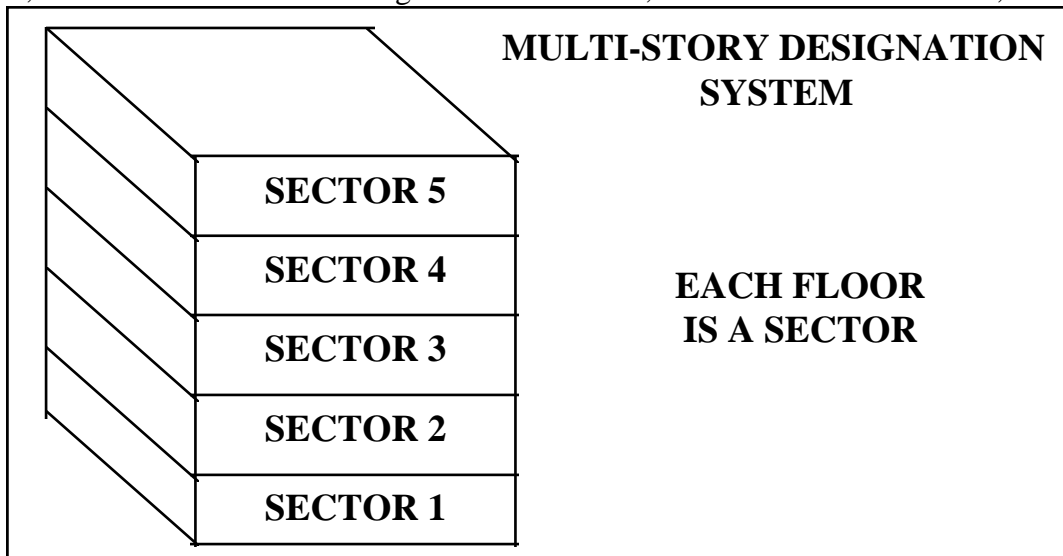
B. DIVIDING THE INCIDENT

To ensure 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 designation for each exterior side of the incident area. Normally, the addressed or street side of the incident will be designated as Exposure "A" or the letter designations move clockwise around the incident. Exposures may also be identified with a similar system. The front of the building refers to the working side of the building as established by the Incident Commander. The "Area" term can be used to designate a large geographical situation such as a wildland fire.

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



C. BRANCHES

At large-scale or complex incidents the number of Sectors 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 Sectors or Groups and the Incident Commander (see Diagram on Page 28). A Branch Director is responsible for implementing the portion of the incident action plan appropriate for that particular Branch. Branches are 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 Branch Chief, informed of the status in the Sector's area of responsibility.
5. Assigns specific tasks to Sectors or Groups within the Branch.
6. Resolves logistical problems associated with the units deployed in the Branch.

D. COMMAND STAFF POSITIONS

At all incidents, consideration must be given to the functions of safety. At large-scale or complex incidents, consideration may have to be given to 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 areas other than the Command Post. The Safety Officer may be required to oversee the Accountability Function. (See M.C.F.C.A. Accountability Program.)

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, 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, victim's names, and any other information that should not be (and does not have to be) released 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/Administration is not delegated, the IC must perform those functions. These functions are usually assigned Branch Status.

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 Branch Chief. NOTE: The term "Chief" in this application does not require that the individual holding this position be of the Chief Officer's rank. It is used to delineate a level of responsibility.

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 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 Branch 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. Assure activation of the Accountability System.
- d. Requests or releases resources through the IC.

- e. Consults with the IC about the overall incident action plan.
- f. Keeps the IC informed of situation and resource status within Operations.
- g. 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 Branch Chief. NOTE: As previously mentioned under OPERATIONS, the term "Chief" is used to delineate a level of responsibility - not necessarily the rank of the individual filling the position.

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 Branch 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 Branch 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 Branch Chief. NOTE: As previously mentioned, the term "Chief" is used to delineate a level of responsibility - not necessarily the rank of the individual filling the position.

As incidents grow in size, complexity, and duration, the logistical needs of the operation 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 Branch Chief manages service and support resources required for the incident. The Logistics Branch 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. Sectors may be required within Logistics to maintain span-of-control when several functional units are established.

SERVICE SECTOR
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT
MEDICAL UNIT (for emergency personnel, not civilians)
FOOD UNIT
SUPPORT SECTOR
SUPPLY UNIT
FACILITIES UNIT
GROUND SUPPORT UNIT

4. FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION

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 Branch Chief. NOTE: The term "Chief" is used to delineate the level of responsibility - not necessarily the rank of the individual filling the position.

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

The Finance Branch 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
LEGAL SERVICES

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, once-in-a-career incident, your thorough knowledge of the Incident Command System will ensure a safer, more effective approach to emergency incident management.

APPENDIX 1
A Guide for an Initial Attack Response Capability
Assuming Interior Attack and Operations Response Capability

High-Hazard Occupancies - 2000-4000 GPM - 4 Companies (Schools, hospitals, nursing homes, explosive plants, refineries, high-rise buildings, and other high life hazard or large fire potential occupancies)

At least 3 engines, 1 ladder truck (or combination apparatus with equivalent capabilities), incident commander, and other specialized apparatus as may be needed to cope with the combustibles involved; typical staffing of 13 personnel.

Typical Hazard Occupancies - 1000-2000 GPM - 3 Companies (Apartments, offices, mercantile and industrial occupancies not normally requiring extensive rescue or fire fighting forces) or (One-, two-, or three-family dwellings and scattered small businesses and industrial occupancies)

At least 2 engines, 1 ladder truck (or combination apparatus with equivalent capabilities), incident commander, and other specialized apparatus as may be needed or available; typical staffing of 10 personnel.

Low Hazard Operations - less than 1000 GPM - 2 Companies (Scattered dwellings, small businesses, and farm buildings)

At least 2 engines with a 500 gallon or more water tank, 2 mobile water supply vehicles (1000 gallons), incident commander, and such other specialized apparatus as may be necessary to perform effective initial fire fighting operations; typical staffing of 11 personnel.

APPENDIX 2 Apparatus Placement Suggestions

Apparatus function should regulate placement. Many times, by virtue of poor placement, options are limited or functions are eliminated as assignments.

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 units should be placed in a manner that builds on the initial plan and allows for expansion of the operation.

The fundamental operational guideline is for the first arriving unit to respond to the incident address. The condition found and the designed functions of that unit will determine the placement of that unit. If the first arriving unit is a Chief Officer in a staff car, he/she will take a position conducive to establishing a formal Command Post. If the first in unit is an engine company, they will be expected to take a position that will facilitate the effective use of fire streams. When a ladder company is first to arrive, they will be expected to take a position that will maximize the use of their aerial device or other pertinent equipment.

In general, the basic response pattern is designed to allow the first arriving engine to attack the fire and the first arriving ladder company to locate at a position of maximum effectiveness (usually the front of the building). The second arriving engine company is expected to provide a continuous ample supply of water. The Chief Officer is expected to locate and identify a Command Post. Additional equipment sent to an alarm is expected to take a position that will provide the Incident Commander with a flexible resource for a variety of needs as appropriate.

Avoid congestion! Later arriving companies should stage a significant distance away from 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.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AMBULANCE UNIT - The vehicle that is responsible for Basic Life Support care and transport of ill and injured persons.

ATTACK LINE - An evolution that has an engine at a water source pumping water via hose to an engine at the fire scene.

BRANCH CHIEF - Title that refers to a member of the General Staff (Planning Chief, Operations Chief, Finance/Administration Chief, Logistics Chief).

COMMAND POST (C.P.) - The designation given by the person in charge of an incident; usually with a specific location (front of building, street location, known landmark, etc.)

COMPANY OFFICER (CO.) - The person designated as in charge of truck, engine, or special company.

DIVISION- Is either a geographic or functional assignment. Division may take the place of either the Branch or Group or both.

ENGINE COMPANY (Eng. Co.) - Usually three (3) to four (4) firefighters, with an officer (Lieutenant or Captain); performs evolutions of hose lays and applies water to the fire.

EXTRICATION - An organized function of removing a victim from entrapment (building collapse, auto accident, etc.)

LADDER COMPANY - A crew of three (3) to five (5) firefighters with an officer (Lieutenant or Captain), that performs evolutions of forcible entry, search and rescue, ventilation, ladder placement, and overhaul.

LADDER TRUCK - The vehicle that carries an aerial device (ladder, snorkel, or elevating platform), a full array of ground ladders, and many specialized tools.

MEDIC UNIT - The vehicle that is responsible for Advanced Life Support medical transport of ill and injured persons.

OVERHAUL - The organized function of removal of building parts (walls, ceilings), to check for fire extension.

RESCUE - The act of bringing a person or persons to a safe environment from a hazardous one.

SALVAGE - The organized function of saving undamaged property by covering with tarpaulins or by removing from danger area.

SEARCH - The organized function of systematically checking all spaces in a structure for incapacitated persons.

PRIMARY SEARCH - Where a search is made under fire conditions as companies enter the structure.

SECONDARY SEARCH - After the fire has been brought under control and a slower, more thorough search can be conducted.

SUPPLY LINE - An evolution where the engine at the fire is directly connected by hose to a water source.

VENTILATION - The organized function of systematically removing heat, smoke, and toxic gases from a structure.

WORKING FIRE - An emergency situation where property is involved in fire and a substantial attack by firefighters is necessary.

WORKING INCIDENT - An emergency situation, other than a fire, such as a Haz/Mat emergency, water rescue, emergency medical operations, etc.