

Enchanted Circle Regional Fire Association

Model Operating Procedures

ICS / Command Procedures

Purpose

This procedure establishes the use of the Incident Command System at all emergency incidents, and provides guidelines for certain command procedures.

General

The fire department responds to a wide range of emergency incidents. In order to effectively manage personnel and resources, facilitate automatic aid and mutual aid operations, and to provide for safety and welfare of personnel, the Incident Command System (ICS) will be used to manage all emergency operations.

Command Procedures

The first arriving Company or Command Officer will assume the role of Incident Commander (IC). The initial IC should:

- Announce over the radio that he or she has assumed command. This announcement should be made in such a way that it is clear to all personnel on the scene, dispatch, and personnel responding that command has been established.
- Size-up the incident, and give a size-up report to dispatch.
- Determine the strategy to be used (either offensive or defensive)
- Establish tactical priorities:
 - Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured
 - Confine and extinguish the fire
 - Conserve property
 - Provide for the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel
- Make tactical assignments as necessary
- Manage communications
- Establish an effective incident organization
- Provide for an orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers if appropriate

Radio Designation

The incident should be named for an appropriate geographic location (for example, a fire on Rim Road might be named the “Rim Fire”). The IC should adopt the incident name and designator as IC (“Rim IC”) instead of using their usual radio unit number. If command is transferred, the transfer should be announced over the radio, and the “Rim IC” designator transfers to the new IC. In this way, operations personnel will always get an answer when they call for the “Rim IC”.

Stationary and Mobile Command

The Initial IC may choose to establish a “Stationary” or “Mobile” command post, dependent on incident needs. If the first arriving fire officer is a company officer, and the situation requires immediate action that depends on the company officer’s direct participation and close supervision, he or she may choose to function in a “mobile command” mode. In this mode of operation, the company officer maintains command by use of a portable radio while continuing the direct supervision of his or her company, including entry into the fire building. The officer should announce clearly over the radio that he or she is in “mobile command mode”. The mobile command mode should rapidly culminate in one of the following:

- Situation is controlled

- Situation is not controlled and the IC moves to the exterior and establishes a stationary command.
- Command is transferred to a subsequently arriving officer, and the company officer continues direct supervision of their company.

Should a situation occur where a later arriving Company or Command Officer cannot locate or communicate with the initial IC who is functioning in a mobile command mode, they will announce that they are assuming command and initiate whatever actions are necessary to locate the missing crew.

Some situations will require an exterior stationary command due to size, complexity or potential for rapid growth. In these circumstances, the initial IC should establish a command post in a safe and visible location, and maintain that position until relieved by a higher ranking officer.

Transfer of Command

Command is transferred to improve the quality of the command organization and the safety and effectiveness of operations.

- The first arriving fire officer will automatically assume the role of Incident Commander (IC).
- Assumption of command by subsequently arriving higher ranking officers is not automatic, but rather is a discretionary decision reached between the Initial IC and the higher ranking officer.
- Passing command to an officer not at the scene creates significant safety issues, and shall not be done.
- Transfer of command requires communication between the initial IC and the officer assuming command. Face-to-face communication is preferred, but radio communication may be required when the initial IC is functioning in a mobile command mode. It is the responsibility of the person being relieved to provide a briefing for the officer assuming command that includes:
 - Incident conditions
 - Strategy, tactical assignments, and deployment of resources
 - Anticipated needs and problems
- Command shall not be considered to be transferred until the transfer is announced over the radio to all incident personnel and to dispatch.
- The person being relieved will be assigned to best advantage.