

Essex County Fire Standard Operating Guideline

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Incident Command System (ICS)		

Purpose

This procedure is established to:

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

To meet these goals: The Department shall implement the Incident Command System appropriately at all incidents for which it has management responsibility.

Communications

The need for common terminology in any emergency management system is essential. Major organizational functions and units are pre-designated and titled in the ICS and the system's terminology is standard and consistent. Common names are established and used for all personnel, equipment, resources and facilities.

All communications shall be clear text.

Radio communications shall be sender from receiver using the following model:

1. Request to initiate communications and determine that the intended receiver is listening.
2. Transmit the message or order concisely in clear text.
3. Receive feedback from the receiver to ensure that the message was received and understood.
4. Confirm that the message or order was understood; if not, correct and clarify the message.

Examples:

Main St. Command:	Main St. Command to Engine 1
Engine 1:	Engine 1 to Main St. Command
Main St. Command:	Protect the exposure, side C
Engine 1:	Protect the exposure, side C
Main St. Command:	Affirmative
Main St. Command:	Main St. Command to Ladder 1
Ladder 1:	Ladder 1 to Main St. Command
Main St. Command:	Establish a vertical vent, access from side B
Ladder 1:	Establish a vertical vent, access from side D
Main St. Command:	Negative. Establish a vertical Vent, access from side B as in Baker
Ladder 1:	Vertical Vent, access from side B as in Baker
Main St. Command:	Affirmative

Assumption of Command

Command shall be established at all incidents.

The ranking member of the first arriving Company shall assume command. When multiple resources will be committed to the incident, command shall be formally established by transmitting a brief initial report containing the following information to the Fire Alarm.

1. Identify of the Company transmitting the report.
2. Actual location of the incident.
3. Brief description of the incident and report of conditions.
4. Designation of the individual assuming command and incident name.

Incidents are given a specific name to reduce confusion when multiple incidents share the same radio frequency and/or dispatcher.

Example:

Engine 1:	Engine 1 to Fire Alarm
Fire Alarm:	Fire Alarm to Engine 1
Engine 1:	Engine 1 is at 100 Main Street. Fire showing floor 1 side A of a 2-story dwelling 30 x 40; Engine 1 is Main St. Command

Fire Alarm: Engine 1 is at 100 Main Street. Fire showing from floor 1 side A of a 2-story dwelling, 30 x 40; Engine 1 is Main St. Command

Engine 1: Affirmative

Selection of Command Mode

The IC must determine if initial command activity will be conducted from a fixed position, or if it will be conducted simultaneously with the tactical operations of the first arriving Company. Command from a fixed position is preferred, particularly when an incident is complex or rapidly escalating. The initial IC must answer the following two questions:

Will the initial tactical operations of the first arriving company have a significant impact on the eventual outcome of the incident?

Will the **Personal** efforts of the Company Commander in the performance of tactical activity have a significant impact on the ability of the Company to achieve their assigned tactical objective(s)?

If the answer to these two questions is **NO**, command from a fixed position should be established.

If there is a need for immediate tactical activity and Company staffing necessitates that the Company Commander be an integral part of Company tactical operations, command in the offensive mode should be initiated.

Command in the offensive mode should only be performed until command can be transferred.

Responsibilities of the IC

The Incident Commander at any fire incident shall be responsible for the following:

1. Assessment of Incident Priorities. Incident priorities provide a framework for command decision making. Tactical activity may address more than one incident priority simultaneously.

Life Safety (first priority)

Incident Stabilization (second priority)

Property Conservation (third priority)

2. Perform Size-Up. The IC must perform an initial assessment of the situation, incident potential and resource status. This assessment must address the following three questions:

What have I got? (situation)

Where is it going? (potential)

What do I need to control it? (resources)

Size-up is not static and must be continued throughout the duration of the incident.

3. Select the Strategic Mode. A critical decision having an impact on the safety of personnel and the effectiveness of tactical operations is the selection of strategic mode. Operations may be conducted in either an Offensive or Defensive mode. This decision is based on the answers to the following two questions:

Is it safe to conduct offensive operations?

Is resource capability (present and projected) adequate for offensive operations to control the incident?

4. Define Strategic Goals. Strategic goals define the overall plan that will be used to control the incident. Strategic goals are broad in nature and are achieved by the completion of tactical objectives. Strategic goals are generally focused in the following areas:

Protection or removal of exposed persons.

Confinement and extinguishments of the fire or control of the hazard.

Minimize loss to involved or exposed property.

5. Establish Tactical Objectives. Tactical objectives are the specific operations that must be accomplished to achieve strategic goals. Tactical objectives must be both specific and measurable, defining:

Assignment of resources

Nature of the tactical activity

Location in which the tactical activity must be performed

If the tactical action must be performed in sequence or coordinated with any other tactical action

6. Implement the Action Plan. Implementation of the incident action plan requires that the IC establish an appropriate organizational structure to manage the required resources and communicate the tactical objectives. The incident action plan may be communicated by Standard Operating Guidelines, assigning tactical objectives, or by assigning task activity.

Tactical Standard Operating Guidelines may define common components of the incident action plan such as water supply, standard apparatus placement and the methods used for basic tactical evaluations.

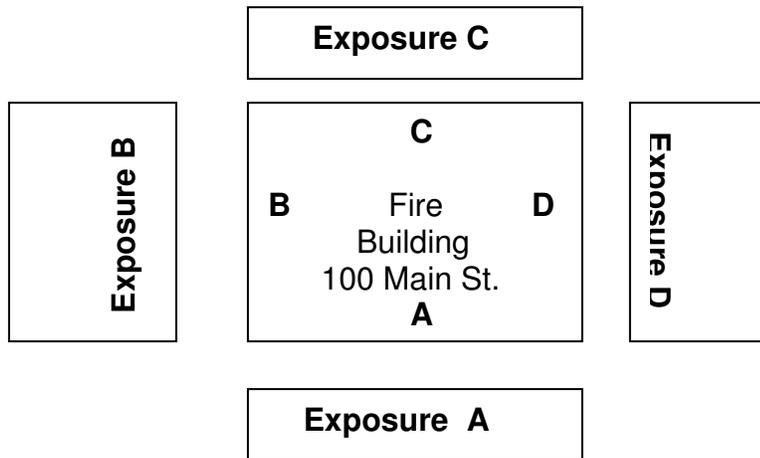
Orders from the IC may specify tactical objectives assigned to subordinate positions within the ICS structure or to a specific resource.

Example:

Main St. Command:	Main St. Command to Engine 1
Engine 1:	Engine 1 to Main St. Command
Main St. Command:	Initiate fire attack on floor 1 as soon as Ladder 1 established a vertical vent.
Engine 1:	Initiate fire attack on floor 1 after Ladder 1 establishes a vertical vent.
Main St. Command	Affirmative

Standard Geographic Designation System

Each exterior side of a structure shall be given a letter designation. The side of the structure facing the street (address side) shall be designated A. The remaining sides shall be designated B, C and D in a clockwise manner. Exposures shall be designated in a like manner as shown below:



The interior of a structure shall be designated by floor (1, 2, 3 etc.). The basement, attic and roof shall be designated name.

ICS Organizational Structure for Initial Operations

The ICS shall be used to maintain an effective span of control and workload for all supervisory personnel.

Divisions and Groups

When multiple resources are assigned to the same function incident-wide (such as ventilation or search and rescue), a Group shall be established to provide coordination and control of tactical operations.

Designation of Divisions and Groups

When Division boundaries are established on the exterior of a structure or in nonstructural incidents (such as a woodland fire) a letter designation (A, B, C, D etc.) shall be used. In addition to establishing the Division designation, specific boundaries must be defined. This is particularly important in nonstructural incidents.

When Division boundaries are defined by level in a structural incident, a number or descriptive designation shall be used (1, 2, 3, basement). If a Division is given responsibility for the entire structure, it shall be designated as the Interior Division.

In radio communications with a Division the letter or number designation shall follow "Division" (Division A, Division 3) if a descriptive designation is given it shall precede "Division" in radio communications (Interior Division, etc.).

Groups shall be designated by function (Vent, Water Supply, etc.). In radio communications with a Group, the function shall serve as the designation.

Staging

Staging provides a standard system by which apparatus, personnel and equipment are organized at a designated area prior to being assigned tasks at the emergency scene.

Level 1

Level 1 staging requires that units, other than those with predetermined assignments or units that have been directed to specific location, respond to a location no closer than one(1) block (or street) of the incident. Once a unit has staged itself at the appropriate location, the following message will be given.

Example:

Ladder 1 is at Main Street and Grove Street

A unit at Level 1 staging location shall wait at that location for an assignment from the IC. If no assignment is given within 1 – 2 minutes, the unit commander may again state the message.

Should no contact with the IC be made after the second radio message, the Unit Commander, with portable radio, shall walk to the command location to receive an assignment. In no case shall more than two (2) radio transmissions be made to advise command that the unit is in staging, face-to-face notification shall be made.

Level 2

Level 2 staging allows additional apparatus to be located in a designated area providing an "On Scene" reserve of equipment. While mutual aid apparatus best fits this description, any additional equipment, manpower, or vehicles should stage in this area until requested to the scene.

In establishing Level 2, the following must be accomplished:

1. Command must designate a staging area and, as soon as is practical, assign a staging officer.
2. Communications will advise responding units of the staging area location and the staging officer in charge of Staging.

If command has not assigned a Staging Officer, the ranking Officer on one of the first responding Companies shall assume this duty. The Staging Officer shall determine what resources in the staging area will be assigned, and may, at his/her discretion, assign his/her unit if appropriate. In this situation, the ranking Officer of the second unit to arrive will assume this responsibility. If all units in staging must be utilized, the ranking Officer of the next unit to arrive in staging will assume the duties of staging.

After staging procedure that been initiated, communications involving staging will be directly between the Staging Officer and Command. The Staging Officer will verbally relay request from Command for assignment of Companies in the staging area. When giving assignments, the Staging Officer will specifically direct companies where and to whom to report.

The Staging Officer will have the following responsibilities:

1. Communicates directly with the IC and assigns Companies as requested by command noting where and to whom they will report.
2. Makes assignments to units in staging verbally and not by radio.
3. Maintains warning lights only on the vehicle he/she is assigned to.
4. Periodically advises the IC of units/manpower available in staging.
5. Coordinate with Police to block streets and control traffic in the staging area.
6. Insures that apparatus is parked to avoid congestion and maintain access.
7. Maintains a log of apparatus in the staging area.
8. Maintains a conspicuous location.

ICS Organizations for Larger Incidents

ICS organizational structure should be based on the management needs of the incident and should not be developed on a proactive basis. Incident resource and management needs must be projected adequately ahead to allow for the reflex time of responding resources.

The IC and other supervisory personnel should anticipate span of control problems. Subordinate management positions should be staffed to maintain an acceptable san of control and workload. This may necessitate requesting additional command officers to fill these overhead positions.

Whenever planning, logistical or finance functional responsibilities become a significant workload for the IC, the appropriate sections should be staffed. This will prevent overextension of the IC's span of control.

Transfer of Command

Command may be transferred from the initial IC (often a Company Commander) to a later arriving or senior Command Officer. Transfer of command shall take place on a face-to-face basis whenever possible to facilitate effective communication and feedback. If face-to-face communication is not possible, transfer of command by radio may be conducted.

If command has been established by a Firefighter, command shall be transferred to the first arriving Officer. Command shall be transferred to the first arriving Command Officer at that Officer's discretion (the Command Officer may choose to allow the Company Commander to continue as IC). Transfer of command to higher-ranking command officers is also discretionary. When a Command Officer allows a lower ranking Officer to retain command, this does not remove the responsibility for the incident from the higher-ranking individual.

Transfer of command shall include communication of the following information:

1. The status of the current situations.
2. Resources committed to the incident and responding, as well as the present incident organizational structure.
3. Assessment of the current effect of tactical operations.

Following transfer of command, the IC may return the previous IC to his or her Company (if a Company Commander) or specify assignment to a subordinate management position within the ICS organizational structure.