FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENTS
OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA
FIREFIGHTING AND
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
MANUAL

COMMAND

OFFICER

OPERATIONS

Fourth Edition

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- City of Alexandria
- Arlington County
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- Stafford County

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>TABLE OF FIGURES</u>

PREFACE

Effective command procedures are essential for all fire and rescue operations regardless of the magnitude or the amount of departmental resources committed to mitigate the situation. Structured incident command procedures must be in place and used on all incidents to avoid confusion. As an incident intensifies, more supervision, management, and support functions are required. At incidents with complicated or rapidly changing situations, considerable confusion and excitement may accompany early operations. Such disorder at an intensifying incident can contribute to extensive property damage; even resulting in unnecessary loss of life. The goal of an effective command organization is to increase the safety of our members, eliminate confusion, and prevent the loss of life.

This Incident Command System Operating Manual is compatible with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as indicated by *Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5, Management of Domestic Incidents*.

Changes to the fourth edition of this manual include:

- The elimination of unneeded NIMS Information.
- Uniform use of establish or transfer of command.
- The clarification of when a unit establishes command and assigns their personnel to a tactical assignment.
- Implementation of NOVA PB and TIA's relevant to Command Officer Operations.
- The elimination of transitional mode and the clarification of transition between modes.
- Addition of several technical terms and tactics:
    - Occupant Status
    - Withdrawal
    - Emergency Evacuation
- Additional information on mobile and stationary command post operations.
- Clarification on Base and Staging.
- Removal of fireground communication reports and relocation to NOVA Communication Manual.
- Expanded information on the duties of the second arriving chief officer.
- Expanded information on the transfer of command to higher ranking chief officer.
- Information on the Deputy Incident Commander role.
- Clarification on use of Passports and Passport drop off location.
- Updates to command boards.
- Removal of all Worksheets and Boards from Manual and relocated to shared accessible folder.

OVERVIEW

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a management tool which enables fire and rescue officers to manage efforts to mitigate any incident, whether routine or of a major disaster proportion. We will always operate within the ICS at emergency incidents in order to effectively manage personnel and resources, while providing for their safety and welfare. The Incident Commander (IC) title applies equally to a company officer as it does to the department's chief, regardless of the nature of the incident.

The ICS organization has the capability to expand and to contract, in order to meet the needs of the incident. All incidents, regardless of size and complexity, will have an IC. A basic ICS operating principle is that the IC is responsible for on-scene management until command authority is transferred to another person, who then becomes the IC.

Management of an incident cannot and must not be left to chance, upon arrival of the initial unit officer. Command procedures must begin. The analysis and management of an incident must follow a well-defined and practiced system of incident command procedures. The ICS provides the needed management tools to coordinate the resources assigned to mitigate an incident.

SECTION 1 – THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

The ICS is based on basic management concepts and principles. Each contributes to the efficiency of the overall structure and system.

ICS uses common terminology that permits diverse incident management and support entities to work together toward the common goal of mitigating the problem. Common terminology encompasses:

- **Organizational Functions:** Major functions and functional units are named and defined. Terminology for the organizational elements is standard and consistent.
- **Resource Descriptions:** Major resources, including personnel, facilities, and major equipment and supply items are given a common name and "typed" with respect to their capabilities. This avoids confusion and improves interoperability.
- **Incident Facilities:** Common terms are used to designate the facilities in the vicinity of the incident area that will be used in the course of incident management activities.

The structure of the ICS allows for expansion of the management staff depending upon the needs of the IC to control the incident. The ICS shall be implemented with the arrival of the first fire department officer and remain in effect until emergency response resources are released from the scene.

Qualified members must staff the ICS. On large, multi-agency incidents, the IC shall use members from the various agencies for their expertise.

The system provides for the following types of operations:

- Single jurisdiction and single agency.
- Single jurisdiction and multi-agency.
- Multi-jurisdiction and single agency.
- Multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency.

The organizational structure of the ICS will adapt to any emergency incident to which the agency is expected to respond.

The system is designed to allow for expansion from initial attack operations into the multi-level management of a major disaster.

The ICS is comprised of the following five functional areas which are required to manage the resources at every incident. (A sixth area, Intelligence, may be established if required.)

1. **Incident Commander:** The individual responsible for the overall management of all incident operations.

2. **Operations Section:** Responsible for all tactical operations at the incident.

3. **Planning Section:** Responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination and use of information about the development of the incident as well as the status of resources.

4. **Logistics Section:** Responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident.

5. **Finance/Administration Section:** Responsible for all costs and financial actions of the incident. Includes: Time Unit, Procurement Unit, Compensation/Claims Unit, and the Cost Unit.

6. **Information and Intelligence Function:** The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence are important elements of ICS. Intelligence includes not only national security or other types of classified information but also other operational information. Such as risk assessments, medical intelligence, weather information, geospatial information, structural designs, toxic contaminant levels, utilities and public works data that may come from a variety of different sources. Traditionally, information and intelligence functions are located in the Planning Section. However, in exceptional situations, the IC may need to assign the information and intelligence functions to other parts of the ICS organization, such as Operations. Especially when law enforcement is part of the Unified Command, or establishing as an additional General Staff Section. Information and intelligence must be appropriately analyzed and shared with personnel designated by the IC, who have proper clearance and a "need-to-know," to ensure that they support decision making.

In small-scale incidents, one person, the IC, may manage all of the components. Large-scale incidents usually require that each component, or section be set up separately. Each of the primary ICS sections may be divided into smaller functions as needed.

The primary goals of all major ICS component functions are to:

- Save lives and protect property endangered by an incident (both civilian and emergency response personnel).
- Reduce duplication of efforts and resources.
- Increase inter-jurisdictional flexibility and upgrade joint capabilities to handle major incidents.
- Provide a predictable, coordinated, effective and acceptable response to emergencies from various agencies within the jurisdiction.
- Provide for the ongoing safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel throughout the incident.

ORGANIZATION

The ICS offers a flexible, modular-based organizational structure containing the functions necessary to manage the emergency resources on an incident. The organization emanates from the IC downward; initially with responsibility for command placed on the first-arriving unit officer. The IC is responsible for the command of all incident activities within their span of control. This includes the development and implementation of strategic goals and the incident action plan (IAP). The roles of Safety, Liaison, and Public Information shall remain a command function at all times.

A written IAP provides a coherent means of communicating the overall incident objectives in the contexts of operational and support activities for longer duration incidents.

Span of control is the key to effective and efficient incident management. Within the ICS, the span of control of any individual with incident management supervisory responsibility should range from three to seven subordinates. The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards, safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span-of-control considerations.

The IC shall activate additional components of the ICS, as necessary, to meet command objectives, as the need for additional resources including apparatus, staff and supervision arises.

The modular concept is based on the following considerations:

- Develop the form of the organization to match the function or task to be performed.
- Staff only those functional elements required to perform the task.
- Observe recommended span-of-control guidelines.
- Perform the function of any non-activated organizational element at the next highest level.
- Deactivate organizational elements no longer required.

Table 1 describes the distinctive title assigned to each element of the ICS organization at each corresponding level, as well as the leadership title corresponding to each individual element.

Organizational Element	Leadership Position
Incident Command	Incident Commander (IC)
Command Staff	Officer
Section	Section Chief
Branch	Branch Director
Division and Groups*	Supervisors
Unit**	Unit Leader
*The hierarchical term *supervisor* is only used in the Operations Section.	

Table 1: ICS Leadership Titles

Levels of Scene Organization

The levels of scene organization are as follows:

- **Strategic** – IC and Command Staff operate, and are responsible for command functions.
- **Tactical** – Branch, Division, or Group Directors and Supervisors manage the tactical activities for their assigned area or function, i.e., responsible for a piece of the incident.
- **Task** – The level where strategic and tactical objectives are accomplished, i.e., where the work actually is done. Fire companies rescue victims, put out the fire, and protect the customer's property.

Delegation of Functional Responsibility

Increasing the number of incident management positions can overload the IC's ability to effectively manage an incident. When this occurs, it is necessary to delegate component functions to qualified personnel. When a given component function is delegated, a designated individual becomes responsible for the tasks of that component. Operational personnel are responsible for achieving the strategic goals established by the IC.

Unified Command

When there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction, or when incidents cross political jurisdictions, Unified Command (UC) is required. Agencies work together through the designated members of the UC to establish a common set of objectives, strategies and a single IAP. Often the senior managers from the agencies and/or

disciplines involved participate in UC. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

The following are examples of when Unified Command is applied:

- Incidents that impact more than one political jurisdiction.
- Incidents involving multiple agencies (or departments) within the same political jurisdiction.
- Incidents that impact (or involve) several political and functional agencies.

Operational Components

The major components of the ICS are Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration. These components are referred to as the General Staff.

The Command Function

The command function is established by the IC and is the person in charge at the incident. The IC must ensure that incident goals are established, strategies are selected, planning activities are accomplished, and available resources are effectively used and tracked.

It is imperative that the strategy is communicated down through Operations to the Division, Group, and single resource level. This is essential if supervisors are to coordinate incident tactics and tasks. More specifically, the IC and Operations Chief must ensure that all resources are cognizant of the mode of operations; whether it is offensive or defensive.

Delegating responsibilities at an incident gives the IC the capability of dividing an incident into more manageable work areas or functions. By dividing the incident and delegating tactical responsibilities, the IC can concentrate on the overall strategy, while remaining at the command post.

ICS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Figure 1 illustrates the command and functional relationships used throughout the ICS.
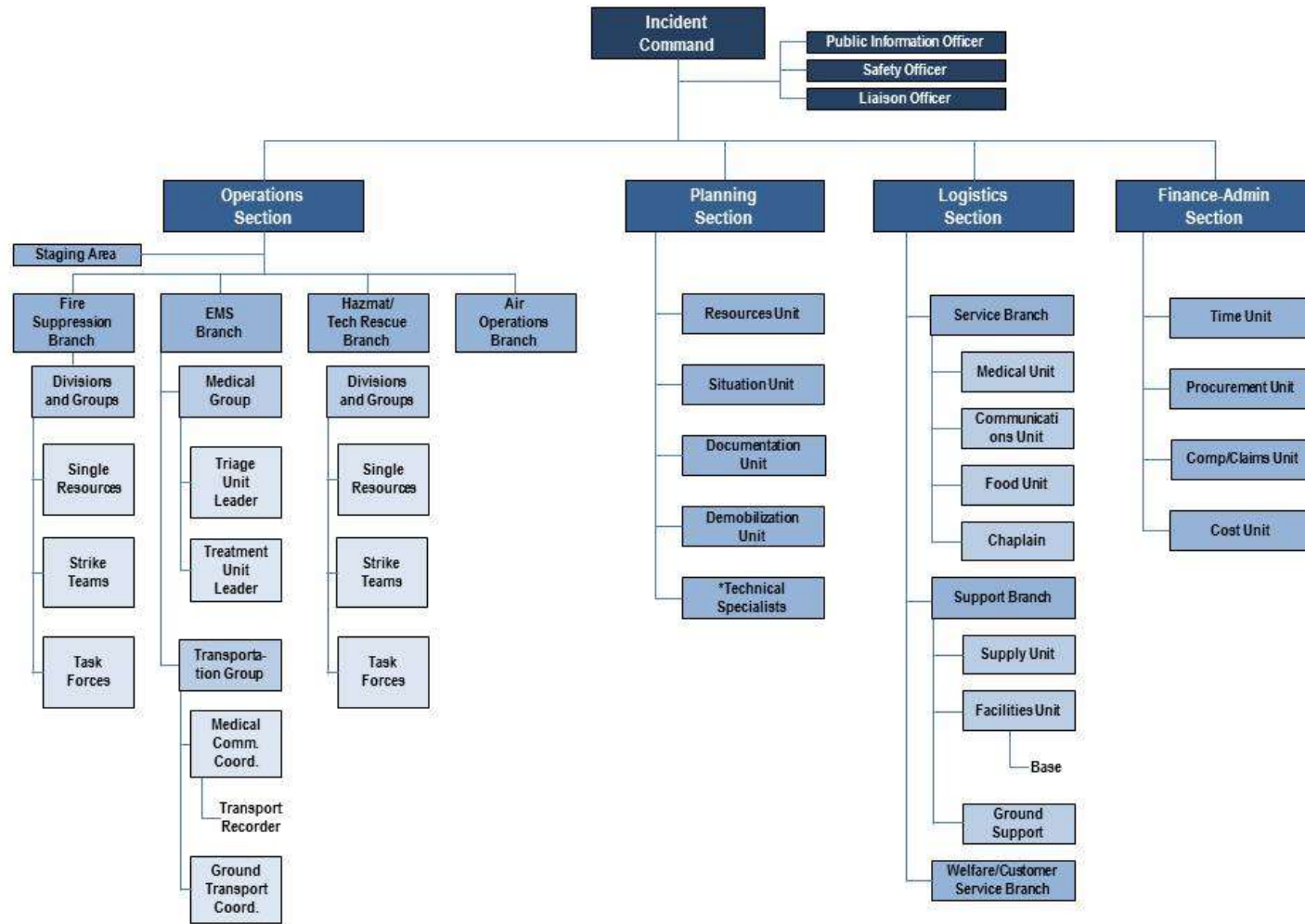
Figure 1: Command and Functional Relationships Used in ICS

Major responsibilities for the IC include:

- Performing command activities, such as establishing command and establishing the Incident Command Post (ICP).
- Protecting life and property.
- Developing and applying appropriate strategies and tactics.
- Command and control of personnel and equipment resources.
- Maintaining accountability for the responders and the public's safety, as well as task accomplishment.
- Establishing and maintaining the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) function.
- Establishing and maintaining an effective liaison with outside agencies and organizations.

Management of the incident encompasses:

- Assessing incident priorities based on risk/benefit analysis.
- Determining operational objectives.
- Developing and implementing the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- Developing an appropriate organizational structure for the incident.
- Maintaining a manageable span of control.
- Managing incident resources.
- Coordinating overall emergency activities.
- Coordinating the activities of outside agencies.
- Authorizing the release of information to the media.
- Tracking costs.

The effective IC must be assertive, decisive, objective, calm, and a quick thinker. To deal with all the responsibilities of the role, the IC also needs to be adaptable, flexible, and realistic about their limitations. The IC must have the capability to delegate positions appropriately for the incident.

It is extremely important to remember that on the majority of incidents, the Incident Command System should be built from the bottom up. This is to say that the IC should only implement those elements of the system that are necessary to maintain a span of control of three-to-seven people, with five being ideal. A simple incident may require nothing more than the example shown in Figure 2.
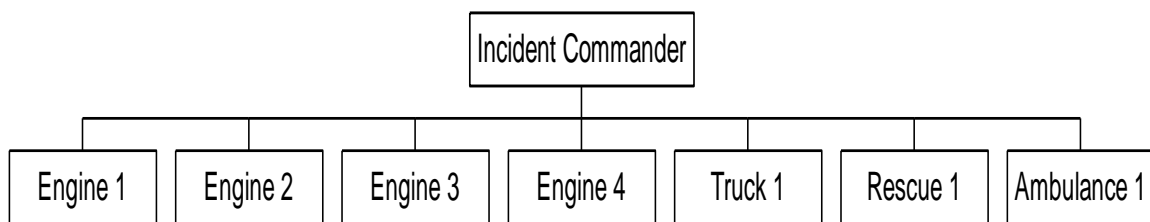
Figure 2: Simple Incident Organization Example

On some incidents, a level of direct supervision over some of the units would be delegated. However, the result would be a similar command structure, yet still remain simple, Figure 3.
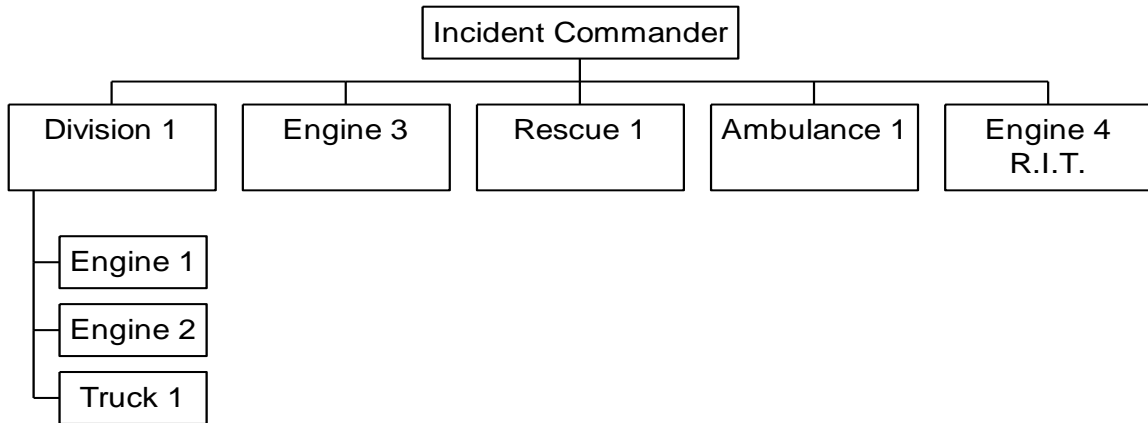
Figure 3: Simple Incident Organization with Level of Direct Supervision Added

The individual in command and location of the command post must be clearly communicated and identified in the initial phase of the ICS build-up.

COMMAND STAFF

Command Staff positions (not to be confused with General Staff positions of Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration) are established to assume responsibility for essential activities that are not part of the line organization, Figure 4. There are normally three positions in this staff: Safety Officer, Public Information Officer, and Liaison Officer; however, the IC may elect to expand this staff to include other functions, depending upon the need. Personnel assigned to these functions shall report directly to the IC and work out of the command post.

Figure 4: Command Staff Positions

ICS STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Sections

The Section level is organizationally between the Branch level and the IC. This management level is a member of the IC's General Staff, not to be confused with the Command Staff positions of Safety, Information, and Liaison, and is responsible for managing a primary segment of incident operations. These sections are Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration, Figure 5.

The Incident Management Team (IMT) consists of the IC's Command Staff (Liaison, Safety, PIO) and the General Staff (Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration).
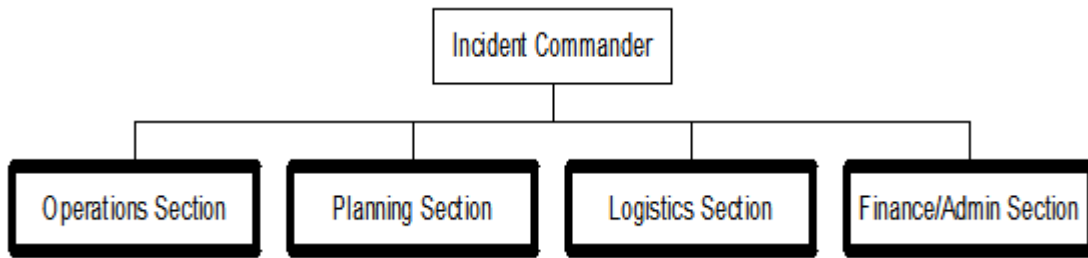
Figure 5: The IC's General Staff

Branches

The Branch Level is the organizational level having functional or geographical responsibility. The Branch Level is organizationally between Section and Division or Group in the Operations Section, and between Sections and Units in the Logistics Section, Figure 9. Depending on the magnitude and or type of incident, the operational functions may require further division into smaller segments for efficient use of resources. However, they are not always essential to the organization of the Operations Section.
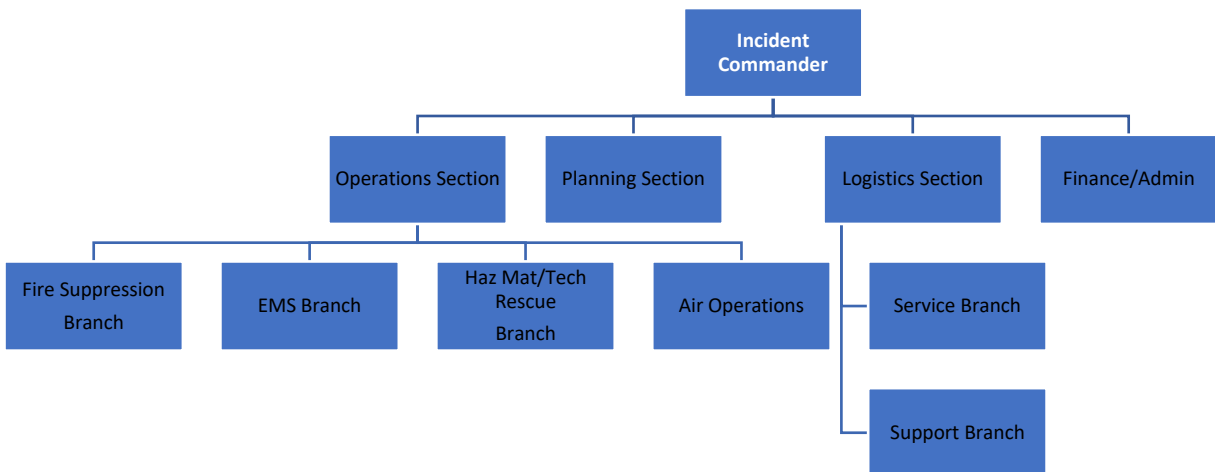
Figure 6: Branch Level

When the numbers of divisions exceed the recommended span-of-control for the Operations Section, a multi-branch structure should be put in place and the divisions allocated within those Branches. Examples of branches can be fire suppression, evacuation, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and EMS.

Branch Directors should be situated at operational locations and may be assigned names. Branch Directors communicate directly with the Section Chief under whom they are assigned to operate.

The Branch Director, when activated, provides management of a complex operation when the incident involves more than one of the major operational components, such as suppression, hazardous materials, technical rescue, or EMS. This Branch Director reports directly to the Operations Chief. The Branch Director makes changes in the action plan as required to combat the incident, requests or releases resources as needed, and reports changes to the Operations Chief. However, branches are not limited to the Operations Section. Branches will be named to reflect their operational objective or geographic area of responsibility. The Branch Director is then responsible for achieving the tactical objectives assigned to that branch by the IC.

Divisions

Divisions are the organizational levels having total responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. For example, on an incident with a working fire on the fourth floor of a ten-story building, the IC will typically place all units operating on that floor under the direction and supervision of a Division Supervisor. This supervisor's designator would be Division 4. This supervisor will be responsible for the activities in that geographical area.

Establishing a division provides a system to divide an incident into manageable geographical areas. Routine communications inside a division can be accomplished more effectively in a face-to-face mode. This eliminates tactical information exchanges on the radio.

Groups

Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operations. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division. Using the same example of fire on the fourth floor of a ten-story building, the IC may assemble and assign a group to ventilate the floors above the fire floor in the fire building. The IC would designate a Group Supervisor and may use the designation of Vent Group. The Vent Group could be operating on the seventh through the tenth floor performing the function of ventilation.

On the organization chart, divisions and groups are located between branches and

individual units in the Operations Section. Divisions and groups along with single resources (individual companies) are responsible for achieving tactical objectives.

The Division or Group Supervisor reports to the next higher level of supervision currently in place. This may be the Branch Director, Operations Chief, or the IC, depending on the size and complexity of the incident. The supervisor is responsible for the implementation of the assigned portion of the Incident Action Plan, assignment of resources within the Division or Group, reporting on the progress of control operations and updated the status of resources within the Division or Group.

Groups may work in or pass through divisions. Lateral communications between divisions and groups will be necessary to coordinate tactical efforts.

The following factors should be given consideration when determining the need for divisions or groups:

- The situation has the potential for growing beyond the ability of command to directly control incident resources.
- When companies are operating in tactical positions, where one designated individual from that location is assigned as the immediate supervisor to maintain communications and coordination with Command.
- When companies are involved in complex operations.
- When the situation is hazardous and close control of operating resources is needed; Division Supervisors must be in a position to ensure the safety and accountability of the resources assigned to them.

Strike Team

A strike team is comprised of a set number of the same type single resources. In other words, the strike team is made up of the same type companies (e.g. five engine companies).

The companies that make up the strike team are under the supervision of a Strike Team Leader and have common communications among the team.

A strike team may be assembled on-scene by the IC, or it may be a predetermined complement of resources that can be requested and dispatched by the communications center.

For example, considering the labor and resource intensive requirements of a trench cut on a commercial occupancy, the IC or Operations Chief may request, assemble and deploy a Strike Team (made up of truck companies) to accomplish this task.

Task Force

A task force is a combination of resources. The task force can be made up of several different type companies (e.g. three engine companies, one truck company, and one medic unit).

The task force is under the supervision of a Task Force Leader who reports to the next-higher level of command that has been established and has common communications.

A task force may be assembled on-scene by the IC or it may be a predetermined complement of resources that can be requested and dispatched by the communications center. For example, on a multi casualty incident an EMS task force may be requested, or assembled, and deployed by the IC (e.g. five EMS transport units, two suppression units, etc.)

Single Resource

A Single Resource is an individual unit that retains its own unit identification (e.g. E429).

ICS ORGANIZATIONAL HEIRARCHY AND DEFINITIONS

Figure 7 is a graphical representation of the ICS organizational hierarchy and includes the definitions for each level.
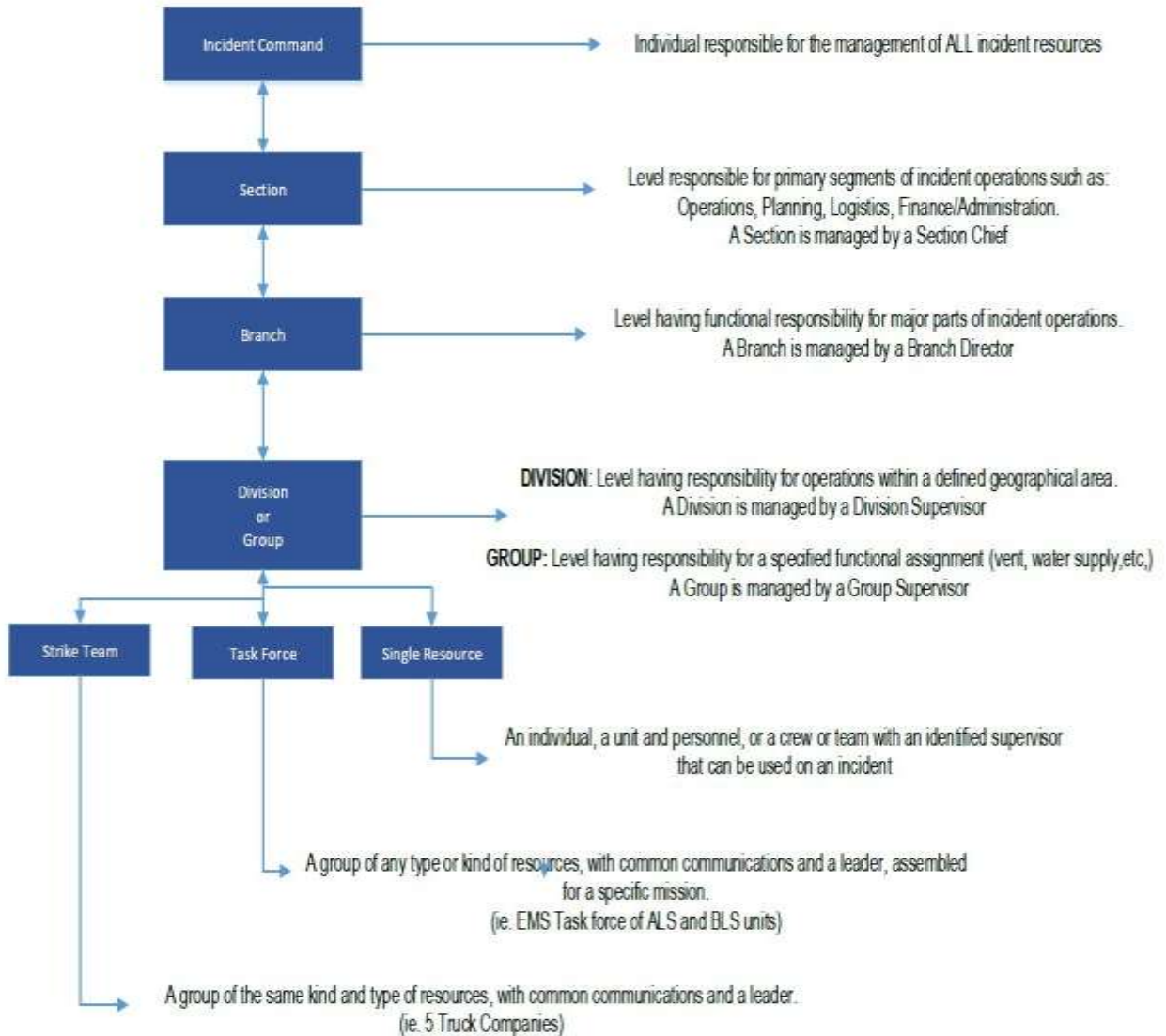
Figure 7: ICS Hierarchy and Definitions

INITIAL ACTIVATION OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

An emergency incident presents a complicated and rapidly changing situation. Effective command organization will assist in the elimination of confusion at the incident and assist in accounting for all personnel operating within areas that pose immediate danger to life and health (IDLH).

The IC is tasked with developing an incident action plan and managing the resources assigned to mitigate the incident.

Initially, the first positions to activate are those involved in the management of operational duties (fire suppression and/or emergency medical services). This provides the IC with information on the location, progress, and current status of committed resources. Members may be divided into suppression, EMS, and support function resources.

Incident Command procedures shall be initiated and initial fireground communications (on scene report, command statement, etc.) made when three or more companies are actively engaged in operational tasks.

This makes it perfectly clear to all units enroute and on-scene; someone has established "Command" and that any subsequent unit actions or observations must be communicated and coordinated through "Command".

Early establishment of command provides the basic infrastructure for effective deployment and accountability of resources.

Routine medical calls do not require formal implementation and announcement of the ICS. It is inferred that the officer from the suppression piece dispatched to the call will assume the responsibilities of the IC for duties such as adding additional resources, and relaying notifications. The EMS provider will be free to manage patient care.

On single unit responses, the officer in charge will be responsible for all ICS components.

The system is implemented to allow for proper span of control and limit task saturation.

Examples of such situations may include, but are not limited to:

- Vehicle accidents that require the efforts of an engine company, rescue company, and medic unit or ambulance.
- Medical calls (resulting from assaults etc.) with multiple patients and/or multi-agency response.
- A brush fire where several suppression units are assigned and operating remotely from one another.
- Fire alarm or fire investigation in which units are operating in separate geographic areas.

- Working structure fires of any magnitude.
- Hazardous materials incidents, including natural gas leaks.
- Technical rescue incidents involving complex or extensive operations such as building collapse, below-grade rescue, train derailment, aircraft accident, etc.
- Marine operations.
- Incidents which require personnel to enter and operate in an IDLH.

Designation of Command

The first arriving officer, as defined by a local jurisdiction, shall advise communications that the ICS is implemented by initiating initial fireground communications such as an on scene report, command statement, etc.

The physical location of the Command Post (CP) must be communicated (e.g., "E106 on the scene, assuming Arlington Boulevard Command at the front of E428").

Transfer of Command

The objective of transferring command is to strengthen the management function and provide increased support for operational resources.

Procedure for Transferring Command

Upon the arrival of the dispatched command officer the following actions should be addressed:

- Confirm, or establish if not done already, that the name of command reflects the geographical location of the incident (e.g., *"Arlington Boulevard Command"*).
- Assess a suitable location to set up the incident command post.
- The specific designation of command helps keep communications concise during complex incidents. The designated name of command should not change during an incident.
- A clear view of the incident scene is extremely important. Sufficient space for access and egress of additional units into the area should be considered. The command post location should not hinder operations to mitigate the incident. It is understood that an initial location of the CP may be suitable but then is blocked by arriving apparatus positioning. In these cases, the IC should evaluate another suitable location and not hinder an apparatus tactical position and/or operation.
- The standard radio designation of command stays with the IC throughout an incident regardless of whether the IC is a company officer or a chief officer and is automatically transferred as the position of IC is transferred.

If the chief officer cannot conduct a face-to-face with the initial IC, the formal transfer of command should take place via radio. In this case, the chief officer should confirm with the initial IC the location of all units operating or at least units operating within the IDLH. Once this confirmation is made, the chief officer should confirm the transfer of command

Prior to assuming command, the following information should be obtained from the initial IC:

- o What was the situation?
- o What is the current situation?
- o What are the strategy and tactics?
- o What is the status of the primary search?
- o What units are committed and where?
- o What units are available?

The first arriving officer who has initiated an offensive attack and plans to transfer command must remain cognizant of the fact that they are still in command until the transfer of command has been confirmed.

The first arriving officer (initial IC) must complete an initial size-up. While in investigative mode, the officer will in most cases establish command. When the initial actions call for an offensive attack, the first arriving officer will advise the chief of the need for transfer of command; typically via the radio.

The transfer of command is complete when it is confirmed and announced.

Staging and Base

One of the first responsibilities of the IC at an emergency incident is to identify the need for and request additional alarms or specific resources.

Efficient management of fire and rescue resources assigned to an incident may require the establishment of a staging area for apparatus and personnel not committed to incident operations.

Staging describes a standard system for assembling apparatus and personnel before assignment at an incident or when they are released from rehab. On incidents where the initial unit is investigating and the IC does not need personnel to assist immediately, the IC may transmit the order for personnel to stage on their apparatus. This allows for personnel to remain non-committed but in close proximity to incident to execute the standard assignments provided in the NOVA Operational Manuals.

Units assigned to staging should be positioned to reach the incident within three minutes of receiving an assignment. Reflex time must be kept to a minimum.

The Staging Manager, if identified, shall report to the Operations Chief. On incidents where the Operations Section is not filled, the IC shall be responsible for staging. The IC or Operations Chief shall designate the staging area. The Staging Manager shall compile a log of available apparatus and personnel located in staging.

The IC or Operations Chief has the option to assign the Staging Manager. In the absence of such an assignment, the first engine company officer to arrive at the staging area shall assume or assign the role of Staging Manager. Depending on the size and complexity of the incident, a single crew member (apparatus driver or other experienced member) or the entire crew may be used to manage the staging function of the incident.

Due to the limited number of truck and rescue companies, only engine company officers or crew members shall serve as Staging Managers.

The Staging Manager shall remain on the command channel, but must also monitor the tactical channel. Units in staging will remain on the command channel until deployed to operational areas at which time they will switch to the assigned tactical channel. The Staging Manager will be responsible for units who are arriving on the scene and have not yet received a tactical assignment.

Effective use of the Staging procedures will:

- Prevent excessive apparatus congestion at the scene and enhance the accountability of personnel.

- Allow time for command to evaluate conditions before assigning companies to tactical positions.

- Place apparatus in an organized fashion and location close to the immediate scene.

- The Staging Manager should begin organizing units by function and parking them in an orderly fashion. This would include parking units on diagonals along one side of the street to allow for easy egress, and to keep a travel lane open. Parking all the engines, trucks, medics, and rescue squads in groups of like vehicles helps facilitate the operation.

Under normal staging operations, the Staging Manager shall advise the Operations Chief (or IC when Operations has not been assigned) as to what resources remain in the staging; the Operations officer shall determine if additional resources are needed and will make the request to communications. The Staging Manager must also keep the command post appraised of changes in the availability of units in staging.

When the IC or Operations Chief has identified a minimum level of resources to remain available in staging, the Staging manager must maintain communications with medical unit performing rehab in order to determine the availability of units and their personnel. When resources cannot be replenished from units already on scene, staging shall keep the command post aware of the shortage of ready units.

As the IC determines the need for resources, the IC or Aide, if available, shall contact Staging and:

- Request the specific resources needed.
- Provide the specific location where companies are required.
- Provide the assigned tactical channel.

The Staging Manager shall then relay that information to the units or personnel that will fulfill the assignment.

Base is the location at which the apparatus is parked and is typically implemented only on large scale, campaign-style incidents. Base reports to Logistics in the ICS structure. For additional information regarding the implementation and management of Base refer to National Incident Management System

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)

The IC is responsible to ensure that the RIT function has been assigned as defined in the *Rapid Intervention Team Command and Operational Procedures* Manual. The unit assigned as the RIT shall announce on the tactical channel their arrival on the scene and confirm the assignment and location. The IC shall echo on the tactical channel the unit assuming the RIT assignment.

The IC must be proactive in increasing the level of RIT capability based on the dynamics of the incident.

Personnel Accountability System

Personnel accountability must be an integral part of the command process.

All supervisors shall maintain a constant accountability of the position and function of all members assigned to operate under their supervision.

The accountability of all personnel operating at any incident scene will be in accordance with the Accountability chapter of this manual.

All personnel, when involved in operations in the IDLH or that require the use of SCBA, shall operate as a member of a team. That team must maintain contact with each other at all times by sight, voice, and/or touch. Each team member should also have a portable radio to allow immediate contact with their supervisor.

Rehabilitation Area

Extensive fire and/or rescue operations can affect the physiological condition of emergency personnel. Command officers operating on an incident must maintain an awareness of the condition of the personnel working under them, and initiate the establishment of a rehabilitation area to prevent excessive fatigue and exhaustion.

The Medical Unit Leader is responsible for providing an organized response to the rehabilitation needs of the personnel operating on an incident.

A Medical Unit may be established whenever deemed appropriate by the IC to meet the needs of operational personnel.

The major factors of consideration shall be to provide for medical evaluation, food and fluid replacement, and protection from the elements for those personnel engaged in incident operations.

A Medical Unit shall be established early during an incident whenever extreme conditions exist.

The Medical Unit Leader shall ensure that personnel are rehabilitated within the parameters and criteria outlined in the NOVA Regional Fire Departments *Emergency Incident Rehabilitation* manual.

The Rehab Manager reassigns rehabilitated personnel to the Staging Manager when ready for deployment in accordance with the *Emergency Incident Rehabilitation* manual.

It is recognized that units will become available from Rehab and may receive another assignment without formally reporting back to Staging. .

Personnel and Equipment Management

Resources are the combination of personnel and equipment used on tactical incident operations. These resources must be managed according to the incident's requirements.

Unit officers shall report to their designated supervisor when:

- Assignment is completed.
- Unable to complete assignment.
- There is a safety problem.
- Additional resources are required to complete assignment.

This will assist in the formulation of tactical objectives by the officer responsible for supervising the operational function.

Instructions for Units Dispatched and Reporting to the Incident Scene

Units responding on mutual boxes shall mark enroute by voice to the controlling jurisdiction's communications center if the jurisdictions do not participate in CAD2CAD. The transmission is to be made on the assigned operating channel for first alarm units. Greater alarm units typically will be assigned to the Command channel. Units should also confirm their response order, and not assign themselves to a position. If a unit is substituted for another, the dispatcher will confirm the position in the assignment.

First-alarm units mark on the scene verbally indicating position and function based upon NOVA Operating Manual procedures. (e.g. "Engine 106 has the water." Or, "Engine 431 has Lobby Control.")

Greater alarm units who have received a tactical assignment must also give a verbal on scene and confirmation of assignment on the assigned tactical channel.

Only the company officer shall report to or communicate with the command post to receive an assignment. Units not assigned by established procedures or those units who have not received orders from command, shall report to Staging or Base and:

- Await orders,
- Organize and brief subordinates before beginning operations, and
- Provide periodic updates on progress of assigned tasks.

Administrative staff officers and chief officers responding to the incident shall report to the command post for assignment.

Agency representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies shall report to the liaison officer at the command post.

Procedures for Units Adding to Calls

In situations where a unit becomes available in the vicinity of a dispatched call, where multiple units are responding, typically box alarms, and the unit officer in charge (OIC) believes they are in a position to respond, arriving on the scene significantly before the dispatched unit(s), the procedures listed below shall be followed:

The OIC of the unit adding to the call will request to the responding command officer over the incident channel of their intentions. Additionally, the unit OIC should give the location they are responding from and where they anticipate arriving in the run order.

> Example for the preferred language: *"Battalion 111 from Engine 106, we are requesting to add on to the Leesburg Pike house fire from Arlington Boulevard and Patrick Henry Drive. We will take the third due assignment."*

The responding command officer will acknowledge the transmission (Battalion 111- "Copy, Engine 106 adding to house fire" and advise other responding units of the assignment changes if the command officer finds the addition of the responding unit will have a positive impact on the event. The command officer may elect to advise the unit adding to the call to remain in service. Additionally, the responding command officer will place the "extra unit" in service if another unit has appropriately added to the call, thereby keeping the assignment to the normal complement.

The responding command officer shall confirm the changed run assignment with the

appropriate communication center dispatcher who in turn will ensure the run assignment is updated in the computer aided dispatch system. This procedure applies for all tactical units including engines, trucks, rescues, and EMS units.

It is important to remember that key radio communication (on-scene report, water supply, & situation report) must take a priority and could be hindered by additional units adding on to incidents when units are arriving on scene. All unit officers shall maintain radio discipline to prevent this from occurring.

For other types of incidents, typically local alarms, where a unit becomes available in the vicinity of a dispatched call and the unit officer in charge (OIC) believes they are in a position to respond, arriving on the scene significantly before the dispatched unit(s), the procedures listed below shall be followed:

The OIC of the unit adding to the call will advise the responding unit over the incident channel of their intentions, determine the location of the responding unit, and place the responding unit in service, if the unit adding is the closer unit. The OIC of the unit adding will confirm the changed run assignment with the appropriate communication center dispatcher who in turn will ensure the run assignment is updated in the computer aided dispatch system.

This procedure applies for all tactical units including engines, trucks, rescues, and EMS units.

Strategic Modes

Incident strategy will fall into one of two general modes: offensive or defensive. The strategic mode shall be announced on the tactical channel by the original IC. Changes in the strategic mode shall be announced by the IC.

Offensive Mode

Offensive mode strategies are used in situations requiring immediate action and commitment of resources to the fire building. This may include interior or exterior operations.

When operating in an offensive mode or strategy, officers must make a decision on their command position. The officer will either be investigating or attacking.

During an investigation, the officer will in most cases establish command which may not be set to one geographic area due to the unit's actions. For example, "Engine 108 is on the scene, side Alpha of a two story single family dwelling, nothing showing from all four sides, and investigating with a crew of three, establishing command."

When the situation calls for units to become operationally engaged, the first officer will request the need for transfer of command. The situation report will reflect the actions of

the first unit. "Engine 203 is on scene, side Alpha of a two story single family dwelling with fire from three windows, second floor, quadrant Alpha and Bravo, advancing a 1¾ inch line, request to transfer command." The Chief will then assign command to another unit or establish command if on the scene.

The first-due chief must make the decision whether to assign command to another unit or direct the initial IC to retain Command until the arrival of the Chief. Command will not automatically be transferred to the second-due engine or another unit. Depending upon response times, consideration should be given to assigning command to a later arriving unit such as the third due engine. This unit is responsible for a side Charlie report which provides a more detailed and accurate report of conditions. By assigning the third due engine, this will allow the second due engine to dedicate their entire crew to the deployment of a second line.

If improper or unclear strategies and tactics are being communicated and/or applied by initial units, the command officer should intervene while enroute. Command officers should **not** assume command while enroute but should directly recommend key prompts or actions to the initial IC.

The IC and/or Operations Chief, as well as all directors and supervisors, must continue to assess the structure, incident conditions, and progress of the offensive attack to determine if units are operating in the appropriate mode.

Division, group, and unit officers must keep their respective supervisors advised on conditions in their area of responsibility.

The IC must not hesitate to change from an offensive to defensive mode when indicated. This must be a decisive and rapid transition.

Defensive Mode

This is essentially a "holding action" used to keep the incident from spreading and protecting exposures until additional resources arrive. The defensive mode is also appropriate when the incident cannot be controlled and the operation must protect exposures until the threat is reduced or eliminated. Typically, command will not be transferred in this mode except on the arrival of the chief.

Once adequate resources are in place, the mode may transition to an offensive mode.

Transition between Modes

When transitioning from an interior offensive attack to an exterior defensive attack, the IC shall conduct a PAR check for the units that were in the IDLH. This accountability check shall be completed prior to the start of the exterior fire attack with large caliber streams. In some instances, the IC will withdraw units from a geographical area (withdrawal from the third floor to the second floor) to complete an exterior fire attack to

knock down a fire. Prior to the start of the exterior fire attack, the units that were operating in the impacted area of the IDLH should have a PAR check completed.

If the operational transition is from defensive to offensive, the accountability of personnel is considered completed when the IC assigns a unit to the task ("E409 from Command, transition to interior offensive attack and stretch a 1 ¾" to the 1st floor.")

Two-In, Two-Out

The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Commission (VOSH) enacted legislation that establishes parameters for minimum staffing levels during initial firefighting operations. These parameters focus on the minimum number of personnel who must be on the scene before committing personnel to enter any hazardous area where there is an immediately dangerous to the life and health (IDLH) atmosphere.

The term "two-in, two-out" refers to incident scene operations where the minimum number of firefighters (two) may enter an IDLH while a minimum number of firefighters (two) remain outside the IDLH area as the "stand-by team" to monitor the activity of the interior crew and effect rescue if necessary.

The Initial IC and Operational Build-Up

The first-due officer, as defined by local jurisdiction, is the initial IC.

The initial IC is responsible for performing the functions of command, which are:

- Arrive, establish, and announce command.
- Evaluate situation (size-up).
- Effective communications.
- Identify strategy and develop an action plan.
- Deployment of resources.
- Organization and accountability of the event and personnel.
- Review, evaluate, and revise action plan.
- Continue, transfer, and terminate command.

Under most circumstances, the initial IC will be the officer of the first-due engine company. This officer shall give a name to command and identify on the radio by that name. For example, "E439 will be establishing Leesburg Pike Command." Until such time as command is transferred, the unit in command shall identify themselves on the radio as Command. Once command is transferred, the unit will revert to its unit designator. (In this example, Engine 439).

If the rescue squad or truck company happens to arrive first at the incident, the officer should consider the arrival time of the first engine prior to establishing command.

If the engine company is delayed, the truck or rescue squad officer should confer with the first due responding Chief Officer to determine who will establish command and to direct incoming units.

Due to the limited number of rescue and truck companies responding and their specialized functions, engine company officers should routinely handle the initial incident command responsibilities.

When the first engine advises the need to transfer command and the Chief will delayed, he will likely assign command to a later arriving engine officer that is on the scene. The company officer placed in the command position will have the balance of their crew available for tasks. The officer should have a general guideline or plan in place in anticipation of this situation well in advance of the incident. Crew unity should be maintained whenever possible. Considering the experience of the crew and the incident priorities, options may include:

- Assist the officer with command post functions.
- In the event the members are of equal rank and assigned to a task without the company officer, a crew leader must be appointed, and/or
- Assign the crew to an additional hoseline with a tactical assignment.
- Assign them under the supervisor of the initial attack line.

Each situation will dictate different needs. Appropriate supervision is the objective. For example, assigning two inexperienced firefighters to an attack line to a basement fire is not appropriate. If the engine officer who is the IC, assigns their remaining personnel to an operational task such as the deployment of a hoseline, the team of two deploying the hoseline will be referred to as their unit designator (i.e. - E439). The engine officer of Engine 439 is Command and no longer a part of Engine 439 until relieved by the Chief and reassigned.

The initial IC will be operating on all three organizational levels, strategic, tactical, and task, so the IC must be efficient in the use of their time.

The officer will state that they will be "command" and assign a name based on the geographic location of the incident. For example, an incident at 200 Prince Street would be "Prince Street Command." By naming command, confusion can be reduced during peak incident periods (i.e., thunder storms) where several working events are not uncommon.

The initial IC should not normally need to make assignments to other units unless conditions require a change from the assignments outlined in the Firefighting and Emergency Operations Manuals.. On those incidents that are not covered by standing procedures, the initial IC will need to make unit assignments.

Command responsibility rests with the initial arriving company officer until the command officer who will assume command arrives on the incident scene or delegates to another unit.

Transferring command to a responding officer not on the scene creates a gap in command and compromises incident management. To prevent this gap in command function, the command position cannot be transferred to an officer who is not on the scene; including the battalion chief.

In situations where command is transferred via the radio, both officers shall confirm the transfer. Command may be transferred only once at the company officer level.

If the second due engine arrives on the scene and it is unclear if command has been established, the officer shall contact the Chief to clarify the command assignment.

It is critical that the initial IC as well as the chief officer, who will be assuming command, continually perform a "risk benefit" analysis of all tasks to be accomplished on every incident. Considerations should include:

- Life Safety (First Priority) – Risk their lives in a calculated manner to save a life.
- Incident Control (Second Priority) – Place themselves in situations with moderate risk to save property.
- Property Conservation (Third Priority) – Risk nothing to try and save lives or property already lost.

The initial tactics and tasks at the incident are assigned and take place in rapid succession. It is especially important for the initial IC to consider personnel safety factors and tactical coordination when making these assignments (i.e. no opposing attack lines, and no master stream operations while members are operating on the interior).

The following actions establish the basic infrastructure for effective incident command as the incident progresses:

- Voiced on-scene/situation report, which shall include a reconnaissance lap (360 Lap) around the structure or a view of the rear whenever possible.
- Size-up and risk/benefit analysis.
- Formal announcement of the establishment of command.
- Identification of the overall strategy, mode of operation (offensive or defensive) and tactical assignment.
- Assessment and request of additional resources.
- Effective tracking of tactical assignments, units, and personnel.
- Transfer of command upon the arrival of a ranking officer.

Size-Up

When the initial assessment of an incident has been completed, management of the incident begins. Size-up is the foundation of incident management. Decisions made during size-up determine strategic goals and tactical objectives identify the operations necessary to achieve the goals and objectives.

Key considerations when sizing up an incident are:

- What is the problem?
- Where is the problem?
- If fire, where is the fire going?
- Who or what is in danger because of this incident?
- What are the safety considerations?
- What additional resources are needed?

Based upon the initial size-up, the IC should set objectives at fires within the following areas:

- Rescue
- Exposures
- Confinement
- Extinguishment
- Overhaul
- Ventilation and Salvage

Factors that affect establishing of objectives at mass casualty incidents would include:

- Severity of Injuries
- Access to Victims
- Number of Victims
- Location
- Weather
- Accessibility to Scene

In conducting the initial size-up and setting operational objectives, the IC must be concerned with the possibility of incident escalation (increased seriousness or complexity), and shall formulate a plan to meet this potential.

When escalation occurs, the IC shall activate additional component functions of the ICS as required. Safety and accountability of personnel shall be given prime consideration on every incident. This system will allow ICs to use available resources most effectively to accomplish the primary operational objectives.

Radio Reports

The on-scene report gives the initial arriving company officer the opportunity to deliver detailed incident description. The on-scene report should paint an image of the building type and benchmark the conditions upon arrival to other incoming units. The on-scene report should be concise, but provide sufficient information to incoming units to permit for proper apparatus placement and crew deployment. Information provided in the on-scene report should include: water supply information, unit identification and location, building height, occupancy type, and detailed location of what is evident upon arrival. (Refer to the *NOVA Field Communication Manual.)*

360° Lap

The 360° Lap, or building walk around, will allow the officer to view all sides of the building (if possible), and further paint a picture of the incident to incoming units communicated in the situation report. The lap will allow the initial arriving officer to determine the possible location of the fire, the presence of victims, best location for initial line deployment, and any obstacle present that may impede smooth fireground operations. The first-arriving officer shall conduct a thorough 360˚ lap of the structure prior to implementing interior firefighting tactics.

However, situations may occur where a reported life hazard exists or the large size of the structure prohibits the physical lap, and the company officer may determine the need for immediate interior firefighting actions. In this case, a radio report shall be transmitted identifying the need to bypass the delivery of this report from Side Charlie to the responding Command Officer.

Elements of the 360°
Elevation of structure (front vs. rear)
Presence of basement and location of access
Location of fire
Label the floors
Any hazards observed
Presence of exposures
Status of occupants
Access and egress points

Situation Report

The initial arriving officer will compile all of the information that was gathered through the pre-incident, pre-arrival, on-scene, and 360˚ lap. This compilation of information provides the tools to allow the first due fire officer to make the decisions necessary to mitigate the situation that is at hand. All information that is gathered is then relayed to units either on the scene or still responding, and dictates the actions necessary design a

plan of action with all units on the incident. (The elements of the situation report are contained in the *NOVA Field Communications Manual*)

All officers and members have a responsibility to notify command of any pertinent information or unsafe conditions that have not yet been reported. For example, a structure is three stories on side Charlie and only two stories on side Alpha. The first engine may have indicated that they were on the scene of a two-story building. When the first unit gets to the Charlie side, the difference in the number of stories is critical, especially if fire is indicated on the lowest level. People who are trapped and are evident or showing on the rear of a structure would be example of critical information that should be transmitted when discovered.

The initial IC identifies the initial strategic and tactical tasks with the situation report. This is why the situation report plays such an important role at the front end of the operation.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are radio reports that provide information on the evolution of an incident. Progress reports may indicate that an incident is continuing to escalate or is being brought under control. Progress reports should also represent a "picture" of the activities underway and the degree of success of the operation.

Unit reports denoting the progress of specific unit action can be defined by the acronym C.A.N., which stands for conditions, actions, and needs. By using this report model, the person giving the report easily identifies the conditions faced, actions taken, and any support or resource needs.

> **C** – Conditions ("We have a fire on the second floor in quadrant alpha")
> **A** – Actions ("We have one hoseline in place knocking down the fire and the truck is performing a primary search.")
> **N** – Needs ("We do not need any additional resources on the fire floor now.")

The first progress report to the respective dispatch center should be given at approximately 10 minutes into an operation. Subsequent progress reports should be given after each PAR check. They can be much shorter and to the point than the first. However, if the overall strategic mode has changed, the format for the first progress report should be repeated. All progress reports shall only be given on the command channel once that channel is established.

Progress reports are given at least every 10 minutes or more frequently as necessary. Progress reports are intended to keep officers and companies informed on incident status as well as to provide a recorded documentation of the incident. Units that are still responding or who have arrived at staging or base should pay particular attention to progress reports in order to have an understanding of the situation before becoming engaged.

IDENTIFICATION OF BUILDING SIDES/GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

Common terminology is a founding principle of ICS. The ICS uses alphabetical phonetic identifiers for the designation of building sides, quadrants, and exposures.

Used alone, the alphabetical letters are easily misunderstood over the radio. Therefore, the "International" Phonetic Alphabet shall be used to designate building sides/areas.

The phonetic alphabet used by communications centers and dispatchers are listed below.

Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Golf, Hotel, India, Juliet, Kilo, Lima, Mike, November, Oscar, Papa, Quebec, Romeo, Sierra, Tango, Uniform, Victor, Whiskey, X-ray, Yankee, Zulu.

Determination of Building's Exterior Sides

Side **A**lpha: The side of the building, which is utilized as the building address. In most cases, this would be the side that includes the main entrance or foyer, Figure 8. If the main entrance door is not located on Side Alpha it should be denoted in the radio report, "E408 on scene, Side Alpha of a 2 -story end unit townhouse, main entrance door will be on Side Bravo of the structure."

Side **B**ravo: The left side of the building, when facing Side Alpha.

Side **C**harlie: The opposite side of Side Alpha.

Side **D**elta: The right side of the building, when facing Side Alpha.
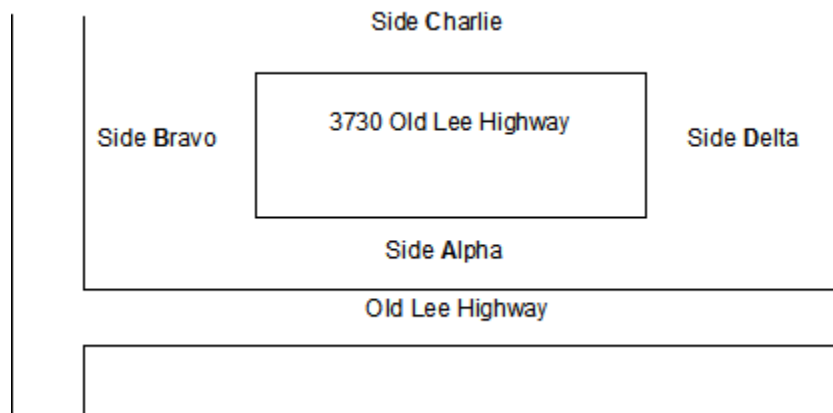
Figure 8: Building Exterior Side Terminology

In those situations where the building location or configuration is unusual, the officer shall designate the sides of the building using a landmark, (e.g., parking lot, swimming pool, etc.)

All radio transmissions shall reflect the appropriate side or exposure. (Examples: "The command post will be located on Side Alpha." "Engine 403 on the scene, smoke showing on Side Charlie.")

When it is necessary, place a unit on the corner of a building to maintain clarity, denote the corner by using the intersection of the two building sides. Example: "Truck 403, set up on the Bravo/Charlie corner."

Geographic Designation

Interior Identification Process

The interior of the buildings shall be divided into quadrants Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta, starting at the left front of the building, Figure 9. Again, the international alphabet shall be used when identifying the quadrants. The floor number shall be used to identify the level of the building. Example: "Engine 403, check the fifth floor, quadrants Alpha and Bravo."
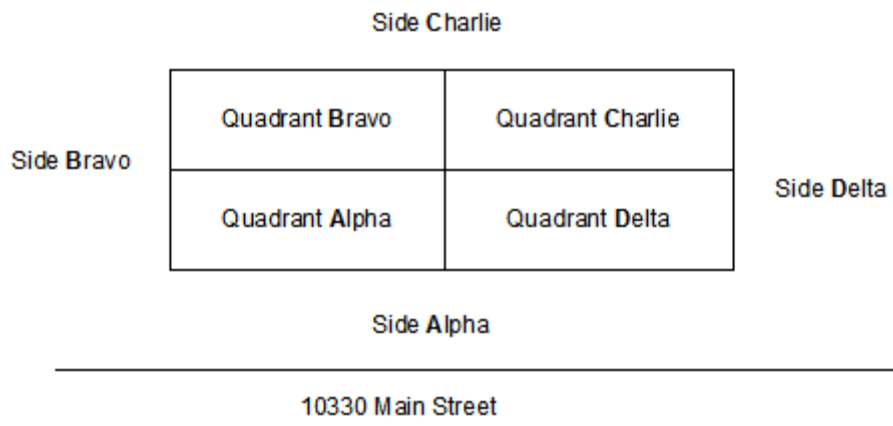
Figure 9: Interior Quadrant Terminology

The wings of the building may be broken down into quadrants or sections by the IC whenever this will facilitate operations, Figure 10 and Figure 11. All company and command officers must be advised of the quadrant designations.
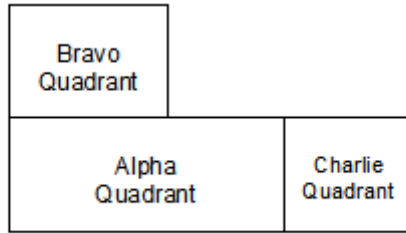
Figure 10: Wings of a Building Can be Identified as Quadrants or Sectors
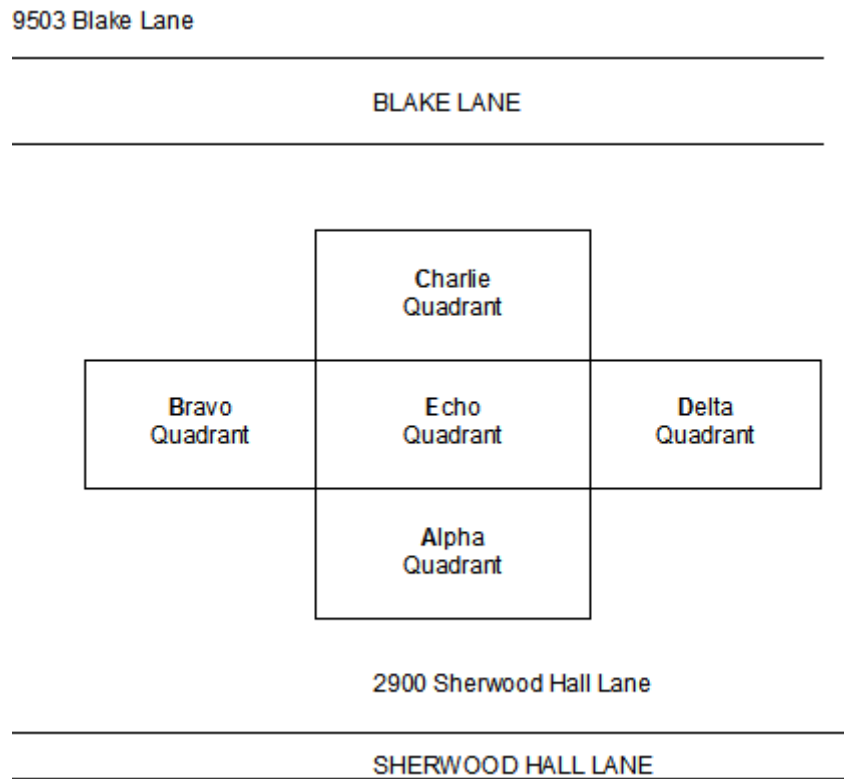
Figure 11: Building Wings Shown as Quadrants

Multi-Story Building Designations

Figure 12 shows an example of designations for multi-story buildings when a Division Supervisor is assigned to that specific floor.

Figure 12: Designations in Multi-story Buildings

Exposure Identification

When referring to an exterior exposure, the exposure closest to the fire building side shall be used to identify the exposure,
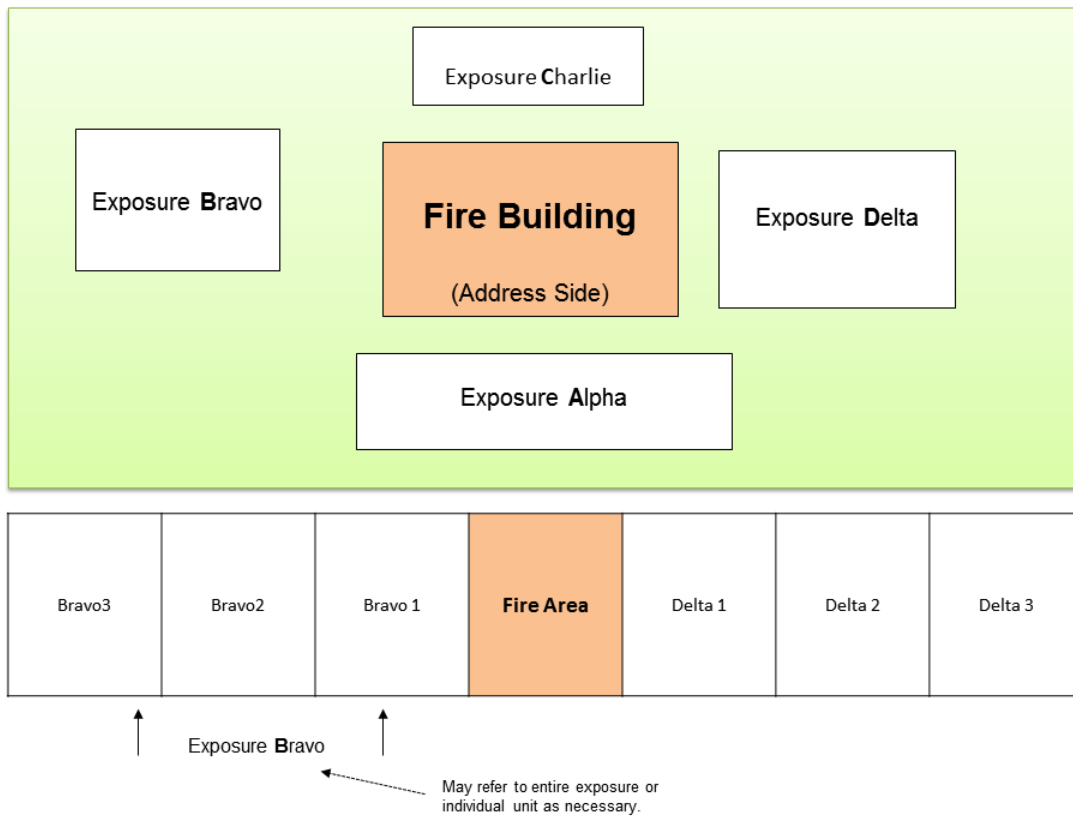
Figure 13: Examples of Exposure Designations

Appropriate Structure Designations

The decision to make an interior attack at a structure fire is inherently dangerous and demands a thorough risk/benefit analysis. This analysis is comprised of the on scene report, a 360˚ Lap, and a situation report, on-going size up, among other factors.

While many factors will ultimately lead to this tactical decision a clear and consistent communication policy of identifying the physical state and declaration on occupant status is essential. Personnel should remain cognizant of the fact that the outward appearance of a structure does not definitively define the occupancy status. For instance, a home appearing to be in disrepair from the front may be occupied with occupants accessing the home through the rear entrance. Regardless of the physical state of a structure, fire department personnel must conduct a thorough search of the structure prior to leaving the scene. This could entail searching through the rubble of an extinguished fully involved home after it is deemed safe to enter and in conjunction with a fire investigation.

The following terms shall be used to appropriately designate structures:

Abandoned -This term identifies a structure no longer being legally utilized. This structure will typically have no utility service, no valuable contents located inside, and may have boarded windows and doors. Additionally, the structure may be in such a state of disrepair that it is collapsing. A structure in this condition would most likely result in exterior defensive operations.

Vacant - This term identifies a viable structure having no contents or activity, empty, having no tenant and devoid of furniture or fixtures.

The above declarations should be made as soon as feasible at an incident. This information assists incident commanders and tactical units operating in an IDLH in maintaining a focus on life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation.

The Incident Command System has been developed to provide for an organized response and deployment of resources to mitigate an inherently chaotic and unorganized event.

Appropriate and proficient application of the ICS is a direct result of frequent familiarization and review, as well as the routine use of the components of the system.

SECTION 2 – TACTICAL COMMAND OPERATIONS

TACTICAL COMMAND OPERATIONS

Tactical command is a function on a fireground, or other incident, that is assigned to provide close supervision and direction to a group of companies assigned to a particular function or area. Group or Division Supervisors typically operate at the tactical level of command. However, Branch Directors may be required to operate at the tactical level of command level as well. The tactical commander has overall authority and control of their assigned area or function. A chief officer best fulfills this function. This allows the individual company officer the ability to remain in direct control with the company. However, it is recognized that there will be occasions that will require the position to be assigned to a company level officer. When that is the case, careful consideration should be to the experience of the individual selected. It should be noted that tactical command is a function and not a title used for communication. For example, a chief may be in charge of the 18th floor at a high-rise fire. This chief is operating as a tactical commander whose radio designator is Division 18.

The purpose of tactical command is to provide a level of command or supervision that:

- Provides closer supervision and direction by an experienced command-level officer in dangerous or complex operational areas.
- Has the advantage of being close to the operation for enhanced command and control.
- Provides for a direct ongoing tactical size-up for a specified operational area or task.
- Provides a level of supervision with the sole perspective of coordinating multiple companies without the addition of unit-level responsibility reducing the IC's span of control.
- Enhances the level of safety in the operation by providing oversight by a single individual, responsible for maintaining a broader ongoing evaluation of the situation.

An example of tactical command is the second-due chief commanding the Division 18 (18th floor firefighting operations) at a high-rise fire. This chief is immediately responsible for direction and supervision of the operations on the fire floor. Initially, this will involve directing and coordinating the work being done by two engines and one truck.

The Need for a Chief in Tactical Command

Assigning officers to tactical command (TC) positions increases and strengthens the decentralized command structure of the IC. Complex and dangerous operations should be provided with a close level of supervision or oversight. As members become engaged in these operations, it becomes imperative that an individual, who is not also occupied with task-level supervision or direct involvement in the work at hand, be assigned to provide

ongoing evaluation of the progress being made as well as with the continual size-up of the situation. Even though a TC is close to the action, it is important that they not get involved in the task-level activity. The TC is responsible for managing and coordinating activities in their area of responsibility; not to perform them. The Chief must keep the IC informed of conditions in their area of responsibility.

It is the responsibility of the officer in a tactical command position to provide the oversight with safety in mind. Firefighter and civilian safety during the operation is of paramount importance. This officer must maintain a continuing tactical size-up while the operation progresses. A TC must make adjustments to the operation under their direction, based upon the continuous size-up.

This individual must be cognizant of activities proximate to their area of responsibility. Information gained simply from radio traffic in other areas of the incident is part of the tactical size-up.

These officers must be skilled in recognizing critical cues. Cues are signs and symptoms that help you make a correct diagnosis. This skill is the ability to identify something as typical or non-typical and is gained through personal experience. This is the basis for an "experienced" officer in these roles. The novice decision-maker cannot be supplied with rules that replace experience. The experienced officer does not try to choose the "most" correct course of action. He instead uses cues, developed through experience, to choose the actions that best satisfy the needs of the situation.

The benefit of assigning a chief officer to this function is that they are more accustomed to managing multiple-unit incidents with a broader operational perspective. It also allows the individual company officer the ability to remain in direct control with the company.

Recommended Equipment

Personal safety equipment should include full PPE, SCBA, portable radio, hand light, and cell phone (if available).

Tools that are needed include an appropriate command board, clipboard, pad of paper, pen, pencil, and markers or other available tools to track resources.

Aide to a Tactical Commander (TC)

If feasible and the incident dictates, an aide to the tactical commander should be considered. This individual must be highly competent with communications and accountability, equipment and procedures. They must be capable of accurately tracking assignments of resources, be knowledgeable in firefighting and rescue operations, and able to think independently.

The aide must have the same safety equipment as the TC. In addition, the aide should also carry a forcible entry tool for team safety.

Responsibilities of a Tactical Commander

A tactical commander has six primary responsibilities:

- Safety and accountability of the crews operating under their command.
- Continuous size-up of the tactical assignment.
- Provide close supervision, direction, and coordination.
- Continuous evaluation of operational effectiveness.
- Monitoring overall ongoing incident progress (this may require monitoring a different radio channel.)
- Update next level of supervision with regular progress reports.

In order to effectively fulfill the role of TC, this officer will often need to make face-to-face contact with the units operating under their command and personally observe the situation. This is particularly important for the officer who is in charge of a division or group. Take for example an officer-in-charge of the roof division. This officer must periodically make short forays into the area of responsibility, to observe and assess fire conditions, structural integrity, and operational progress. As well as provide direction, and make adjustments to operating positions. The TC who is responsible for a branch is less likely to have need for the personal observation within the assigned divisions or groups.

Safety and Accountability of the Crews

A TC must monitor the situation and environment in which the crews under the TC's command are operating. The individual unit officers continue to be responsible for the safety of their own crews. A TC has responsibility for the assigned operational area. Maintaining radio contact with the units as well as monitoring radio traffic is an important component in crew safety for the TC.

Tactical Commanders are responsible for accounting for all units assigned to them.

Continuous Size-Up of the Tactical Area

Once briefed on the overall strategy by the next higher level of supervision, tactical size-up must be carried out as soon as the TC arrives at the assigned area. This entails gathering information on the status of the existing situation via radio traffic, face-to-face communications with officers operating in the area, and perhaps most importantly, personal reconnaissance.

Providing Close Supervision and Coordination

Complex and dangerous operations should be provided with a close level of supervision or oversight. The TC is in command of all operations within the assigned area or function and is responsible to change or adjust tactical assignments as necessary. As units become engaged in these operations, it becomes imperative that an overall evaluation of progress and continual size-up of the situation be maintained.

Continuous Evaluation of Operational Effectiveness

The TC must continuously evaluate the fire conditions, structural stability, progress, and effectiveness of the operations. The TC is in the best position to maintain a constant evaluation of the situation in the area of responsibility and focus attention on the particular operation for which the TC has responsibility. It is this continual evaluation that guides the TC in making changes or adjusting tactical assignments as well as requesting additional resources as necessary.

Monitoring Overall Incident Progress

It is important that the TC maintain an awareness of the operational progress in areas that may or may not be immediately adjacent to the TC assignment. The success or lack thereof, has a direct bearing on safety and effectiveness of the actions taken by the TC. The TC may have to monitor radio channels other than the tactical channel. An example would be the Search and Evacuation (S and E) Group/Branch operating on the floors above the fire would need to monitor the progress of fire attack in Division 16.

Updating the Next Level of Supervision through Regular Progress Reports

The TC must keep the IC informed first-hand of conditions in their area of responsibility. The TC must give an initial report upon arrival at the assigned area of responsibility. Additional reports should be given when significant changes occur, major problems are encountered, or benchmarks are met.

Decision Making Guidelines

Officers assigned to tactical command positions almost always will be forced into making quick decisions with somewhat incomplete information and rapidly changing circumstances.

The process of gaining information for decision-making is known as size-up. The size-up must be ongoing, relevant to the situation, and commensurate with their assigned area of responsibility. For example, the keys to the tactical size-up for an officer assigned to a roof Division should be quite different than a tactical size-up for the search and evacuation Branch or Group.

Communications

Tactical commanders should make an effort to use as much face-to-face communications with their unit officers as possible. Reducing radio traffic ultimately improves communications and keeps the channels open for critical messages. Officers must ensure they clearly understand radio channel assignments and to whom they are to report. (See appendix entitled "Transition to Command Channel with Multiple Tactical Channels").

Some examples of Tactical Command positions include, but are not limited to:

- Rescue Group
- Division 18
- Division Charlie
- Roof Division
- Search and Evacuation Group or Branch
- Ventilation Group
- Extrication Group

SECTION 3 – COMMAND POST OPERATIONS

INITIAL COMMAND (COMPANY-LEVEL OFFICER) AND TRANSITION TO CHIEF OFFICER

The following actions set the basis for effective Incident Command as the incident progresses:

- Perform an on scene report.
- Conduct an effective size-up and risk/benefit analysis conducted through the 360.
- Provide situation report.
- Establish or request to transfer command.
- Assessment and request of additional resources.
- Effective tracking of tactical assignments, units, and personnel.
- Prepare for transition of command.

Transition of Command to Chief Officer

Upon the arrival of the dispatched command officer (usually a battalion chief), the following actions should be addressed:

- Assessment of a suitable location to set up an incident command post.
- Obtain the following information from the original Incident Commander (IC):
    - What was the situation?
    - What is the current situation?
    - What are the strategy and tactics?
    - What is the status of the primary search?
    - What units are committed and where?
    - What units are available?

Announce the change in command.

Strategic Benchmarking

The IC must work to achieve the established incident objective through the use of an incident action plan (IAP). On most incidents, this plan is established somewhat informally. That is, no written formal IAP is developed or distributed. The completion of a $360°$ lap at each change of command, and as needed, can assist in the development of a clear and accurate IAP.

At most incidents, such as building fires, the basic concept of addressing the five basic tactical objectives applies:

- Rescue
- Exposures
- Confinement

- ▪ Extinguishment
- ▪ Overhaul

A critical benchmark is the 10-minute event timer notification. At this point the IC should evaluate the progress of operations. For example, a fire in an occupied residential occupancy should have a primary search underway as its highest priority. By the 10-minute benchmark, the search should either be completed or the IC should have heard what the progress or lack thereof is on this objective.

LOCATING AND ESTABLISHING THE COMMAND POST

A visible command post is vital for managing complex incidents. Under most circumstances, the location of the command post generally shall be in a position where the IC can see the fire building or incident scene. Providing oversight of the incident and the companies operating is an integral part of the IC's responsibility. At times you may need to set up the command post remote from the command vehicle to get a good strategic view of the incident.

Park the command vehicle where it is visible and where it gives the best position to manage the incident. Remember to keep clear of incoming apparatus. A clear view of the incident site is extremely important. Communicate the command post name and location to the dispatch center (e.g., "Battalion 111 will be Main Street Command, Command Post location is on Side Alpha"). It is imperative that while the command post must have a good vantage point, command vehicles MUST stay clear of tactical positions for apparatus. Adjoining driveways or yards may be a possibility as well as sidewalks for the command vehicle.

It is imperative that the IC be able to focus intently on the ongoing strategy, tactics, radio communications, and unit assignments. Operating from the Battalion Chief vehicle and utilizing the mobile radios will provide higher wattage radio devices than a portable radio. If the incident area has sufficient radio towers, the stationary command post located at the vehicle with a view of the structure is preferred.

The chief must do a size-up and confer with the initial IC. Once the chief is prepared to transfer command of the incident, the decision must be made if it is best for the chief to initially position inside the command vehicle or to set up at the rear of the vehicle. If the chief operates outside the vehicle, the IC shall don the IC vest and set up at the rear of the vehicle. Radio headsets, if available, should be used to ensure the IC can maintain full attention to the ongoing operation, minimizing distractions; especially during the critical early phases of incident engagement. An aide is required to assist the IC in order to allow the IC to focus on the current strategy and implementation of the action plan.

COMMAND AIDE DUTIES

The Command Aide has primary responsibility in support of the IC in three functional areas:

- Resource Status
- Situation Status
- Command Post Communications

   Note: A single command aide may not be able to single-handedly manage all three of the primary responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the IC to ensure they are completed and get additional aides as necessary.

Tasks that may be required to fulfill these functions include:

- Determine and track status of resources and assigned personnel.
- Anticipate need for additional resources based upon tactical assignments being made.
- Monitor tactical channel.
- Manage command channel communications and provide progress reports.
- Monitor secondary tactical channels if utilized in the operation.
- Anticipate and recommend logistical needs to support the operation.
- Brief incoming chief officers as necessary.

Arrival of the Aide

The aide in some cases will be in a separate vehicle than the chief, and in other cases they will arrive together. When the aide arrives prior to the chief, the aide shall report to the officer in command and assist the IC with the three primary duties. In some instances, the aide may be able to conduct a 360° lap prior to the chief's arrival. If available, the aide can capture pictures or videos of the sides of the structure, with a Smart device, to provide an accurate view of the building.

After conferring with the IC, the command aide's primary effort should be to set up the command post while the IC maintains focus on commanding the incident. The IC will determine whether to operate from the front of the vehicle or to move to the rear.

Once the command post is set up and ready to support communications, resource and situation tracking, both the chief and the aide may operate from the rear of the vehicle using the command board(s) and radio headsets for incident management.

Resource Status

The aide must set up and manage the accountability system. Proper tracking and accountability of personnel is a major responsibility of the command aide.

The aide is responsible for tracking members and units who are operating, as well as those who are at base or in staging. This includes accounting for units:

- Assigned individually as a single resource.
- Assigned to groups, divisions, or branches.

- Assigned to base, staging, and assigned to rehab.
- Still enroute.

It is a function of the aide to advise the IC as units become engaged, and the remaining staged resources are depleted.

Situation Status

Tracking critical tasks that need to be assigned, are underway, or already completed, is the primary activity for situation status. The aide must be thoroughly familiar with the various command boards used in managing the multitude of incidents encountered.

The aide must document the activities taking place at the incident. This documentation should include consideration for sketching the building outline and showing the location of apparatus.

Progress reports are also a part of situation status. These reports provide a verbal update of the progress of the actions being taken. They also provide a mental picture for units and officers who may be monitoring the situation. These reports are recorded and allow for recovery of the information for evaluation purposes.

Command Post Communications

The aide requests, sets up, and communicates on the command channel.

The role of the aide is to support the IC. The aide is not there to run the incident, make strategic and tactical decisions, or issue orders. The aide operates under the delegated authority of the IC and may transmit additional alarms, directions to companies, progress reports, and relays information. The aide must be proficient in the use of the radio system, supplied electronic devices, such as iPads, MCTS, cell phones, the ICS, and the accountability system.

Additional assistance will at times be required at the command post. The aide should point out the need for such assistance to the IC. This assistance may be in the form of a suppression unit, EMS unit, or staff officers. The command post support staff, under the direction of the IC, primarily will be concerned with managing additional communications functions, maintaining accountability of operational units, and documenting situation status and information.

Special command units are available from the various departments. These units (Incident Command Post Unit, Field Command or Field Communications Unit) also should be considered to support command operations at large-scale or long-term incidents.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ARRIVAL OF SENIOR CHIEF OFFICERS

As an incident escalates or the complexity increases, higher-ranking command officers may respond. Most agencies have procedures in place whereby higher-ranking chief

officers may assume command from the initial battalion chief, usually as greater alarms are requested. The same transition of command information is necessary to ensure continuity of operations:

- o What was the situation?
- o What is the current situation?
- o What are the strategy and tactics?
- o What is the status of the primary search?
- o What units are committed and where?
- o What units are available?

When a higher-ranking chief arrives and is preparing to assume command, the initial aide should be prepared to brief the chief on situation and resource status. The chief officer assuming Command should, if appropriate, assign and communicate a tactical assignment to the chief officer being relieved (i.e. Assign the BFC to Vent Group Leader, Search and Rescue Group, etc.) or assign them as the Deputy Incident Commander. Prior to re-assigning the previous incident commander, the higher-ranking chief must have an update from the current IC before command is transferred.

Assumption of Command by Higher Ranking Chief Officer

A higher-ranking chief officer should consider assuming Command when:

- Upon their arrival, the incident is still escalating, and the initial IC is needed to serve as a tactical commander for greater control of the incident.
- The higher-ranking officer deems it necessary due to the incident (high profile incident, multi-agency unified command incident, host jurisdiction, etc.)
- The initial IC is not demonstrating a strong command presence.
- Improper strategy and tactics are being employed by the initial IC.
- The incident is being poorly managed upon their arrival.
- Accountability is not being maintained and the IC is not tracking units appropriately.

When the higher ranking Chief Officer assumes command it may be appropriate to assign the previous IC (tactical command position or to the role of Deputy Incident Commander.)

The Deputy IC is a position assigned to the Command Post and is a subordinate of the Incident Commander. The Deputy IC may be re-assigned as the Operations Section Chief if the incident escalates. In most instances, the Deputy IC will have the most institutional knowledge of the incident and will assist in the continual application of effective strategies and tactics, Figure 14.

This reappointment ensures seamless continuity of command, while allowing the new IC to address and focus on the overhead issues. This option should be considered for complex incidents or those that could expand to large-scale operations. As the incident

expands, subsequent operational positions, such as branches, divisions, and groups would be assigned under the Operations Chief, to maintain span of control.

Higher Ranking Chief Officer Acting as a Senior Advisor

The higher-ranking chief officer may decide to act as a senior advisor to the current IC instead of assuming command. In the role of senior advisor, the higher-ranking chief should consider the following issues:

- Complete a lap of the structure to assess fire conditions, unit actions, and structure stability, then provide a report back to IC on findings.
- Review and evaluate the incident action plan, and suggest any needed changes.
- Provide ongoing review of the overall incident.
- Review the organizational structure, and suggest change or expansion to meet the incident needs.
- Provide liaison with other city/county agencies and officials, outside agencies, and property owners and/or tenants.
- Forecast and react to the effect this incident will have on the community.
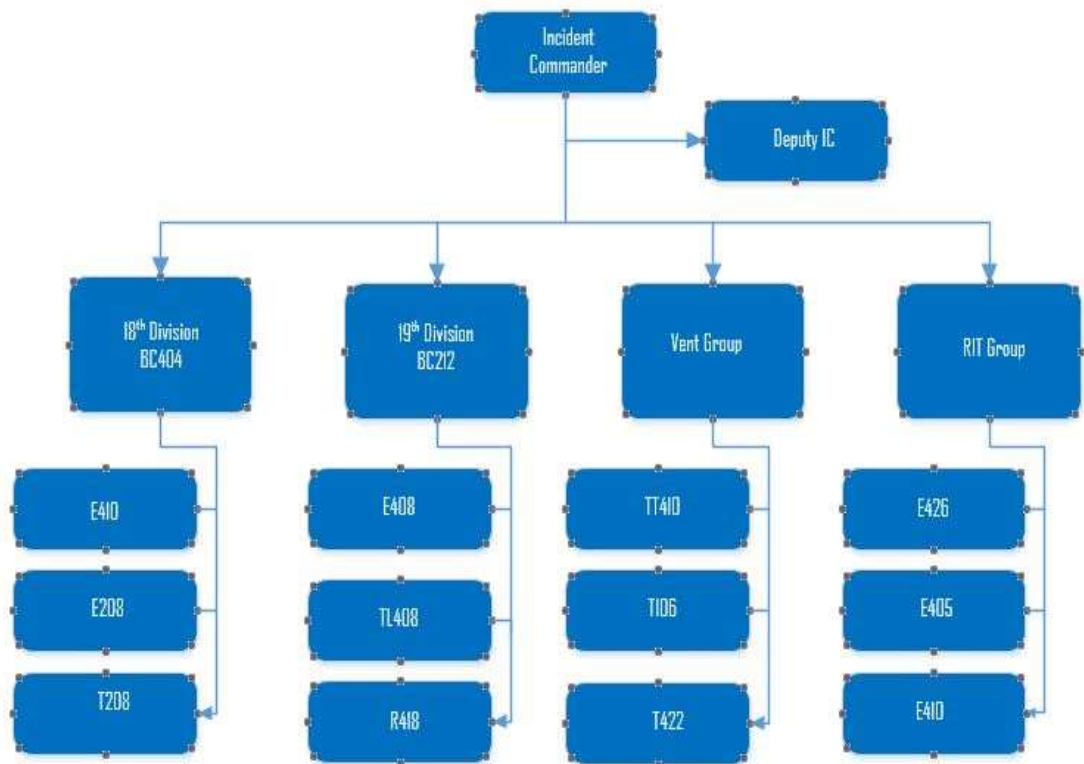
Figure 14. Example of expanded incident with appropriate span of control.

Another option would be to assign the battalion chief to the Planning Section Chief. By assigning the original IC to the Planning Section, historical knowledge of what has taken place at the incident will be maintained at the command post. In this case, the command post support staff assigned to Resource and Situation Status would continue to assist under the Planning Section.

Use of Extra Alarm Battalion Chiefs

Additional arriving chief officers will be used to fill ICS general staff positions, to manage tactical units within a branch, division, or group, or to assist with command post operations.

NOVA ICS Boards

Click HERE for Approved NOVA ICS Boards that are maintained in the NVERS repository.

ICS Command Board

The Incident Command Board is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. NOVA Incident Command Board

The incident command board allows for tracking of resources, notation of operational tasks, (i.e. water supply, first hoseline deployment, and search, etc.), tracking on any patients, incident benchmarks for maintaining awareness of air supply and PAR checks. As the incident may escalate and the command post may expand, the incident command board also allows for the rapid transfer of information from the initial incident commander's command board, to a larger version of the same board, located in the rear of the chief's vehicle or command vehicle. This board is intended to be used on many events as a stand-alone command board.

NIMS Organization Chart

Unit and intermediate command positions and assignments would be tracked on the organizational chart. Velcro passport identifiers or erasable markers can be used to fill in information. This chart allows the span of control to be continually assessed.

Resource Status / Accountability Board

The Resource Status/Accountability Board, division or group assignments, as well as other operational areas (i.e. Staging, Base of Operations, Rehab, etc.) would be tracked on this chart.

The name of the assignment would be labeled in the top row of each column. The name of the officer of the unit would be labeled in the second row.

Units assigned to each location/activity would be denoted on the left side of the lower rows of each column, with the assigned activity denoted to the right, if applicable.

Incident Situation Status

Pertinent incident information should be filled in on the top lines of the chart. Of singular importance is the identification of the current mode of operation. All subordinate strategic and tactical decisions should conform to this constraint.

A list of tactical and support considerations is denoted on the left of the chart.

Radio channel assignments should be identified and tracked, in particular the initial tactical channel, which is identified at dispatch. The command channel should be requested and utilized once the command post is established and staffed. However, in cases where a second alarm is transmitted, prior to the arrival of the first chief and formation of the command post, the command channel shall be assigned and announced to the 2nd alarm units. All greater alarm units shall monitor both the tactical and the command channels. The controlling dispatch center shall monitor the command channel for any traffic. The first-due engine on the 2nd alarm is still responsible for establishing a staging area, unless the IC assigns that unit directly to a tactical assignment. Otherwise,

the first engine to arrive at the staging area will assume responsibility for establishing staging.

Incident Site Sketch

A general sketch of the incident site and building(s) should be drawn. Unit placement, hydrant(s), standpipe connections, supply line, hoseline layouts, and other pertinent information should be illustrated.

Support areas such as staging, base, rehab, etc., should be identified.

General building dimensions should be estimated.

The sketch is useful in apprising unit and command officers of ongoing operations as they report in and assume assigned tactical responsibilities.

The sketch also provides useful information, after the incident, for critiques or other follow-up. A digital camera can be used to take a picture of each command board to document the event.

Displays

Displays are vitally important for briefings that take place during incident operations; especially in long duration incidents requiring multiple operational periods. Usually command officers from the off-going shift are brought together with their counterparts from the on-coming shift to provide continuity of operations. Display charts of the ICS command boards may be available in a larger size. These can be used in briefing areas to depict the incident organization, resources, situation status, area site sketch or other related information for visual reference to a larger audience. Computer-generated displays and photo enlargements, with the use of LCD projectors, can also be used to enhance information exchange.

Vests

Individuals assuming a command assignment must be visually conspicuous on the incident scene. Use of the ICS vests ensures that personnel operating at the incident site can identify and interact effectively with the command staff.

The support staff at the command post should ensure assigned command positions are provided with a vest at the time of the assignment, if feasible. In most cases, the person being assigned has reported to the command post to receive the assignment and incident information. A vest can be provided immediately. In some cases, where appointment is made via radio transmissions, the command post support staff should attempt to provide the appropriate vest by runner.

Officers in tactical command positions should NOT use a vest if they will be entering an IDLH environment. Vests can compromise the effectiveness of personal protective equipment.

Command vehicles should carry a minimum complement of ICS vests to accommodate initial command assignments. A minimum complement on the initial command vehicle should include:

- Incident Commander
- Deputy Incident Commander
- Command Aide
- Branch Director(s)
- Division/Group Supervisor
- Public Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Staging and Base Officer
- Water Supply Group Supervisor
- RIT Group Supervisor
- EMS Branch

A full complement of all identified ICS vests should be carried in the agency senior command vehicle(s), such as an on-duty Operations Deputy Chief, etc., as well as on any command units, P.O.D.'s, or support vehicles. A comprehensive list of ICS vests needed for a larger scale incident or campaign can be found in NFPA 1561.

It is recommended that units utilize the six different color vests in multiple configurations, allowing for the insertion of assignment-specific placard. The placards should be laminated, and double-sided which would allow for each placard to be used for various positions. The color-coded vests should be:

- Royal Blue
- Blue with two white stripes
- White
- Red
- Green
- Orange with one white stripe

Identification Flag or Light

A green light or flags should be used to identify the Command Post. Other functional areas may be set up to accomplish management of the incident, but they need not be identified by flags or their personnel identified by vests.

SECTION 4 – PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability procedures enhance the safety of firefighters operating on emergency incidents by providing the Incident Commander with a system to track the number of members and their areas of operation. This information is vital, especially when an evacuation occurs or a serious event happens that requires immediate accounting for all members involved.

The Personnel Accountability System is initiated when the first unit arrives on the scene and continues until the IC determines it is no longer necessary. Accountability responsibilities expand as the Incident Command System expands. Accountability procedures shall be strictly followed to ensure the effectiveness of the system and the safety of all members.

The Personnel Accountability System in no way reduces the company officer's primary responsibility to supervise crew members, provide for their safety, and maintain communication with Command.

Passports, unit rosters, and unit command boards shall be considered part of apparatus inventory and shall be maintained as such. Nametags shall be considered an issued item of personal protective equipment. All members are responsible for these items. An inspection of the accountability system components shall be included in the daily check of all apparatus.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Nametags

Every member shall be issued six nametags. The tags shall have the first initial and last name, jurisdiction identification, and a star of life for all ALS providers. Nametags shall be color-coded as follows:

- **White/Black Letters-**Any officer who is certified to enter an IDLH environment.
- **Blue/White Letters-**EMS certified personnel who are not certified to enter an IDLH environment. This would include EMS officers who are not certified to enter an IDLH environment.
- **Yellow/Black Letters-**Any member (FF, D/O, Tech, etc.) who is certified to enter an IDLH environment
- **Red/White Letters-**Members who are not certified EMS, fire, or not certified to enter an IDLH environment (recruits, red hats, etc.)

Members shall store their nametags under the brims of their helmets when not in use.

Unit Designator

A white unit designator shall be placed on each passport as well as each unit roster. In addition, command vehicles shall also carry a supply of unit designators for all NOVA fire and EMS vehicles. The unit designator is the same size as the nametags.

Helmet Identification

Every helmet shall be marked with a unit identification designator to identify the member's current assigned unit.

Helmet Shields/Fronts

Each member shall, at the beginning of shift, assure they have the correct helmet shield/front affixed to the front of their helmet, identifying the unit they are assigned. Listed below is the color scheme that shall be used.

- Red Identifies the Engine.
    - Crew Members – red background with white numbers.
    - Officer – white background with red numbers.

- Green Identifies the Truck.
    - Crew Members – green background with white numbers.
    - Officer – white background with green numbers.

- Black Identifies the Rescue.
    - Crew Members – black background with white numbers.
    - Officer – white background with black numbers.

- Blue Identifies the Medic/Ambulance.
    - Crew Members – blue background with white numbers.
    - Officer – white background with blue numbers.

- Yellow Identifies FMO, Safety, OPS, TRNG and Support Staff.
    - Non-officers – yellow background with white letters.
    - Officer – white background with yellow letters.
    - All support staff will have yellow background with white letters.

- Gold Identifies Chief Officers.
    - White background with gold numbers/letters

Passport

The primary passport will be constructed of Velcro (2-inch x 4-inch), with one removable and one permanently affixed unit designator tag. The nametags of members who normally will be remaining outside the hazard area, such as vehicle drivers, shall be placed upside-down on the passport.

Some companies may also carry a second passport with the unit designator, followed by the letter X. This allows the unit officer the flexibility of having two teams, if staffing permits. Command must be notified and approve the request when a company splits into two teams to work in two distinctly separate areas or functions in the IDLH. The team using the X passport shall use the term X-ray when communicating by radio, for example, "Truck 208 X-ray." X-ray will be used to distinguish reference to a unit's second crew. The leader of the X-ray team will then report to the next higher level of supervision in the ICS. Command will often need to assemble a separate passport for the X-ray team as this split often occurs once units are operating.

Unit Rosters

Unit Rosters shall be 2-inch by 4-inch pieces of Velcro that is attached to either the dash or the officer's door of every unit. It will have one unit designator permanently affixed and one removable unit identification tag. The unit roster will contain the names of all members who are assigned to staff that particular unit.

Command Post Passport Drop-Off Point

The Command Post will be the drop off location for all passports of units not engaged in operations prior to the arrival of the chief officer. The passports for the units engaged prior to the chief's arrival will be collected by a unit or personnel (i.e. runner) assigned by the IC. Passport collection should not hinder any initial efforts to mitigate the incident in the early stages. Passport drop off information should <u>not</u> be conveyed in the on scene or situation report unless there is an exception.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Personnel Accountability System shall be implemented on all emergency incidents when members are operating in an IDLH, hazardous area, when using SCBA, or at the discretion of the IC. Members reporting for duty shall take two of their nametags and place one each in the following areas:

- The Unit Roster located on the dash or officer's door of their assigned apparatus.
- The Passport of the assigned unit.

Members shall remove the nametags of firefighters they relieved.

The unit officer's nametag shall be attached to the top of the Unit Roster and Passport, underneath the unit designator. The driver's nametag shall be placed under the Officer's tag. The nametags of members who will normally be remaining outside the hazard area, such as vehicle drivers, shall be placed upside down on the passport and unit roster.

Members shall place the Unit Identification Designators and proper helmet shield/front on their helmets.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

IC Responsibility

The IC is responsible for ensuring the passports are collected from the on-scene apparatus or from the designated drop-off point. Passports will be placed at a designated passport collection area at the Command Post. Unit designators will be used on the appropriate command board.

Division/Group Supervisor Responsibility

The Division/Group Supervisor must maintain accountability of the units assigned to their area of responsibility. Division/Group Supervisors should utilize the command board with passports for the units assigned to that particular division/group.

It is the responsibility of the division/group supervisor to advise command when units are moving between divisions/groups.

Example: "Command from Staging, Engine 324 is leaving Staging going to Division 2." Command shall advise Division 2 and note the location change on the appropriate Command Board.. The Division 2 officer will advise command when Engine 324 arrives.

Remote Entry

When units must enter a hazardous area, or presumed hazardous area, remote from the initial passport drop-off point, unit officers shall place their passports on the driver's door of the first unit at the remote entry point. This new information needs to be conveyed by the IC for a general announcement. Other units entering at that point shall place passports at the designated remote drop-off point. Routinely, this will not apply to 1st alarm or initial arriving units.

The tracking of those units at a remote entry point shall become the responsibility of the IC until a division/group is in place.

An example would be units entering a shopping mall at the opposite side of the command post.

Withdrawal

During the course of a firefight, conditions within a structure may change to the point that precludes fire department personnel from continuing to operate in that specific area. As an example, this may be an area in danger of isolated collapse, advancing fire conditions, or temporary loss of water supply. The IC or company officer may order a withdrawal.

A withdrawal is coordinated with specific direction on the relocation of units and their equipment, operating from an area deemed untenable, to a specific area deemed safe to continue operations.

A specific fireground example would be a temporary loss of water for units operating on the 8th floor of a high rise. The IC would order a withdrawal of personnel on the 8th floor to the protection of a stairwell. The IC shall conduct a PAR check for the units that were in the IDLH to confirm units withdrew appropriately. Once water is re-established, the offensive attack would commence, and units would advance.

Emergency Evacuation of Personnel

Should it become necessary to evacuate operating personnel immediately from an unsafe structure, the following evacuation procedure shall be initiated:

- The command post shall be notified immediately of the unsafe condition or situation.
- The incident commander immediately shall direct all units to evacuate the structure on the operations channel prior to ordering the controlling dispatch center to make the announcement. At this time, operating units without a hoseline will cease what they are doing and immediately remove themselves from the structure or from the unsafe area. The engine company should maintain a hoseline in place to protect the evacuation of those personnel.
- The command post shall order the controlling dispatch center to make an evacuation announcement. The command post also shall advise the controlling dispatch center of any specifics deemed necessary to be included in the announcement.
- The controlling dispatch center shall announce over the operating channel(s) for all personnel to evacuate the specified area. Immediately after the general announcement, the dispatch center shall activate the evacuation signal for 15 seconds. The command post shall ensure the evacuation announcement and evacuation signal are broadcast over the non-repeating channels.
- Simultaneously, while the evacuation signal is being transmitted, all staffed apparatus operating in the immediate area shall sound the air horns continuously for 15 seconds.
- After the evacuation signal and air horns have stopped, the dispatch center shall repeat the evacuation message and give specific information as provided by the incident commander. Additionally, the dispatch center shall further advise all units to hold all radio traffic, except for emergency transmissions, and stand by for an accountability check from the command post.
- All officers on the incident shall be responsible for accounting for their personnel and for being prepared to report same when the PAR check is initiated by command. If divisions, groups, or branches have been established, this information shall be relayed to the command post through the respective division, group, or branch officer.
- The command post shall account for all units in the IDLH and their members by using the Personnel Accountability System. Additionally, the command post shall record each unit's position and status.

- The command post shall initiate a search for any person who is not accounted for. This search shall continue until such time as the person's whereabouts are determined.
- Personnel shall not re-enter the structure or evacuated area until given the all clear signal by the command post. This should include a size up and reassessment of the structure and conditions. Re-entry must have a mode of operation declared by the IC which shall include any safety considerations or instructions.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) Check Procedures

To ensure the safety of members, the dispatch center will announce the duration of the incident every ten minutes. The event timer will be started when the first unit arrives on the incident scene. This timer announcement shall be made on the command channel once that channel is operational.

Example: " King Street Command from Alexandria, you have been operating on the scene for ten minutes." This shall continue until command advises that the timer is no longer necessary.

The IC shall determine the welfare of all members operating in the IDLH environment at the first 20-minute PAR check, **and at every 20-minute interval thereafter.** This may be done visually or via radio if necessary.

40-minutes into the incident, all members on the incident scene, including those operating in non-IDLH areas, will be PAR checked by the appropriate division supervisor or incident commander. This shall be repeated every 40 minutes thereafter. An example would be checking on the driver of a water supply engine that is out of sight of the incident scene.

The IC shall acknowledge the 20-minute notification and initiate a PAR check. Example: "All units operating on the fireground from Command, stand-by for PAR check." If divisions or groups have been established, the Division or Group Supervisor accounts for the units working under their command. Divisions and groups should conduct their PAR check face-to-face with their units as much as possible. The results of the PAR check are then reported up the chain-of-command. The IC must be aware that the PAR check done by a division or group will take a few minutes before the results are reported.

If the Incident Commander is attempting to address another situation on the incident scene, the PAR check is to be assigned to another resource to be completed.

Officers shall account for all members under their command and be prepared to report this when called.

The unit officer shall report their status, the area in which they are operating, and indicate the number of crew members operating in the IDLH. If there are crew members operating outside the IDLH, this shall also be identified in the report.

Example: Engine 208 responds to a scene with a total of three people. The officer and bucket person enter the hazard zone while the driver remains outside with the engine. At each PAR check the unit officer will respond, "E-208 is par, operating on the second floor, quadrant Bravo, two in, driver is outside."

Divisions and groups must report which units are operating under their command.

The IC shall be responsible for the welfare of units/members not assigned to a branch/division/group, outside truck person, or engine driver. When called by the IC, these units/people shall respond with their status and location; for example, "E208 driver is PAR at the hydrant."

After all elements of the command structure have been PAR checked, the IC shall document the time and note on the command board that all members were accounted for, and those members who were not.

If any units were not accounted for during the PAR check, the IC, Branch Director, or Division/Group Supervisor, as appropriate, shall recall the missing unit(s). This shall be done on the assigned tactical channel as well as on the Safety Channel, which is channel "O" throughout Northern Virginia. If there is no success in contacting the missing unit(s), the RIT shall immediately be deployed. Operations shall be conducted in accordance with the NOVA *Rapid Intervention Team Command and Operational Procedures* manual.

NOTE: An unaccounted member or crew shall not stop PAR check from other elements of the command structure. The IC can assign a resource (Ex., R.I.T.) to check on the unaccounted crew, but PAR check must continue to determine if more than one person or crew is unaccounted for.

Branch Directors or Division/Group Supervisors shall attempt to locate missing members or units within their own areas. All units operating in the command structure shall maintain their current positions and assignments unless otherwise directed.

The IC may initiate a PAR check to check the status of members at any time they deem necessary. Some situations in which this **must** be done include, but are not limited to:

- Report of a member or crew missing or trapped.
- When a unit/crew cannot be contacted in the IDLH after three consecutive attempts at radio contact.
- Sudden hazardous change on the incident scene.
- Incident conditions deteriorate to a point that evacuation is ordered.
- A change from an offensive to a defensive mode.
- When a withdrawal is ordered and units are directed to report to another area.
- When the incident is declared under control.

COMPLIANCE

A mechanism to quickly account for members must be available to the IC at any point during the incident. In order to ensure the effectiveness of this system and the subsequent safety of all members, accountability procedures shall be strictly followed at all times:

- The nametags shall be considered an issued item of personal protective equipment.
- Unit rosters and passports shall be considered part of apparatus inventory and shall be maintained as such.
- If nametags, unit rosters, or passports are lost or misplaced, replacement items shall be obtained as soon as possible from the jurisdiction's appropriate resource. Company officers shall ensure replacements are ordered as soon as possible.
- Each member's nametags shall be inspected when the member's personal protective equipment is inspected.
- Fire department members shall always operate as a crew of two or more people when functioning in a IDLH environment. A **minimum** crew shall be considered two people and a portable radio.
- No one shall operate alone in the IDLH unless to perform a life-saving measure such as VEIS.
- No crew shall operate without a portable radio.
- Crews shall always go in and come out together.
- Members operating as a crew shall be in contact with the crew "leader" by voice, touch, or sight.
- Ensure operational discipline is maintained.

APPENDIX A – COMMAND BOARD AND WORKSHEETS

| PRI H2O:
SEC H20:
FDC: | RIT-1:

BSMT: | SIDE-C: | NAME FLOORS | LINE-1:
LINE-2:
LINE-3: | SEARCH
PRI:
SEC: | LADDERS
A B C D | VENT : | GAS:

ELECTRIC: | SALVAGE: |

1st Alarm	PAR / AIR Supply												RIT 1/2	EMS TF
	20	40	60										BC	BC
E													UNITS	EMS
E													IRIT	EMS
E													E	M
E													T/R	M
E													M	M
T													SAF	M
T													L/A	M
R													E	E
													T	E
M													R	STAGING
EMS SUP										REQUEST		M	
EMS SUP									RED CROSS		EMS	
BC										REHAB	
BC									Gas Co			
SAF									Power Co			
FM									Water Co			
2nd Alarm									Health Insp			
E									Bldg Insp			
E									Police			
E									VDOT			
T											
M									PATIENTS	UNITS	
EMS									P1 M-F-A-J		
BC									P2 M-F-A-J		
SAF									P3 M-F-A-J		
MAU									P4 M-F-A-J		
CAN											
Tanker TF											
E											
TK											
TK											
TK											
BC			B2	B1	FIRE UNIT	D1	D2	ADDRESS:		CHANNEL:		

All remaining approved ICS boards for use in the NOVA region are available on the
NVERS Website are located in the shared folder.

Click HERE for Approved NOVA ICS Boards

THE FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

- Contact controlling communications center.
- Confirm the address or location of the incident.
- Define commitment of resources.
- Define the hazard.
- Describe the building or involved area.
- Define strategic mode.
- Status of search.
- Define extent of involvement or hazard.
- Brief description of major tactical operations.
- Describe the level of containment of the fire or hazard.
- Describe the fireground layout or operational area.
- Estimate time prediction for holding units.

PROGRESS REPORT TO BE DELIVERED ON COMMAND CHANNEL
(*Items in italics and enclosed in parentheses are provided as examples.*)

_____ Command to (*proper jurisdiction*)

At _____ (*address*)

We are using _____ (*2 and 1, all units, etc.*)

For (*fire, smoke condition*) on the _____ floor.

Building is a _____ story, (*commercial, SFD, multiple family*)
of _____ (*wood-frame, fire-resistive, etc.*) construction.

We are currently in a _____ (*offensive, defensive*) mode.

Primary search is _____ (*in progress, negative, etc.*)

Fire is on _____ floors with _____ % involvement.

The fire situation is _____ (*advancing, under control*).

We will be holding units for _____ (*time estimate*).

At 20 minutes and every 20 minutes thereafter:

Accountability status is _____ (*underway, complete*).

All units are PAR or _____ (*provide exceptions*).

APPENDIX B – TRANSITION TO A COMMAND CHANNEL WITH MULTIPLE TACTICAL CHANNELS

1. Command established by first arriving unit on the assigned Tactical Channel.
2. Transfer of Command from initial IC to the Battalion Chief on the Tactical Channel.
3. Command Channel is to be requested on working incidents after arrival of staff assistance/aide (dispatcher, staging, rehab, and units on additional alarms on the Command Channel).
4. IC remains on the initial Tactical Channel, Aide on Command Channel, RIT monitors the Tactical and "O" Safety Channels.
5. On large incident a higher ranking chief officer will assume Command and the person (aide) communicating on the Command Channel may be assigned to the new IC to continue communications on this channel.
6. If the higher-ranking Chief does not assume command, the initial IC will continue in charge of the branch/divisions/groups assigned to the original Tactical Channel. Units operating on this channel continue to refer to this position as Command.
7. Communications at the CP between initial IC and the new IC will normally be face to face.
8. If additional Tactical Channels are assigned to specific branches or divisions/groups, these leaders need an aide with a radio, to monitor and communicate with the IC, or Aide, on the Command Channel.
9. If the IC appoints an Operations Section Chief, it is recommended this position take over the Tactical Channel and use the radio terminology of Operations.
10. The IC (operating at the strategic level) should at this point, communicate with the Section Chiefs face to face or if necessary on another channel assigned specifically for this purpose. The original Command Channel may actually become the Operations Channel at a large expanded incident.
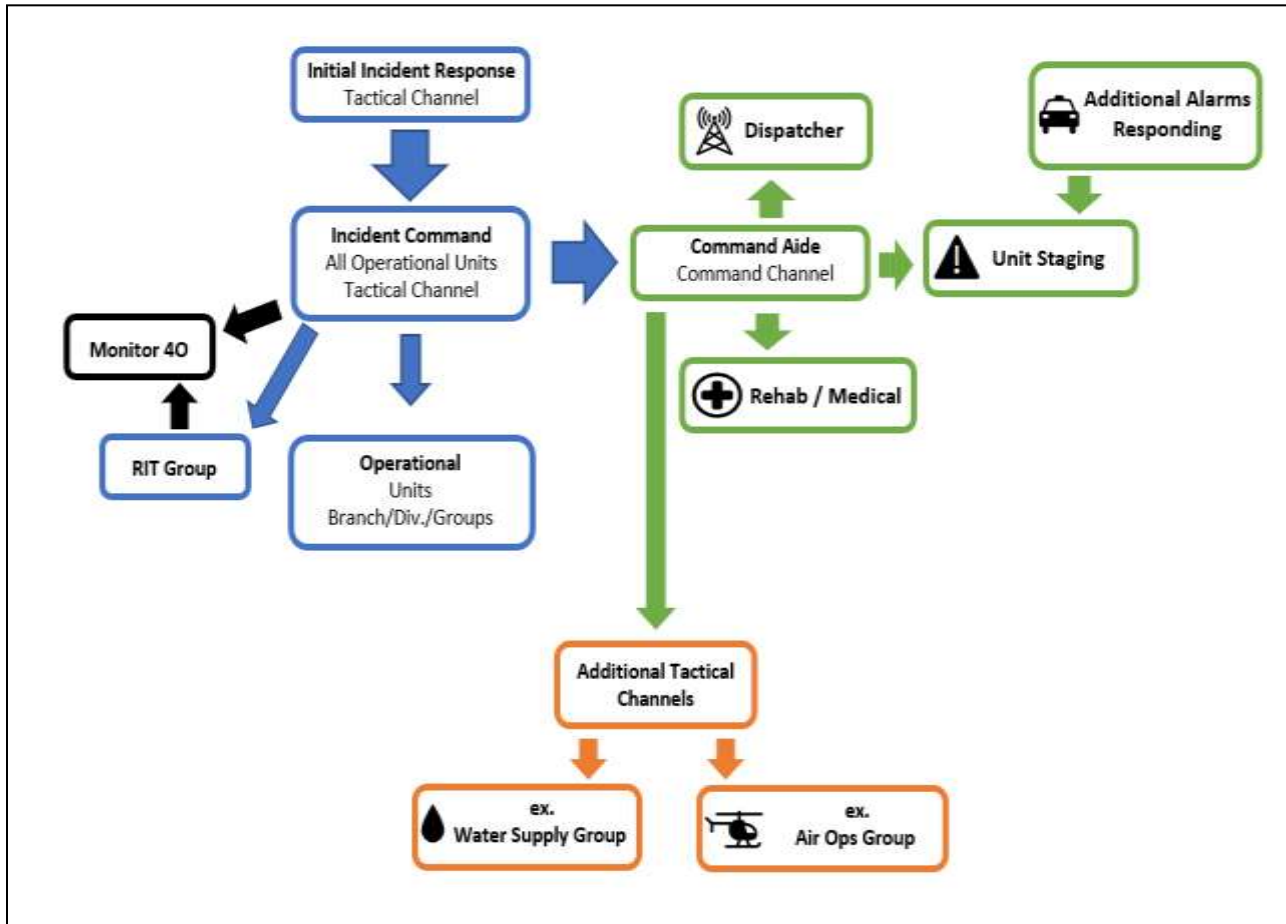
APPENDIX C – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY – NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)

Access to the Department of Homeland Security NIMS Document should be accessed via: www.fema.gov/nims (NIMS Resources/National Incident Management System Document 7.24 MB).