

# Shepherd Tri-Township Fire Department INCIDENT COMMAND

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### **I. Purpose:**

The adoption of this Incident Command policy will provide a mechanism by which all Isabella County Fire Agencies can operate at any type of incident under a uniform and unified command system.

### **II. Policy**

It shall be the policy of all Isabella County Fire Departments to operate under a uniform Incident Command System. Operating under a Model AWAKES. plan will allow for a safer, more efficient and effective fireground operations involving both single and multi-agency incidents.

### **III. Procedures/Overview**

**The Isabella County Fire Department's Incident Command System objectives are:**

- A. To provide for a centralized command for incident control.
- B. To provide for inter/intra agency command coordination.

C. To prevent any "one" individual from being overloaded with more information than they can effectively correlate.

D. To provide common plain language terminology in radio

communication; unit identification; command staff positions; "key" fore ground orders; incident scene orientation; etc.

E. To provide safe and efficient incident management.

#### **IV. Procedure**

The first fire division unit to arrive at the scene of multiple unit responses shall assume Command and remain in command until relieved by a ranking or command officer or until the incident is terminated.

When Command is initially assumed by a company officer, that officer must decide on an appropriate commitment for their company which will usually fall into one of three general modes listed below.

1. Nothing Showing Mode: These situations generally require investigation by the first arriving company while holding staged companies at a distance. Normally, the officer should go with the company to check while utilizing a portable radio to command the incident.
2. Fast Attack Mode: Situations which require immediate action to stabilize the situation; such as interior fires in residences, apartments or small commercial occupancies, and require that the officer quickly decide how to commit their company. Where a fast interior attack is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the necessary involvement in the attack without neglecting Command responsibilities. This mode should not last more than a few moments and will end with one of the following:
  - A. Situation is stabilized.
  - B. Command is passed to next arriving officer.
  - C. Situation is not stabilized and the officer must withdraw to the exterior and establish a Command Post.
3. Command Mode: Situations that require a strong command by virtue of the size of the fire, the complexity or potential of the occupancy or the possibility of extension require strong, direct, overall command from the outset.

#### **V. Passing Command**

In certain situations, it may be advantageous for the first arriving company officer to "Pass Command" to the next arriving company officer or to a chief officer. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving company requires a full crew (i.e., high-rise or an immediate rescue situation) and the next arriving officer is on the scene or close behind.

## **VI. Transfer of Command**

The actual transfer of command will be regulated by the following procedures:

- A. The officer assuming command will communicate with the person being relieved by radio or preferably face-to-face on arrival.
- B. The person being relieved will brief the officer assuming command by indicating the following:
  - General situation status.
  - Deployment and assignments of operating companies.
  - Appraisal of needs for additional resources.
- C. The initial arriving officer will give an initial on-scene radio report and advise that Command is either being assumed, or will be passed. The initial arriving company officer retains responsibility for Command until the next unit arrives and acknowledges the transfer. Dispatch should confirm that the next unit assumes Command.

## **VII. Initial Report**

The first unit arriving at the scene of an incident will give a brief radio report describing the situation.

1. Unit identification on-scene confirming assumption of Command and location.
2. Building description (occupancy, size, construction).
3. Obvious smoke or fire conditions.
4. Any obvious life hazards.

Command officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding unless such communications are required to insure that Command functions are initiated and completed. This requires the person initially in command to give a clear on-scene report and continue to give updated progress reports as needed.

## **VIII. Command Structure**

The most basic structure for a routine incident involving a small number of companies involves only two levels.

The role of Command combines the Strategic and Tactical levels. Companies report directly to Command and operate at the Task level.

(Figure 1)

In more complex situations, Command should group companies to work in a Group or Division. The Group or Division Supervisor operates at the Tactical Level, directing the work of several companies or performing specialized functions as requested by Command. Command continues to operate at the Strategic Level, determining and directing the overall strategy to deal with the incident.

(Figure 2)

The responsibilities assigned to Command often require the involvement of more than one individual to manage Command functions. The officer in Command of a working incident is routinely assisted by other assigned personnel in managing information at the Command Post, gathering information by reconnaissance, assisting with communications, and providing liaison.

#### **IX. Common Terminologies and Definitions:**

<u>Radio I.D.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Basic Duty Statement</u>
Command	Incident Commander	Responsible for overall incident activities. Co-locate with other service commanders as appropriate for incident (i.e. EMS Command, Police Command, etc.)
Liaison	Liaison Officer	Responsible for interaction with assisting and cooperating agencies whether co-located at the Command Post or not.
P.I.O.	Public Information Officer	Responsible for formulating and releasing information about the incident to the news media and appropriate agencies.
Safety	Safety Officer	Responsible for the monitoring of safety considerations involving all personnel and equipment. Makes recommendations on same to Command.

<u>Radio I.D.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Basic Duty Statement</u>
Plans	Planning Section Chief	Responsible for understanding the current situation and predicting the probable course of the incident. Makes recommendation to Command of optional course of action.
Status	Status Unit Leader	Responsible for collection and display of current situation status information and collection and display of current status of resources (personnel equipment, apparatus, etc.)
Techad	Technical Advisory Unit Leader	Responsible for collecting, evaluating, and dissemination of information concerning specialized technical data.
Logistics	Logistics Section Chief	Responsible for managing those units which provide for manpower, apparatus, equipment, facilities, and personal needs in support of incident activities.
Supply	Supply Unit Leader	Order, receive, store, distribute, and maintain inventory of all supplies.
Communication	Communication Unit Leader	Responsible for establishing and supervising the utilization of incident communications equipment and facilities. May be established to handle the radio communication for Command, assign frequencies to sectors, and monitor multiple frequencies for Command.

<u>Radio I.D.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Basic Duty Statement</u>
Staging	Staging Area Officer(s)	Responsible for establishing and maintaining a staging area for incoming resources and holding them until directed to release to a given assignment.
Water Supply	Water Supply Officer	Responsible for the handling of all details in the supply of water at a quantity matching or exceeding fire flow requirements, or advising Command of limitations of the same.
Dump	Dump Site Coordinator	Responsible for setting up and directing dump site operations in a tanker shuttle/folding tank operation. Prioritizes tankers as to their dump efficiency.
Fill	Fill Site Coordinator	Sets up and directs fill site operations in tanker shuttle operation. Prioritizes tankers as to their fill efficiency.
OPS	Operations Section Chief	Responsible for management of incident combat operations.
Medical	Medical (Division) Supervisor	Responsible for the E.M.S. management of elements within a division.
Triage	Triage Officer	Responsible for the systematic sorting of patients by priority of injury or illness.

Transportation	Medical Transportation Officer	Responsible for the staging and transportation status of ambulances based on the injury classification of patients and the Regional Hospital Categorization Plan.
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### Sectoring Description

#### Division

A Division is a geographical assignment at an incident commanded by a division supervisor.

Examples:

- Division within a building.
- Division outside a building.

#### Group

A group is a functional assignment at an incident. Examples:

- Ventilation Group
- Water Supply Group

Divisions and Groups operate at the same level. There is no difference except one is geographical and one is functional.

(Figure 3)

The objective of Staging procedures is to provide a standard system of initial placement for responding apparatus, personnel, and equipment prior to assignment at tactical incidents.

Effective utilization of these procedures will:

- A. Prevent excessive apparatus congestion at the scene.
- B. Allow time for Command to evaluate conditions prior to assigning companies.
- C. Place apparatus in an uncommitted location close to the immediate scene to facilitate more effective assignment by Command.
- D. Produce more effective communications by virtue of reducing radio traffic during the critical initial stages of fire operations.
- E. Allow Command to formulate and implement a plan without undue confusion and pressure.

Staging involves two levels: Level I and Level II.

Level I Staging is automatically in effect for all incidents involving two or more units.

Level II Staging supersedes Level I when ordered by Command.

## **X. Level I Staging**

Level I Staging will automatically apply to all multiple unit responses unless otherwise ordered by Command.

The first arriving unit will respond directly to the scene and make a size-up of the situation.

All other units will stage in their direction of travel, uncommitted.

Uncommitted units shall stage approximately one block from the scene until assigned by Command. A position providing a maximum of possible tactical options with regard to access, direction of travel, water supply, etc., is to be selected.

Staged companies will, in normal response situations, report company designation, standing by and their direction ("Engine One, east"); it may be necessary to be more specific when reporting standby positions in extraordinary response situations. An acknowledgment is not necessary from either dispatch or Command. Staged companies will stay off the air until orders are received from Command. If it becomes apparent Command has forgotten the company is in a staged position, the company officer shall contact Command and re-advise him of their standby status.

These staging procedures attempt to reduce routine traffic, but in no way should reduce effective communications or the initiative of officers to communicate. If staged companies observe critical tactical needs, they advise Command of such critical conditions and their actions.

Pre-fire planning may identify exceptions to Level I Staging with regard to the special functions that must be performed in that particular occupancy. In the absence of such tasks, regular Level I Staging will automatically apply.

## **XI. Level II Staging**

Level II Staging is used when an on-scene reserve of companies is required. These companies are placed in a Staging Area at a location designated by Command.

Command may designate a Staging Area and Staging Officer who will be responsible for the activities in that area. In the absence of such an assignment, the first arriving officer to arrive at the staging area will automatically become the Staging Officer and will notify Command on arrival.

In some cases, Command may ask the Staging Officer to scout the best location for the Staging Area and report back to Command.

All communications involving Staging will be between Staging and Command. All responding companies will stay off the air, respond directly to the designated Staging Area, and report in person to the Staging Officer. They will standby their unit with crew intact and warning lights turned off.

When directed by command, the Staging Officer will verbally assign companies to report to specific locations, telling them where and to whom to report. Staging will then advise Command of the specific unit(s) assigned. The operating Division or Group Supervisor may then communicate directly with the company by radio.

Staging will give Command periodic reports of available companies in Staging. Command will utilize this information to request additional resources.

The Staging Officer will also be responsible for the following functions:

- A. Coordinate with the Police Department to block streets, intersections, and other access required for the Staging area.
- B. Ensure that all apparatus is parked in an appropriate manner.
- C. Maintain a log of companies available in the Staging Area and inventory all specialized equipment that might be required at the scene.
- D. Progress reports to Command indicating number and type of units available.
- E. Assume a position that is visible and accessible to incoming and staged companies. This will be accomplished by leaving the red lights operating.
- F. In some cases, the Staging Officer may have to indicate best direction of response and routing for responding companies to get into the Staging Area.

Groups or Divisions describes a standard system of dividing fire ground command into small command sectors.

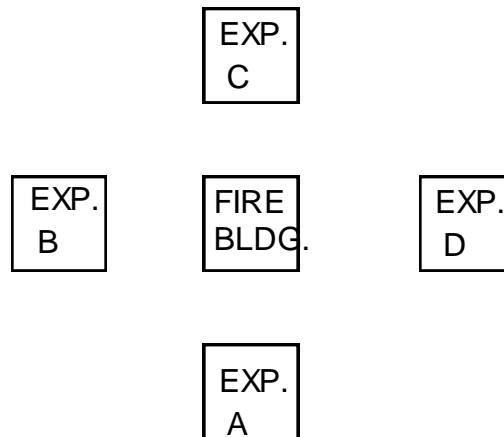
To provide for clarity of location requires a system that everyone knows and is void of individual confusion in north, south, east, and west directions.

## **XII. Exterior Exposure Groups/Divisions**

Figure 4 represents a simplified illustration of a building for determining exterior exposures. As one faces the fire building, the exposure at one's back is exposure A, Exposure B, C, and D are clockwise around the building. So the building at the immediate left of the fire building is exposure B; the one behind the fire building is exposure C and the one to the right is exposure D.

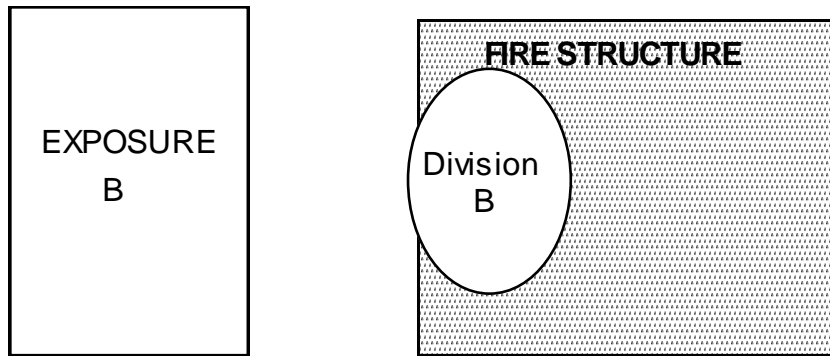
An Example:  
Exposure Sectoring System

FIGURE 4



Fire structure "Division B" in Figure 5, would be the exterior of the fire structure on the exposure "B" side. For example, the order to "Ladder Division B" should result in the laddering of the fire structure on the Division B side. The order to "Ladder exposure B" should result in the laddering of the exposed building.

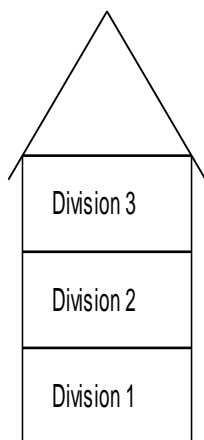
An Example . . .  
A B C D Sectoring System



### **XIII. Interior Groups/Divisions:**

Figure 6 represents an example of multi-story sectoring. each floor is a Division. Each Division would be commanded by a Division Supervisor.

An Example . . .  
Multi-Story Sectoring System



**EACH FLOOR IS A DIVISION**

Floor designations should be added as necessary in multi-story buildings. In many cases, basement, ground, and top floor nomenclature may be appropriate.

Finally, notice that the exterior exposures are lettered and the interior exposures are numbered. This should prevent mixing the two and minimize confusion. (see figures 5 and 6).

Sectors will be regulated by the following guidelines:

- A. It will be the ongoing responsibility of Command to assign sectors as required for effective fire ground operations; this assignment will relate to both Geographical Divisions and Functional Groups.
- B. Command must advise each Group/Division Supervisor of the overall strategy and plan, in addition to the objective of the Group/Division.
- C. In multi-story occupancies, Divisions will usually be indicated by floor numbers (Division 10 indicates the 10th floor)

- D. Function Groups will be identified by the function (Salvage Group, Search & Rescue Group).
- E. Group/Division Supervisors will use the designation in radio communications. (Salvage Group, Division 10)

Sectors will be commanded by Group/Division Supervisors who can be Chief Officers, Company Officers, or any other member of the fire Department designated by Command.

#### **XIV. Responsibilities of Division or Group Supervisor(s)**

- A. Firefighter safety and survival.
- B. Implementation of their assigned portion of the incident
- C. Keeping the next level of command informed of the status.
- D. Coordination of activities.
- E. Determination of need for assistance.

Tactical priorities identify the three separate tactical functions that must be completed in order to stabilize any fire situation. These priorities also establish the order in which these basic fire ground functions must be performed.

Basic tactical priorities are as follows;

- #1 - Rescue
- #2 - Fire Control
- #3 - Property Conservation

It is standard operation procedure to extend a primary search in any involved and exposed occupancies which can be entered. Command must structure initial operations around the completion of the primary search. Primary search means removal and/or safety of all occupants.

Secondary search means that companies thoroughly search the interior of the fire area after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed. Secondary search should preferably be completed by different companies than those involved in primary search activities. Thoroughness, rather than time, is the critical factor in secondary search.

The completion of the primary search is reported, utilizing the standard radio reporting term "ALL CLEAR". It is the responsibility of command to coordinate primary search assignments and secure completion reports from the interior companies.

Command and operating companies cannot depend upon reports from spectators to determine status of victims. Control forces should utilize reports as to the location, number, and condition of victims as supporting primary search efforts and must extend a complete primary search wherever entry is possible.

Command must consider the following factors in developing a basic rescue size-up:

- #1 - Number, location, and condition of victims.
- #2 - Affect the fire has on the victims.
- #3 - Capability of the control forces to enter the building, remove/protect victims, and control the fire.

Rescue efforts should be extended in the following order:

- #1 - Most severely threatened.
- #2 - The largest number (groups).
- #3 - The remainder of the fire area.
- #4 - The exposed areas.

The term "SEARCH & RESCUE" should be used when structuring a primary search over the radio; "ALL CLEAR" should be used only as a completion report.

It is standard operating procedure to attempt to stabilize fire conditions by extending, wherever possible, an aggressive well placed and adequate offensive interior fire attack effort and to support that aggressive attack with whatever resource and action is required to reduce fire extension and to bring the fire under control.

A critical Command decision (both initial and on-going) relates to the offensive/defensive mode of the situation:

Offensive Strategy - Interior attack and related support directed toward quickly bringing the fire under control.

Defensive Strategy - Exterior attack directed to first reduce fire extension and then bring the fire under control.

Command must define offensive/defensive mode based upon:

- A. Fire Extent
- B. Structural conditions
- C. Entry capability
- D. Ventilation profile
- E. Rescue ability of occupants
- F. Resources

Basic Offensive Plan:

- A. Take Command
- B. First line - fast, aggressive interior attack
- C. Provide support activities (ie., ventilation)
- D. Do primary search
- E. Second line - back up first/check for extension
- F. Quickly evaluate success and react

Basic Defensive Plan:

- A. Take Command
- B. Evaluate fire spread/write-off lost property
- C. Identify key tactical positions
- D. Provide big, well placed streams

**Emergency Evacuation Signal:**

In the event that it becomes necessary for an emergency evacuation of a building or area, the following signal shall be utilized:

Long blasts on air horns along with notification by radio to "EVACUATE".

Incident Command should initiate the evacuation signal by having all units sound air horns and advising Dispatch to sound an alert tone and repeat the words "EVACUATE, EVACUATE, EVACUATE!" By having Dispatch make the evacuation announcement, signal is being transmitted on a stronger radio to ensure all personnel will hear the message.