

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 201.01	
<i>Issued</i>	10/03	<i>Revised</i>	04/14
			Page 1 of 5

The purpose of an Incident Management System (IMS) is to provide an effective means of managing fire department resources at an incident scene. It can be used for any type or size of emergency ranging from a minor incident involving a single station to a major incident involving several stations.

It is the policy of the Troy Fire Department to utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) at all incidents regardless of size. All members of the department shall be familiar with the operating principles of ICS.

INCIDENT STRATEGY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

When responding to a reported structure fire, firefighters must conduct a 360° size-up to determine what is burning or “involved” - contents or structure. Incident strategy should then be based upon the following risk management model:

- Risk a lot, in a highly calculated and controlled manner, to protect a savable human life.
- Risk a little, in a highly calculated and controlled manner, to protect savable property.
- Risk nothing to protect any life or property that is already lost.

Once properly evaluated, the incident Commander is better prepared to set the incident strategy using Offensive, Defensive or Transitional Attack tactics.

COMPONENTS OF AN INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Necessary components of an incident management system include the use of *common terminology; modular organization; integrated radio communications; unified command structure; consolidated action plans; manageable span of control; and comprehensive resource management.*

The need for *common terminology* in an incident management system is essential. Under the Incident Command System (ICS), terminology is standard and consistent. Organizational functions are predetermined and assigned units are titled using standard and consistent terminology. Common names are established and used for all personnel and equipment resources conducting tactical operations within ICS. (See Tactical Plan 211.02, Firefighter Accountability.) To prevent confusion when simultaneous incidents occur, and to aid in the identification of the fire officer in charge, each incident should be named using the street name or business name.

The IMS organizational structure develops in *modular fashion* from the top down at any incident. The command function is always established after an initial size-up is given over the radio upon arrival. A specific ICS organizational structure for any incident is based on the incident's management needs.

For example, a simple incident does not require staffing sections to manage each major functional area. The operational demands and number of resources do not require delegation of management functions. A complex incident, however, may require staffing sections to manage each major functional area and the number of resources committed may require delegating management functions.

Integrated communications involves managing radio communications at an incident through use of a common communications plan. (See Tactical Plan 204.01, Radio Communications.)

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 201.01	
<i>Issued</i>	10/03	<i>Revised</i>	04/14
			Page 2 of 5

Effective two-way communication is essential to effective incident management.

Another important component of an effective incident management system is a manageable *span of control*. Span of control is defined as the number of subordinates one supervisor can manage effectively. Guidelines for a desirable range are from three to five persons.

Command officers must anticipate span of control problems and prepare for them; especially during a rapid buildup of incident organization. Effective management is difficult if too many people are reporting to a single supervisor.

INCIDENT COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

"Incident Commander" (IC) is a title given to the person in charge of the incident. It can apply to a senior firefighter or to the Chief of the department depending upon the situation. **Every incident must have an Incident Commander.** Responsibilities include:

- Perform a 360 degree size up of the incident upon arrival
- Establish command
- Determine and communicate the mode of operation
- Establish a staging area
- Initiate the appropriate level of accountability
- Develop and implement the incident action plan (IAP), or strategy, based on an assessment of the incident priorities:
 - Life Safety
 - Incident Stabilization
 - Property Conservation
- Develop an incident command structure appropriate for the incident.
- Assign resources appropriately – crews and equipment.
- Communicate tactical objectives to crews.
- Assess resource needs, then deploy, stage, or release resources as required.
- Coordinate overall incident activities.
- Review and modify the IAP as needed.

Any section or area of the Incident Command System that the IC does not staff, such as Safety or PIO, is **automatically** assigned to the IC.

COMMAND MODE OPTIONS

The initial IC may exercise one of the following three modes of command at an incident:

- Checking Mode – This mode may be used when there is no immediately visible emergency, the situation requires investigation, and the IC will be mobile utilizing a portable radio.
- Fast Attack Mode – This mode may be used for a short period of time when the incident must

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<i>Issued</i>	<i>10/03</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>04/14</i>
			Page 3 of 5

be stabilized immediately and the IC's involvement is required before formally establishing command.

- Command Mode – In this mode, the IC performs the following actions:
 - Assumes a stationary command position in a vehicle or other suitable position.
 - Provides an accurate size up and summary of actions required, and the establishment of command.
 - Assigns a staging area with a staging area manager (SAM).
 - Designates an officer or firefighter to assist at the command post.
 - Uses the Command Status Board for tactical considerations and to track assignments.

COMMAND POST

A command post should be established at each working incident and/or when firefighters enter an area that is *immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH)*. Although Command Posts may vary in type and size at different incidents, a CP provides a central, stationary location to assist the IC in incident command and control. The CP is a field office for management, communications, and data retrieval functions.

The CP may start out in the cab of an engine, then move to an officer's POV, and then to a staff officer's vehicle. It should be isolated from noise and confusion associated with the incident and provide a method of tracking unit status and assignments, i.e., command status board; and have effective communications capability and/or multiple radios. If possible, the CP should provide a view of the incident.

The IC will staff the CP. As soon as practical, the IC should assign an additional officer/firefighter to the command post as an assistant. The IC may assign additional personnel to the command post as necessary.

The CP location should be announced as soon as possible so that individuals with certain functional assignments know where to report.

STAGING

A staging area (Level 1) and manager (SAM) should be assigned early in the incident. This individual will be responsible for assembling and assigning crews as directed by the IC. The SAM will maintain personnel accountability for the incident and keep the IC informed of crew assignments and the number of available personnel on a regular basis. The SAM should utilize additional personnel to assist with these responsibilities. (Refer to Tactical Plan 211.02, Firefighter Accountability.)

If the incident escalates, and the IC requests additional resources (2nd Alarm or greater), the IC should designate a Level 2 staging area for units to report to and await their assignments. This Level 2 staging area will require a Level 2 SAM who must coordinate with the Level 1 SAM.

The Level 2 staging area can be a parking lot, or any suitable location away from the incident. All

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<i>Issued</i>	<i>10/03</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>04/14</i>
			Page 4 of 5

incoming units will then report to the Level 2 staging unless otherwise directed by the IC.

MODULAR ORGANIZATION

The Incident Management System provides a modular framework that may be utilized at minor incidents with limited resources to large-scale incidents with multiple resources. The key element of a successful operation is maintaining span of control as the incident escalates. The following are the organizational levels of ICS:

- **Crews**

The basic level of ICS is the Crew. Most often, firefighters respond directly to the scene to meet the responding apparatus. Crews are then formed on scene by the IC and/or the SAM. A Crew is a specified number of personnel, typically 2-4, assigned a specific task. Once a Crew is formed, this creates the need for a supervisor, typically an officer with a portable radio, known as the Crew Leader.

When assigned a task, a Crew shall remain together throughout the duration of the task. Upon completion of the task, the Crew will return to Staging for reassignment or rehab. It is important that firefighters remain at Staging until assigned a new Crew or a new task. This ensures accountability and will allow for rapid identification of the number of firefighters available for future task assignments.

Most incidents are handled by the IC and one or more Crews, lead by an officer or senior firefighter. Under this arrangement, the IC is able to maintain an adequate span of control over the Crews directly. As more Crews and tasks are required at an incident, the span of control is exceeded and the increased number of Crews requires the IC to create an intermediate level of supervision.

- **Divisions and Groups**

The next level of ICS above the Crew is the Division and/or Group. This level is established when the number of Crews exceeds the IC's span of control, typically three to five.

A Division is a supervisory level established to organize an incident into geographical areas such as exterior or interior locations like the Charlie side of the building, roof, 2nd floor, etc., and supervise Crews working within those areas.

A Group is a supervisory level established to organize an incident into functional assignments such as strategic objectives like rescue, ventilation, salvage, etc., and supervise Crews working within those assignments.

Divisions and Groups operate at the same command level as each other but are independent of each other's supervision responsibilities. A Group's functional responsibility however, may cross established Division boundaries. For example, the Salvage Group may be working in the same area as the Interior Division.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM		TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 201.01	
<i>Issued</i>	10/03	<i>Revised</i>	04/14
			Page 5 of 5

Each Division and Group is lead by an officer known as a Supervisor who provides accountability and coordination of resources under his/her supervision. These Supervisors are also responsible for the implementation of their assigned portion of the overall incident action plan and coordination with other Division or Group Supervisors.

Division and Group Supervisors must keep the IC informed of their progress, or lack of progress, in achieving their part of the IAP, and the status of resources within their area of responsibility.

- **Branches***

The next level of ICS above Divisions and Groups is the Branch. This level is established at large scale or complex incidents with multiple Divisions or Groups. The Branch is the organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major segments of incident operations. The Branch level is situated organizationally between Division or Group and Section.

- **Sections***

The next level of ICS above Branches is the Section. This organizational level has functional responsibility for primary segments of incident operations such as Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. Sections are typically implemented in extremely large incidents of long duration or multi-operational periods.

**Extremely large incidents requiring the establishment of Branches and Sections are described in further detail under National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines, and will require the response of an Incident Management Team.*

- **Safety Officer**

While safety is everyone's responsibility at an incident, the Safety Officer position is implemented to formally manage overall scene safety. The Safety Officer observes building conditions and firefighters' actions from a safe distance and keeps the IC informed of potential hazards. The Safety Officer has the authority to halt an operation when it is necessary to immediately correct unsafe acts or prevent impending harm to firefighters. The Safety Officer, however, must immediately communicate any such corrective actions to the IC and the appropriate Division or Group Supervisor.

UNIFIED COMMAND

Whenever units from multiple fire departments (mutual aid) and/or other support agencies such as EMS and law enforcement are operating at an incident, these departments/agencies shall operate under the Unified Command concept. Unified Command allows for commanders from each agency to work together at the command post to coordinate resources.