



COMMAND POST PROCEDURES

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT

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COMMAND POST

May 2012

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FOREWORD

The goal of this manual is to establish standard operating practices as authorized by the Chief of Department and implemented by the Division of Training.

The purpose of this manual is to provide all members with the essential information necessary to fulfill the duties of their positions, and to provide a standard text whereby company officers can:

- Enforce standard drill guidelines authorized as a basis of operation for all companies.
- Align company drills to standards as adopted by the Division of Training.
- Maintain a high degree of proficiency, both personally and among their subordinates.

All manuals shall be kept up to date so that all officers may use the material contained in the various manuals to meet the requirements of their responsibility.

Conditions will develop in fire fighting situations where standard methods of operation will not be applicable. Therefore, nothing contained in these manuals shall be interpreted as an obstacle to the experience, initiative, and ingenuity of officers in overcoming the complexities that exist under actual fire ground conditions.

To maintain the intent of standard guidelines and practices, no correction, modification, expansion, or other revision of this manual shall be made unless authorized by the Chief of Department. Suggestions for correction, modification or expansion of this manual shall be submitted to the Division of Training. Suggestions will be given due consideration, and if adopted, notice of their adoption and copies of the changes made will be made available to all members by the Division of Training.

Joanne Hayes-White
Chief of Department

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SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The San Francisco Fire Department responds to a wide range of emergency incidents (Fire, MCI, Hazmat, Technical Rescues, etc). In order to effectively manage incidents and provide for the safety and welfare of personnel operating at the incident scene, all incidents shall operate under the Incident Command System (ICS). When applicable, components of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) will also be used.

Command Procedures are designed to:

- Establish an effective incident organization to manage personnel and resources by defining the activities and responsibilities assigned by the Incident Commander (IC) to the individuals operating within the incident.
- Ensure that a strong, direct and visible Command will be established at the onset of the incident and continue through to the conclusion of the incident.
- Provide for a system for an orderly transfer of Command to a higher-ranking officer.
- To ensure that the command structure matches the strategic and tactical objectives of the incident.
- Provide a system to process and document information to support incident management, planning and decision-making.

This procedure will provide information and roles and responsibilities for the following:

- I. Chief Officers
 - A. Chief of Department
 - B. Deputy Chiefs
 - C. Assistant Deputy Chiefs
 - D. Assistant Chiefs
 - E. Battalion Chiefs
- II. Company Officers
- III. Command Post Operations
 - A. Command Post Location
 - B. Command Post Formation
 - C. Incident Documentation
 - D. Duties and use of Incident Support Specialist
 - E. Transferring of Command
 - F. Progress reports (Tactical progress reports to IC, Incident progress reports to DEC)

SECTION 2. INCIDENT COMMANDER

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for all activities on the incident scene.

The IC must:

- Conduct a quick size-up of the situation/incident
- Determine the appropriate strategy, taking into consideration all critical fire-ground information and factors and using risk analysis (refer to the SFFD Risk Management Policy Guidelines Manual)
- Develop an incident action plan (IAP) designed to solve the incident problem
- Effectively manage the efforts of all resources and responders available using the IAP

The IC must identify, manage, and communicate the Strategic and Tactical Objectives (e.g., Fire Attack, Ventilation, and Search) that he/she has identified. The IC is responsible for building a Command structure that matches the organizational needs of the incident to achieve the completion of the Strategic and Tactical Objectives.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMAND

- 1) Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up)
- 2) Identify the incident priorities (Life, Property, Environment)
- 3) Identify the incident strategic objectives
- 4) Identify incident tactical objectives.
- 5) Initiate, maintain, and control effective communications
- 6) Provide and manage appropriate resources
- 7) First Chief Officer assume and announce Command
- 8) First Chief Officer establishes an effective Command Post.

LEVELS OF COMMAND

STRATEGIC

All incidents are driven by the **Incident Priorities** which include:

1. **Protecting Life**
 - a. Civilian
 - b. Department members
2. **Stabilizing the Incident (property)**
 - a. Limit growth
 - b. Minimize property loss
 - c. Mitigate problem
3. **Protecting the Environment** (this is moved to #2 priority during a Hazardous Material Incident)

Once the incident priorities are established, the Incident Commander will develop the **Strategic Objectives**, which include the mode of operation:

1. Offensive
2. Defensive
3. Combination

TACTICAL

Tactical Objectives are assigned to Division and/or Group Supervisors once the Incident Commander has identified the Incident Priorities, Strategic Objectives and mode of operation.

Tactical Objectives are the operations that are put in place to mitigate the incident.

Example: Confine fire to room of origin

TASK

Tasks are assigned to Company Officers and their crew by the Incident Commander and/or Division/Group Supervisor

Example: Hoseline placement, Ventilation, Search and Rescue, etc.

- ✓ **The following two items must be considered at all incidents:**
 - 1) The safety, accountability and the welfare of personnel operating at the incident scene is a priority and concern that is ongoing throughout the incident. **The identification and filling of the Safety Officer position should be considered by the Incident Commander as soon as possible.**
 - 2) Consider the amount of resources you will have available to you when choosing the strategy and tactics that will be used to mitigate the incident.

SECTION 3. CHIEF OFFICERS

Chief Officers' roles will vary depending on the size/complexity of the incident and the rank of the Chief.

Whether a formal transfer of command takes place or not, the Ranking Officer on scene will be responsible for the safety of the citizens and the personnel on scene.

1. **Chief of the Department (CD1)** will always be the ranking officer when he/she is on scene at the incident. The Chief of Department will act in the role of a Senior Advisor to the IC. The Chief of the Department may assume the overall IC position when necessary.
 - **The Senior Advisor's focus is to look at the entire incident and its impact from a broader perspective, to provide direction, guidance and advice to the IC.**
2. **Deputy Chiefs (CD2, CD3)** The Deputy Chiefs may assume the role of the IC position at their discretion, only after a formal transfer of command from the AC. If not, the Deputy Chief will assume the role of Senior Advisor. If a Deputy Chief takes over the IC position, they can either assign the AC to:
 - The Operations Section (The AC will continue to assume control over the tactical objectives and the assignment of all resources.)
 - A supporting role for the Command Post (The DC will assume control over the tactical objectives and the assignment of all resources.)
3. **Assistant Chief (AC)** will be the IC until relieved by a senior ranking chief officer via a formal transfer of Command (Chief of Department or Deputy Chiefs). If a superior officer assumes the IC position, the AC may:
 - Be assigned to the Operations Section position. The AC will continue to assume control over the tactical objectives and the assignment of all resources
 - Be assigned a supporting role for the Command Post
4. **Assistant Deputy Chiefs (ADC)** hold an Administrative Rank which have limited operational authority on the incident scene. Several ADC positions may operate at an incident in a support role as assigned by the IC:
 - Support Services—water supply and equipment support
 - Emergency Medical Services—assist the Medical Group Supervisor (MGS)
 - Fire Marshal—assist the fire investigation
 - Director of Training—can be used if needed as the Incident Safety Officer with the full authority of the Incident Commander to stop unsafe acts.

SECTION 3. CHIEF OFFICERS

5. **Battalion Chief (BC)** will be the IC unless an AC arrives on scene and takes overall command. If the incident is not escalating, the AC may allow the Battalion Chief to continue running the incident for mentoring purposes. The AC would be the IC and a senior advisor for the Battalion Chief. Battalion Chiefs may be assigned as Division/Group supervisors overseeing Tactical Objectives that have been established by the IC.

At large/complex incidents, Battalion Chiefs may be assigned the following positions:

General Staff:

- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Operations Section Chief

Command Staff

- Public Information Officer
- Liaison Officer
- Safety

SECTION 4. COMPANY OFFICERS

Initial On-Scene Report

The first unit to arrive on scene will give a proper on scene report as outlined in the Incident Command System and Communications Manual. The first Officer on scene is the initial Incident Commander but **shall not form a Command Post or name the incident.**

- Unit ID #
- Address
- Description of the incident situation (i.e., building size and type, occupancy, working fire, number of patients)
- Safety concerns/hazards/unusual situations
- Request of resources, as needed

Subsequent Report on Tactical Channel (A7-A16)

Company officers should give a subsequent report on the tactical channel describing actions they are taking prior to the arrival of a Chief Officer. This report should consist of:

- Location—where you are in the incident building/scene
- Conditions—fire/smoke
- Actions—what you are doing
- Needs—what you need to complete your task

Company Unity/Discipline

The area in front of the IC will remain clear.

Company Officers will be the only members to check in the Command Post. All other crew members will stand back, stay together, and await orders from their Officer.

Officers will report into the Command Post and announce **if their company is not at full strength.**

Examples of reporting in are: *Engine 1: 1 & 2*
Truck 5: 1 & 3

Officers will advise the Command Post of any task already assigned to their crew.

Example: *Truck 1 is laddering the rear fire escape*

SECTION 4. COMPANY OFFICERS

Companies operating at the scene of an incident will operate as one unit. Rescue Squads and Trucks may split into teams; however, the unit is still one company with one officer. When a crew splits, the officer must notify the IC of the location and assignment of the teams.

Example: "Command, Truck 7, I've got two to the roof, two to the second floor."

No company or member will freelance on the incident scene. Company officers must know the location of all their members at all times. The IC must ensure that everyone is accounted for and is operating in the area they were assigned.

Company officers shall:

- Give progress reports to their supervisor. The information that needs to be included in this report is:
 - Location—where are you in the incident building/scene
 - Conditions—fire/smoke
 - Actions—what are you doing
 - Needs—what do you need to complete your task
- If a company is unable to complete a task assigned to them, this must be reported and explained to their supervisor.
- Company officers are to report to their supervisor or directly to the IC when they complete their assignment.
- When appropriate, give a face-to-face progress report.

Fire Department Rescue Captains (RC) and medical units will check in with Command for an assignment. In most situations, the RC will be assigned as the Medical Group Supervisor (MGS) with all medical resources reporting to them.

The RC (MGS) may institute a triage, treatment and transport units depending on the size and complexity of the incident.

SECTION 5. COMMAND POST OPERATIONS

INITIAL CHIEF OFFICER ON SCENE REPORTS

- The first Chief Officer to arrive will give an updated on scene report via the radio and, if needed, will name the command with the location of the Command Post.
- The Assistant Chief will report on scene via the radio and MDT.
- ✓ **Company Officers are not to establish/form a Command Post, or name an incident. If an incident requires a Command Post to be established, the 1st arriving Chief Officer will establish and name the Command.**

COMMAND POST LOCATION

The IC will establish and announce a stationary Command Post at a location that will provide the IC the best possible view of the incident and allow resources to check in safely and effectively.

- In most situations the Command Post will be best located across the street from the incident address.
- If the incident is in a building that is located on a corner, the IC may locate the Command Post in the intersection so that they will be able to see two sides of the building and exposures on each side.
- Command Post location at some incidents such as a HazMat, BART/MUNI, High-Rise or a MCI may be set up remote from the incident/building.
- In some instances the initial location of the Command Post may become untenable due to smoke or other hazardous conditions. Also, there may be instances when the initial location of the CP is not giving the IC the most advantageous perspective of a growing incident. In both these cases, the Command Post should be moved. There should be an announcement made over the Control/Command Channel to the DEC and a separate announcement made on the Tactical Channel for all units of the new location of the Command Post.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMMAND POST LOCATION

The IC must announce the location of the Command Post over the tactical channel to all units.

The IC must notify the DEC of the location of the ICP and name of the incident.

COMMAND POST (INCIDENT) DOCUMENTATION

The IC must insure that the incident is documented with the use of the SFFD Incident worksheet. The IC must insure that the location and assignment of all resources operating at the incident are accounted for on the worksheet. The SFFD ICS 201 "Incident worksheet" and/or the T-Card System will be used to assist with the accountability of all resources and personnel. The Incident Support Specialist working at the Command Post will have the assignment of completing the required documentation.

The IC may request the use of additional ICS forms to help with the tracking and documentation of the incident.

All forms completed at the incident will be kept on file with the major incident report at the Division Office for a period of three years.

All Company Officers will complete a post fire analysis report as directed.

INCIDENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST (ISS) ASSIGNMENTS

The ISS shall:

- Track the location and assignments of all resources operating on the incident scene.
- Monitor the appropriate control/command channel.

All additional ISS's will report to the Command Post for assignment by the IC. These duty assignments may include:

- 1) Resource status tracking
- 2) Situational status recording
- 3) Assignment as the Liaison Officer, Staging area manager, etc.
- 4) Additional duties as assigned by the Incident Commander
- 5) If the Incident Commander designates an Operations Section Chief, an ISS will be assigned to work with the Operations Chief.
- 6) The ISS may be directed to enter the building, note the status of the alarm panel and/or check the rear of the building and report on conditions.

TRANSFER OF COMMAND

The first Officer on the scene is the initial IC. That Company Officer will advise and brief (usually by radio) the first chief officer on the scene of the following information:

- Location—where are they
- Conditions—what is the problem, how big (fire)
- Actions—what have they have deployed/completed
- Needs (additional hose, additional units)
- Hazards (victims, wires down)

When the transfer of command is from one Chief Officer to another Chief, the transfer should be face to face and will consist of the following:

- Size and location of the problem (fire)
- Mode of operation (offensive, defensive or combination)
- Current incident objectives
- Actions that have been deployed
- Status of primary search
- Accountability report of all assigned resources, including their location and assignment.
- Status and availability of unassigned resources
- Hazards
- Division/Group Supervisor assignments

The Chief Officer being relieved of command will not be released/reassigned until the transfer report is completed.

When the transfer of command is complete, the IC will broadcast over the tactical channel that he/she is now in command.

Example: All units be advised Division 2 is now in Command

The ISS will notify the Communication Center of the transfer of command and who is now in command.

- ✓ **When the IC assigns Chief Officers to Command positions or Division/Group Supervisor assignments, the IC will broadcast to all units over the Tactical channel the Chief by name and the assignment they are now filling (e.g., "All units—B2 Chief Jones is now fire attack").**

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports fall into two types:

- Division/Group/Single Resource tactical progress reports to the IC
- Incident progress reports to Communication Center

Tactical Progress Reports

The tactical progress reports from the Division/Group Supervisors/Single Resource shall be brief and to the point. These reports shall provide the IC with an update on the tactical assignment given. Basic info should be:

- Location
- Conditions—Situation update (**Important to report on any major change in conditions**)
- Actions—Progress
- Needs
- Hazards
- Accountability

The IC should provide progress reports to the Division/Group Supervisors/Single Resource on any change in conditions that they notice from the outside (e.g., “fire/smoke now showing from a floor above”).

Incident progress reports

Incident progress reports made to the Communication Center should be given every **10 minutes**. Information that should be included in the progress reports will be:

- Location of fire/smoke within the fire building
- Conditions on each floor—smoke/fire
- Actions—number and location of hoselines operating, etc
- Needs—additional resources/equipment
- Search Progress—Primary/Secondary
- Hazards—Exposure threats

A progress report will be made to the Communication Center after one of these events:

- Injuries (civilian/FF)
- Evacuation/MayDay/RIC operations
- Hostile fire event
 - Flashover

- Backdraft
- Collapse
- Change in mode of operation (e.g., offensive to defensive)
- Water on the fire
- Status of searches (Primary and secondary)
- Fire contained
- Fire under control

When the fire gets into the exposure building/s, the ISS will report the following to the Communication Center:

- address,
- type & size of the exposure building
- location of the smoke/fire within the exposure building
- current actions

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Control Channels (A1-A3) link units on the field with the DEC

Command Channels (A4-A6) Communications between the Command Post and the DEC when a greater alarm has been struck. They maybe used by the Assistant Chiefs at other incidents as needed.

Tactical Channels (A7-A16) Communications between tactical units and the IC or the Operations Section Chief (if established). If the Operations Section is established the IC may use request another tactical channel to communicate with the Ops Section Chief.

Incident Commanders may request additional tactical channels to the DEC in order to assist them to manage the incident.

STAGING

Staging areas may be established by the IC or Operations Chief for the temporary location of available resources. The IC or Operations Chief shall assign a **Staging Area Manager** and specify a Staging location. A location for staging shall be established for 3rd alarm or greater. The Communications Center shall be notified in order to ensure that all responding resources are directed to respond to Staging.

Exception: Chief Officers, ISS, and Rescue Squads shall report directly to the Command Post.

When requesting resources through the Staging Area Manager, the IC or the Operations Chief shall specify where and to whom those resources shall report. The IC may designate a minimum number of resources needed at Staging.

At a High Rise fire this function is known as **Base**. A Base manager is established to control resources.

Medical Staging

Medical Group Staging shall be established by the first arriving Rescue Captain. He/she shall notify the IC of its location and resources assigned.

RIC OPERATIONS

Once a RIC operation is put into effect, the DEC shall clear A1 for use as a separate tactical channel. Once A1 is cleared, the DEC will contact the Command Post over the Control or Command channel advising that A1 is available to be used as the non-RIC Tactical Channel, if needed.

If the IC uses A1 as the Tactical Channel for on-scene companies not involved in the RIC operation, he/she should announce over the original Tactical Channel (now the RIC Channel), "ALL COMPANIES NOT INVOLVED IN THE RESCUE OPERATION, YOUR TACTICAL CHANNEL IS NOW A1. SWITCH TO A1." The IC shall advise the DEC whether or not to make the announcement on the RIC Channel.

For more information on RIC procedures, see RIC Operations Manual.

TERMINATION OF THE COMMAND POST

When the Command Post is no longer necessary, the IC will notify the DEC and place the Command Post out of service. If Command is still necessary, they shall notify which unit will be in command

SECTION 6. APPENDIX A.

The Following Rules of Engagement (ROE) were developed by the Health and Survival Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. They represent the best practice model that all Incident Commanders should review and consider to enhance fire ground safety. The goals of the ROE are to improve fire ground risk assessment by both the firefighter and the Incident Commander.

THE INCIDENT COMMANDER'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

- Rapidly conduct, or obtain, a 360-degree size up of the incident.
- Determine the occupant survival profile.
- Conduct an initial risk assessment and implement a **SAFE ACTION PLAN**.
- If you do not have the resources to safely support and protect firefighters, seriously consider a defensive strategy.
- **DO NOT** risk firefighter lives for lives or property that can not be saved, seriously consider a defensive strategy.
- Extend **LIMITED** risk to protect **SAVABLE** property.
- Extend vigilant and measured risk to protect and rescue **SAVABLE** lives.
- Act upon reported unsafe practices and conditions that can harm firefighters. Stop, evaluate, and decide.
- Maintain frequent two-way communications and **keep interior crews informed of changing conditions.**
- Obtain frequent progress reports and revise the action plan.
- Ensure accurate accountability of all firefighters' locations and status.
- If, after completing the primary search, little or no progress towards fire control has been achieved, seriously consider a defensive strategy.
- Always have a Rapid Intervention Crew in place at all working fires.
- Consider firefighter rehab services at working fires. (see SFFD rehab policy)

OBJECTIVES

Rapidly Conduct, or Obtain, a 360-Degree Situational Size Up of the Incident.

The Incident Commander should obtain an early 360-degree survey and conduct a risk assessment of the fireground in order to determine the safest approach to tactical operations as part of the action plan development and before firefighters are placed at substantial risk.

Determine the Occupant Survival Profile.

The Incident Commander should consider fire conditions in relation to possible occupant survival of a successful rescue event before committing firefighters to high-risk search and rescue operations as part of the initial and ongoing risk assessment and action plan development.

Conduct an Initial Risk Assessment and Implement a SAFE ACTION PLAN

The Incident Commander should develop a safe action plan by conducting a thorough size up, assessing the occupant survival profile, and completing a risk assessment before firefighters are placed in high-risk positions on the fireground.

If You Do Not Have the Resources to Safely Support and Protect Firefighters, Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy.

The Incident Commander should not commit firefighters to high-risk tactical objectives that cannot be accomplished safely due to inadequate resources on the scene.

DO NOT Risk Firefighter Lives for Lives or Property That Can Not Be Saved – Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy.

The Incident Commander should not commit firefighters to high-risk search and rescue and firefighting operations that may harm them when fire conditions prevent occupant survival and significant or total destruction of the building is inevitable.

Extend LIMITED Risk to Protect SAVABLE Property.

The Incident Commander should limit risk exposure to a reasonable, cautious and conservative level when trying to save a building that is believed, following a thorough size up, to be savable.

Extended Vigilant and Measured Risk to Protect and Rescue SAVABLE Lives.

The Incident Commander should manage search and rescue and supporting firefighting operations in a highly calculated, controlled, and cautious manner, while remaining alert to changing conditions, during high-risk search and rescue operations.

Act Upon Reported Unsafe Practices and Conditions That Can Harm Firefighters. Stop, Evaluate and Decide.

The Incident Commander, and Division/Group Supervisors, should prevent firefighters and supervisors from engaging in unsafe practices or being exposed to unsafe conditions that can harm them, and should allow any member to raise an alert about a safety concern without penalty and promptly address the question and insure safe operations.

Maintain Frequent Two-Way Communications and Keep Interior Crews Informed of Changing Conditions

The Incident Commander, and Division/Group Supervisors should obtain frequent progress reports from Division/Group Supervisors and keep all interior crews informed of changing fire conditions observed from the exterior that may affect crew safety.

Obtain Frequent Progress Reports and Revise the Action Plan.

The Incident Commander, and Division/Group Supervisors, should obtain frequent progress reports to continually assess fire conditions and any risk to firefighters, and to regularly adjust and revise the action plan to maintain safe operations.

Ensure Accurate Accountability of All Firefighter Location and Status.

The Incident Commander, and Division/Group Supervisors, should maintain a constant and accurate accountability of the location and status of all firefighters within a small geographic area of accuracy within the hazard zone and be aware of who is presently in or out of the building.

If, After Completion of the Primary Search, Little or No Progress Towards Fire Control Has Been Achieved, Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy.

The Incident Commander, following completion of the primary search, should determine if it is safe to continue offensive interior operations where progress in controlling the fire is not being achieved and there are no lives to be saved.

Always Have a Rapid Intervention Crew in Place at All Working Fires.

The Incident Commander should have a rapid intervention crew in place ready to rescue firefighters at all working fires.

Always Have Firefighter Rehab Services in Place at All Working Fires.

The Incident Commander should insure that all firefighters who endured physically strenuous activities at a working fire have adequate rehabilitation services available to them prior to being released from scene