HALIFAX FIRE DEPARTMENT SOG 0	Incident Command System
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Purpose

The purpose of the Incident Command System (ICS) is to provide for a systematic development of a complete, functional command organization designed to allow for single or multi-agency use which increases the effectiveness of command and firefighter safety.

Scope

This SOG applies to all members of the Halifax Fire Department

Back Ground

Command Guidelines are designed to:

• Fix the responsibility for command on a specific individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies, and chief officers.

• Ensure that a strong, direct, and visible command will be established from the onset of the incident.

• Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander and to other individuals operating within ICS.

• Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning, and decision making.

• Provide a system for the orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers.

Guideline

Responsibilities of Command

1. Life Safety. (Including the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel)
2. Incident stabilization.
3. Property conservation.

Duties of the Initial Incident Commander

1. Assume an effective, visible Command position.
2. Rapidly evaluate the situation (size-up).
3. Provide Brief Initial Report (BIR)
4. Develop a plan for dealing with the incident.
5. Develop an effective ICS organization. Assign units as required.
6. Provide ongoing Brief Progress Reports (10 min. after BIR) to Fire Alarm.
7. Review and evaluate efforts, and revise the incident plan as needed.
8. Request, assign, and stage additional units as necessary.
9. Return companies to service.

Establishing Command

1. The first fire department firefighter or officer to arrive at the scene shall assume command of the incident.

2. The first arriving officer to arrive on location after a non-officer has assumed command must relieve that person of the responsibility.

Passing Command

In certain situations, it may be advantageous for a first arriving Company Officer to pass command to the next company ON THE SCENE. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving company requires a full crew (i.e., an immediate rescue situation) and another company is on the scene.

Passing command is different from transferring command in that passing is only available to the first arriving unit at an incident; transferring can be done at any time, and more than once if Necessary.

<u>Transfer of Command</u>

Command is transferred to improve the quality of the ICS organization. The following guidelines outline the transfer of command process.

1. The first fire department member arriving on the scene will automatically assume command. This could be any fire department member up to and including the Fire Chief.

2. The first arriving officer will assume command after the transfer of command procedures have been completed.

3. Later arriving, higher-ranking officers may choose to assume command or continue to allow a junior officer to remain in control. However, the senior officer assumes all responsibilities for the operation, while on location.

<u>Procedures for Transferring Command</u>

1. The officer assuming command will communicate with the person being relieved by radio or face-to-face. (Face-to-face is the preferred method to transfer command).

2. The person being relieved will brief the officer assuming command indicating at least the following:

    A. Incident conditions (fire location and extent, Haz Mat spill or release, number of patients, etc.)
    B. Incident Action Plan
    C. Progress towards completion of the tactical objectives
    D. Safety considerations
    E. Deployment and assignment of operating companies and personnel
    F. Appraisal of need for additional resources

3. Whenever a transfer of command occurs, this change in Incident Commander must be announced.

General Considerations

The response and arrival of additional ranking officers on the incident scene strengthens the overall ICS organization. As the incident escalates, the Incident Commander should use these subordinate officers as needed.

The arrival of a ranking officer on the incident scene does not mean that command has been transferred to that officer. Command is only transferred when the outlined transfer-of-command process has been completed.

The Incident Commander has the overall responsibility for managing an incident. Simply stated, the Incident Commander has complete authority and responsibility for the incident. If a higher ranking officer wants to change the management of an incident, they must first be on the scene of the incident, then utilize the transfer-of-command guideline.

Brief Initial Report (BIR)

The Brief Initial Report (BIR) shall include:

1. Unit ID
2. Side of the building the unit has arrived
3. Number of stories of the building
4. Description of the incident including percent of involvement
5. What actions have been taken
6. Declaration of Strategy
7. Any obvious safety concerns
8. Assumption, identification, and location of Incident Commander
9. Request or release resources as required

Expanded ICS Chart