

# ***Snohomish County Fire Chiefs Association***

## **DOCUMENT 60-03-09**

### **SNOHOMISH COUNTY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDELINE**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 To establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the incident commander and other individuals operating within the Incident Command System (ICS).

1.2 The Incident Command system shall provide for a systematic development of a complete, functional command organization. ICS allows for single or multi agency use, which increases the effectiveness of command and firefighter safety.

1.3 To have a functional organizational structure that allows for rapid growth and expansion while maintaining responsibility for functional performance at the highest level possible.

1.4 To identify the regular operating procedures to be employed in establishing command and all components of NIMS.

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

1.6 Provide an information processing system that supports incident management, planning, and decision-making.

1.7 Provide a system of orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving senior officers.

1.8 To provide a companion document that utilizes the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the adopted standard of incident management, and further clarifies the components and descriptions of a complete Incident Management system.

#### **2.0 PERSONNEL AFFECTED**

2.1 All emergency response agencies as well as other public service agencies called on to respond to incidents within Snohomish County. Included but not limited are personnel involved with responding to emergency incidents, overhead/administrative personnel that may be needed to document activities, and/or purchases, personnel that may have authorizing purchase power, support personnel, civilian clergy and others.

#### **3.0 REFERENCE**

3.1 IFSTA publication "Incident Command System"

3.2 Model procedures guide for Structural Fire Fighting by Fire Protection Publications Second Edition.

3.3 N.I.M.S. - Also known as National Incident Management System.

3.4 U.S. Department of Homeland Security – National Incident Management Coordination Center and its training materials.

#### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

*Definitions and instructions contained herein shall be considered an addition and / or supersede the definition and instructions of those stated in reference materials. The National Incident Management document and all other definitions and instructions stated in “Model Procedures Guide for Structural Fire fighting” shall be deemed part of this procedure.*

4.1 All positions assigned in the I.M.S. system not specifically defined in this procedure or its companion documents shall utilize the position designations and radio call signs assigned by the IC.

4.2 Area Command – This type of command recognized under NIMS is used to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization, or to oversee the management of large incidents that cross jurisdictional boundaries. These types of incidents call for a coordinated response, with large-scale coordination typically found at a higher jurisdictional level. Area Commands are particularly relevant to public health emergencies because these incidents are typically:

- Not site specific.
- Not immediately identifiable.
- Geographically dispersed and evolve over time.

4.3 Base - Base shall be defined as an apparatus assembly area. Base area shall be supervised by a base manager who shall keep track of all man power, apparatus and equipment coming in and leaving the base area. The base area shall be designated an area that normally will provide a response of equipment and or man power to the incident scene within three minutes or less. The apparatus assigned to base shall park apparatus as directed and manpower shall remain together in an area so the base manager will easily be able to contact the company Officer for assignment.

4.4 Branch - (“Branch Director” shall be the title utilized to describe this appointment) Organizational level having function / geographic responsibility for major segments of incident operations. The branch level is organizationally between Operations and Division / Group.

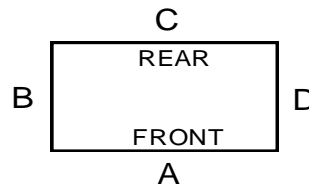
*The examples of Branch vary in that they can be very similar to divisions, geographic areas are usually a larger and defined by boundaries. Branches can also be defined by a discipline such as EMS Branch where all EMS would be provided by this branch. Branches are generally used in large complex situations or incidents covering large areas.*

4.5 Division – (“Division Supervisor” shall be the title utilized to describe this appointment) Established to divide an incident into **geographical** areas of operation. This

is the organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. Common designations shall be utilized in the naming of Divisions.

A. Floors of buildings shall utilize numerical designation; i.e. the second floor will be Division Two. The roof shall be designated Roof Division and basements designated Basement Division, unless several floors are located below ground level then they shall be designated 01, 02 etc...

B. Sides of buildings or sides of a complex will be commonly used for naming of divisions. The exterior of the buildings shall utilize an alpha designation. "A" shall be the front of the building, moving clockwise the left side shall be designated the "B" side, rear of the building "C" side, and the side to the right of the front shall be the "D" side. The incident command officer may designate which side of the building is the "A". The designation should be performed anytime personnel may confuse which side of a structure is designated the "A" side.



C. When it is necessary to divide an incident other than a structure into divisions such as a plane crash, wild land fire, etc... The incident shall be divided using directional designations.

*Example: Every thing East of highway 99 shall be known as the East Division. Everything West of highway 99 shall be known as the West Division.*

4.6 Group - ("Group Supervisor" shall be the title utilized to describe this appointment) This is the organizational level having responsibility for a specified **functional** assignment at an incident. Example: Ventilation, Salvage, Water supply, etc... It is recommended that groups be named and called by function assigned.

4.7 Crew / Team - A crew shall consist of a number of personnel assigned to perform a task under a division or group supervisor. Where possible radio call numbers will be used in identifying crews. Where radio call numbers of unit are not practical phantom numbers will be used.

4.8 Incident Commander – Shall be the only position that utilizes the word command(er) in its description. The Incident Commander (IC) is the highest level of authority for the specific incident assigned and has overall authority to request resources, manage resources, establish incident goals and objectives, and provide for the general needs to mitigate the outcome of the incident.

4.9 Incident Action Plan (I.A.P.) – An I.A.P. is recommended for all incidents. A new updated, preferably written, incident action plan should normally be created for each 12-hour operational period.

4.10 ICS - Incident Command System is considered a component tool of the National Incident Management system. It is recognized that the terms ICS, IMS and NIMS may be used interchangeably.

4.11 Section – This describes the General Staff of Organizational structure. Personnel appointed to one of these positions shall utilize the Title of Chief; for example, “Planning Chief.” No other organizational levels shall utilize Chief in the title of the designated position.

4.12 Standby location - An area usually in close proximity of the incident. Apparatus may be assigned to standby at a specific location while actual access and or positioning of the apparatus are being sought out or planned. A standby location shall normally be assigned at an entrance to a complex or narrow driveway. When equipment is assigned a standby location they are to stay in the apparatus and await further instructions.

4.13 Staging - The staging area shall be defined an area where personnel, misc. equipment (hand tools, spare S.C.B.A. bottles) and other miscellaneous resources are located for the incident. The staging area shall normally be located in a close proximity of the incident for rapid deployment of manpower and equipment. The staging area may have a staging officer that will record incoming and outgoing manpower and equipment.

4.14 Multi equipment response - Incidents requiring three or more fire department companies to respond.

4.15 Multi-agency Coordination System – A combination of resources that are integrated into a common framework for coordinating and supporting domestic incident management activities.

4.16 Single Command - Used when there is no overlapping of jurisdictional boundaries and / or when management responsibility of the incident is primarily that of one agency. In this case a single incident commander is solely responsible to establish objectives and overall management strategy with the incident.

4.17 Single resource - In general, single resources shall be used for initial attack, first response situations. During the incident there will always be a use for a single unit. Often these single resources shall be used to increase manpower and/ or equipment needed in a specific group, division, or branch.

4.18 Span of control - Generally the span of control for any one supervisor ranges from 3 to 7 with the optimum number of (5). .

4.19 Strike Team - A resource made up of like type units.

*Example: Five water tenders assigned to fill portable water sources in a wild land fire. The strike team shall have a leader and all tenders assigned will be on a common radio frequency.*

4.20 Task Force - A combination of dissimilar units designated for a specific assignment.

*Example: Two aid units, one rescue unit, and two medic units assigned to perform EMS services in the West Division. The task force will have a leader designated and all equipment/manpower assigned will be on a common radio frequency.*

4.21 Unified Command - Used when more than one internal or external agency shares management responsibility of the incident. Individuals designated by their jurisdictions jointly determine objectives, strategy and priorities. Under this command structure an Operations Chief must be appointed who has responsibility for implementation of the plan. In a unified command incident, the jurisdictional authority with primary responsibility for mitigation of the incident would chair the group as the Incident Commander.

Example: In a SWAT incident in Everett, the Everett Police Chief would be the chair of the unified command team, with support from the other agencies represented in the unified command post.

4.22 Hazardous Area – A geographical area designated by the Incident command officer or his / her designee that requires the use of strict procedures for personnel operating in these designated areas.

4.23 Phonetic Alphabet – The following lists two options used in identifying letter identifying characters often used in radio communications. Currently area dispatch agencies use the public radio version of the alphabet, however many users are accustomed to the military (NATO) version. Emergency responders should be able to use either version with ease.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A - Alpha or Adam      | <input type="checkbox"/> N - November or Nora       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B - Bravo or Boy       | <input type="checkbox"/> O - Oscar or Ocean         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C - Charlie or Charles | <input type="checkbox"/> P - Papa or Paul           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D - Delta or David     | <input type="checkbox"/> Q - Quebec or Queen        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E - Echo or Edward     | <input type="checkbox"/> R - Romeo or Robert        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F - Foxtrot or Frank   | <input type="checkbox"/> S - Sierra or Sam          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G - Gulf or George     | <input type="checkbox"/> T - Tango or Tom           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> H - Hotel or Henry     | <input type="checkbox"/> U - Uniform or Union       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I - India or Ida       | <input type="checkbox"/> V - Victor (same for both) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> J - Juliet or John     | <input type="checkbox"/> W - Whiskey or William     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> K - Kilo or King       | <input type="checkbox"/> X - X-ray (same for both)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> L - Lima or Lincoln    | <input type="checkbox"/> Y - Yankee or Young        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> M - Mike or Mary       | <input type="checkbox"/> Z - Zulu or Zebra          |

## 5.0 INCIDENT COMMAND OFFICER / FUNCTIONS

*(Throughout this document the term him or he will be used synonymously to mean she or her. This reference is gender neutral)*

5.1 It shall be standard procedure to designate an incident command officer for all incidents in Snohomish County involving fire agencies, even though such designation may not be named and considered an informal command.

5.2 **PREARRIVAL** *(No units have initiated command)* - During response to an incident, a designated officer responding to the incident shall make communications and pre-arrival decisions. In the event of two command officers responding to the same incident, the first due command officer shall make pre-arrival decisions.

5.3 The IC is responsible for overall management of the incident. The fire department empowers that individual (The IC) with the authority to turn his decisions into actions

(formulate a plan, request and assign resources, utilize and manage incident needs). If a higher-ranking officer elects to effect change in the management of the incident he must first be on the scene of the incident, and assume command of the incident utilizing the transfer of command outlined in this procedure.

*Note: If an imminent safety concern is present, anyone on scene can effect change if it is related to safety by notifying command.*

5.4 The first arriving fire department unit shall initiate command of the incident. The initial IC shall remain in command until command is transferred or the incident is terminated. The IC shall make decisions to stabilize and control the incident.

5.5 A company officer assuming command has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in the tactical activities. However the company officer continues to be fully responsible for the command functions. The following options shall be utilized in the establishment of command by the first arriving company officer.

A. Investigative Mode

The first arriving company officer may elect to handle the situation utilizing only company identification. This command option is used in single unit responses and / or EMS type calls. As a general rule alarms where three or more fire department units are dispatched this option shall not be used. The mobile IC is on a portable radio, moving around evaluating conditions / looking for the incident problem.

B. Fast Action Mode

The first arriving company officer shall establish command by name but not establish a command post. This option is indicated in those situations where the company officer must remain as a functional member of the company. In this case, a mobile IC is inside with their crew directly assigning initial responders with the Incident Action Plan and supervising attack operations that are attempting to quickly solve the incident problem.

*Example: E-21 arrived, Wood frame single family dwelling, flames visible from rear, E-21 laying blind alley from 22nd St. S.E., attacking fire with preconnect, E-21 will be 196th St. Command.*

C. Command Mode

The first arriving company officer shall establish a formal command post where the name and location of the command post shall be transmitted following the on scene report. In this case the company officer may appoint a company member to act as the company officer in their absence, or assign his crew to another officer. The company officer may appoint command functions to members of his crew due to the scope of the situation. By establishing a command post the company officer is expected to be at that command post location and not a working member.

*Example: E-31 arrived, three story multi family dwelling with a working fire on the second floor, E31 laying forward supply, attacking fire with pre-connect, establishing Rosewood command in front of E building, request second alarm assignment.*

5.6 Normally in larger scale incidents a chief officer shall assume the command officer position which shall be transferred as outlined in this procedure. However, the chief officer may elect to leave the current incident command officer in that position. The following indicates situations where this may occur.

A. In the interest of training, the on duty chief officer may elect to aide the lower ranking officer and have him / her remain in that position.

B. The incident may indicate that a change of command will interfere with the efficient operation of the incident.

5.7 Chief Officers and staff personnel arriving at the scene should report directly to the command post to notify the IC of their availability and to receive assignment. These personnel should park their vehicles in locations that will not restrict access to the scene. Chief Officer's radio announcement of arrival should include "reporting to command post."

5.8 In many situations it may be necessary to change the IC and assign him to another post to better deal with the situation. This should be looked upon as a strengthening of the organization and not a detrimental action to the previous IC. In the case that a superior officer has elected to assume the Incident commander role, he shall first request a complete briefing from the current IC (See sections 5.10 and 5.12 of this procedure). After receiving the necessary information, the new IC shall advise the relieved incident command officer he is assuming command. Dispatch shall be advised of the change of command via radio. It would be appropriate at this time to reassign the previous IC. Consideration should be given to assigning this person as an aide to the incident command officer or to a key position since he has been at the heart of the operation and should have good understanding of the overall strategic plan. It may be desirable to have the subordinate officer continue as IC and the ranking officer would assume a supportive role in the overall command structure.

5.9 The continued direction of the incident, depending on its escalation or demobilization, may determine the need for change of command several times. It is each Incident Command Officer's responsibility to provide as smooth of a transition as possible during these times. Each time the command changes, the new Incident Command officer shall assume the radio designation Command (As named) and no other designation should be used since it tends to confuse the personnel and the dispatchers.

5.10 When transfer of command is executed the following information shall be included in the briefing:

1. General situation status
2. Size up of incident
3. Overall strategy, tactics, and plan of action in use

4. Effectiveness of efforts
5. Assignments and deployment of companies and personnel
6. Review the ICS chart or tactical worksheet if in use
7. Safety considerations
8. Appraisals of need for additional resources

5.11 "Transfer of Command" to a unit that is not on the scene creates a gap in the command process and compromises incident management. To prevent this "gap" **COMMAND SHALL NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO AN OFFICER WHO IS NOT ON THE SCENE.** It is preferable to have the initial arriving company officer continue to operate as IC until command can be transferred.

5.12 Should a situation occur where a later arriving company or command officer cannot locate or communicate with a command (after several radio attempts), they will assume and announce their assumption of command and initiate whatever actions are necessary to confirm the safety of the missing crew and control of the incident.

## **6.0 COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 Safety shall be the highest priority of the IC. In order to assist the IC in this responsibility, a high priority must be placed on the assignment of an Incident Safety Officer. It is strongly recommended to make this appointment as early as possible in multi unit responses. Individuals that have completed I.S.O. training should be appointed to this position when possible.

6.2 It shall be the responsibility of IC to develop an organizational structure utilizing the Incident Management System as soon as possible upon arrival. The I.M.S. chart shall be used when at all possible.

6.3 When needed, establish an effective location for the Command post and notify dispatch of command post designated location.

6.4 Establish other designated areas as needed for incident. (Base, Staging, Rehab, Triage, etc ...)

6.5 Determine initial minimum staffing and equipment desired at incident, staging and base. Make resource requests for forecasted equipment and needs before they are needed.

6.6 The IC shall designate and appoint subordinate officers, supervisors or leaders and staff members as needed. Each appointed position shall be briefed given his objectives, assigned location, radio frequency assignment and designation, I.M.S. identification vest and duty statement/checklist clipboard.

6.7 Identify and prioritize immediate problems and potential problems. These include:

- A. Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
- B. Stabilize the incident and provide for life safety.
- C. Conserve property.
- D. Provide for the safety, accountability and welfare of personnel.
- E. Preserve the environment.

6.8 Organize a strategic plan and deploy resources to carry out tactical objectives to meet the plan.

6.9 Evaluate status of incident and effectiveness of the strategic plan at regular intervals. Make revisions and or additions to overall strategic plan and reassign objectives if needed. Strategy declaration shall be updated via radio announcement every 10 minutes or as close as possible to 10 minute intervals as needed (This applies to structure fires). Strategy declarations shall be one of the following.

A. Defensive fire attack - A defensive fire attack announcement shall determine that the fire has reached a point of danger beyond the risk of interior fire operations. Upon announcement of a defensive fire attack, entry into the structure shall be prohibited. Only if the conditions change and an offensive fire attack declared should personnel be allowed to enter the building. Collapse zones shall be established and observed by all personnel and fire streams shall be operated outside these zones. The zone for entry may be increased based on other conditions the fire problem presents. A defensive fire attack will be used to prevent the spread of the fire to exposures and apply agents as necessary to keep the fire from spreading. In non-structural fire incidents, a defensive mode shall be announced with the restricted area and / or actions.

*NOTE: Many fire situations will dictate the changing of fire attack mode from offensive to defensive. When the mode changes and appropriate signals have been given, incident command shall initiate a roll call, which shall be carried out as described herein.*

B. Transitional mode - This intermediate step shall be used when the incident command officer is preparing to change the mode. It is not necessary to use this intermediate step before changing from defensive to offensive attack mode.

C. Offensive fire attack - This indicates to all personnel that entry into the structure to attack/extinguish the fire using standard safety procedures is permitted. Personnel should be attentive to signs of impending danger and retreat from the building if needed. Any obvious signs of building collapse unknown to personnel outside of the structure should be relayed to the assigned supervisor. All interior-operating teams should relay information and status at regular intervals and any time the interior conditions change.

*Note: Regular updates need to be precise and to the point. Rambling on the radio only interferes with communication. Remember that your reports tell the Incident Commander the conditions and helps indicate the strategic mode.*

*The mnemonic C.A.N. is recommended as a report format. C-conditions, A-Actions, N-Needs. CAN Reports shall conclude with an Air Status reported in percentage of air left, if applicable.*

*Examples: "Fire and heat intensity increasing, unable to make any progress, request a back-up line and ventilation, 50% air." ; "We have located the seat of the fire, we are getting a knockdown, request ventilation, 25% air."*

*See Communications section on Evacuation, Withdrawals, and Abandon terms*

6.10 Demobilize Incident resources and terminate command structure.

6.11 Personnel Accountability Reports

The Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) involves a roll call of all personnel assigned to crews and/or divisions/groups that are working in the hazard area. The PAR is a confirmation that all members are accounted for. For the Division/Group Supervisor, a "PAR" is an accounting for all crewmembers of all companies assigned to his/her division/group. For the Company Officer, a PAR is an accounting of all crewmembers assigned to his/her company. The exception is when the driver/operator of the company is at the apparatus and the officer is on another assignment. In this case, the driver/operator status shall be confirmed by the IC. Reports of PAR's should be conducted face-to-face within the Division/Group or company whenever possible.

A personnel accountability report (PAR) will be required for the following situations:

- Any report of a missing or trapped fire fighter.
- Any change from offensive to defensive mode; Or prior to transitioning from defensive to offensive mode.
- Any sudden hazardous event at the incident - flash over, back draft, collapse, May Day, etc.
- Every 20 minutes of elapsed time during offensive operations.
- Any time Command determines it is necessary.

*Example: The IC announces on the radio "All units stand by for roll call. After approximately 20 seconds the incident command officer calls each assigned branch, division, group and company, as is appropriate, to determine their status.*

*Only immediately urgent messages should be sent during a PAR.*

There are two types of Personnel Accountability Reports;

1. An Emergency PAR
2. A Standard PAR

In an **Emergency PAR**, the IC will generally check only with Supervisors of Personnel working in the Hazardous or IDLH Area. The IC wants to know that everyone in the hazardous area is accounted for. This is a quick, rapid accounting of personnel while emergency rescue operations are initiated.

Example: The IC has called for an “Emergency PAR”, you are the Division “A” supervisor; you have matched up each Firefighter to his/her Name-Tag. *The IC calls you on the radio for the Emergency PAR. “Division A...Emergency Roll Call. How do you answer? “Division A PAR.”* This designates that all personnel are properly accounted for. If a firefighter is missing from one of the companies Division “A” would report; “PAR with the exception of one firefighter missing from E-1.”

A **Standard PAR** can be conducted anytime by the IC to account for All Personnel at the Incident scene and to check on resource deployment. The IC contacts all Command Staff, down-line Sections, Branches, Supervisors, Managers and any Teams/ Companies assigned directly under the IC.

Example: The IC has called for a “Standard PAR”,  
*You have matched up each Firefighter to his/her Name-Tag. The IC calls you on the radio for the Standard PAR. “Division A...Roll Call How do you answer?” “Division A with 9...PAR.”* This designates that all personnel are properly accounted for.

6.12 Other responsibilities of the IC may include:

- A. Notification of appropriate Local, State, and Federal agencies.
- B. Appointment of liaison personnel or interaction of other agency liaison personnel in planning and decision-making.
- C. Assure a safety survey has been accomplished on a fire building prior to overhaul and/or salvage operations. Safety concerns need to be communicated to all firefighters entering the fire area.
- D. Designate hazardous areas and provide a system to control access into these designated areas.

## 7.0 COMMAND STAFF

7.1 The incident scene is often a dynamic, intense, and exciting place. As the incident grows past the requirements of an initial alarm response, the IC can become overwhelmed with information management, assigning companies, forecasting, calling for additional resources, talking on the radio, and fulfilling all the other functions of command. The immediate need of command at this point in the incident is support. As additional ranking officers arrive on scene, the command organization may be expanded through implementation of needed Incident management positions, with the involvement of officers and staff personnel to fill these positions.

7.2 The number of divisions/groups that can be effectively managed by the IC varies. In fast moving, more complex operations a span of control of no more than 5 divisions is indicated. In slower moving less complex operations the IC may effectively manage more divisions, it is recommended not to exceed 7.

7.3 Where the number of divisions exceeds the span of control that the IC can effectively manage, the incident command should consider dividing into Branches. Each Branch is divided into several divisions and / or groups.

7.4 The safety of fire fighting personnel represents the major reason for establishing divisions or groups. Each officer must maintain communication with assigned companies to control both their position and function. The Division or Group Supervisor must constantly monitor all hazardous situations and risks to personnel, and must take appropriate action to ensure that companies are operating in a safe and effective manner.

7.5 When a company is assigned from Staging to an operating division or group, the company will be told to what division or group and which supervisor they will be reporting to. The Division or Group Supervisor will be informed of which particular companies or units have been assigned by the IC. It is then the responsibility of the Division or Group Supervisor to contact the assigned company to transmit any instructions relative to specific actions requested.

7.6 Division or Group Supervisors will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their division or group. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward specific objectives.

## **8.0 EXPANDING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE**

8.1 The IC must balance between the need for increasing the command and supervisory staff during the incident and appointing so many supervisory positions that there are not enough personnel to accomplish the needed tasks. Generally speaking keep the supervisory assignments to the minimum needed to accomplish incident management goals.

8.2 As the organization expands to deal with a major incident, the IC will need additional command post support. The IC should consider the appointment of a Command Post Aide and an Operations Section Chief as some of the first positions to be implemented.

8.2.1 Once the Operations Section Chief is in place and functioning, the IC's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning and other components of the incident. This focus is to look at the "big picture" and the impact of the incident from a broad perspective. The IC should provide direction, advice and guidance to the Operations Section Chief in directing the tactical aspects of the incident.

8.3 As span of control exceeds an operations level supervisor, the IC may implement an additional intermediate level within the command organization. The Branch Level of the organization is designed to provide **COORDINATION** between divisions or groups and Operations. The Branch Directors supervise and manage a number Division or Group Supervisors, and reports to the Operations Section Chief..

8.4 Branch Directors should be used at incidents where the span of control with division or groups is maximized, incidents involving two or more distinctly different major management components i.e. (a large fire with major evacuation, a large fire with a large

number of patients, etc.). The IC may elect to assign Branch Directors as forward positions to coordinate the activities between divisions or groups.

8.5 Branch Directors will normally be utilized at very large-scale incidents that involve two or more major components. The radio designation of Branch Director should reflect the function or geographic area of the Branch (i.e. Fire Control Branch, EMS Branch, and West Branch). When command implements Branch Directors, the Division or Group Supervisors should be notified by Command of their new supervisor. This information should include:

- o What Branch the division or group is assigned to.
- o The radio channel the Branch is operating on.

8.6 Radio communications should then be directed from the Division or Group Supervisor to the Branch Directors, instead of Operations or Command. Division or Group Supervisors will relay this information to the Company Officers working in their area.

8.7 Branch Directors positions should be assigned to Chief Officers. Depending on the situation, Branch Directors may be located at the Command Post or a remote location. When located at the Command Post, Branch Directors can communicate on a face-to-face basis with the IC. When Branch Directors are sent to forward positions they should utilize a Fire Department vehicle to set up a Branch control location. In these situations, Command must assign officers in the Command Post to monitor each Branch radio talkgroup.

8.8 The incident command officer should consider the need/request for an Incident Management Team (I.M.T.) early in the incident. As these areas expand, it is important to activate and utilize these positions to mitigate the problem.

## **9.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

9.1 Once Command has been established at an incident, all communications with the dispatch center shall go through Command unless specific direction has been given to contact the center directly. Often base is given this latitude since the base supervisor is usually responsible to keep a minimum number of units and/or personnel available in base at all times.

9.2 Necessary communications shall be directed to the immediate supervisor assigned.

*Example: Crews shall contact their Division Supervisor. Division Supervisors shall contact the assigned supervisor, which could be IC, Operations, or a Branch Director.*

Equal level leaders or supervisors shall be allowed to communicate with one another when absolutely necessary.

*Example: Division (1) supervisor needs to contact Division (2) supervisor. A team leader assigned under Division one needs to talk with another team leader assigned under Division one.*

9.3 It is imperative that unnecessary radio communications are eliminated. Only communications that are vital to your assignment shall be allowed. Every effort to utilize the most precise but brief message shall be used.

9.4 Personnel, equipment and supervisors shall remain on the talkgroup assigned. Only the IC or the Communications Supervisor may authorize switching of radio talkgroups.

9.5 In the I.M.S. all radio transmissions are to be considered priority messages and all non-priority messages should be delivered by note or face-to-face contact. However; should any leader or supervisor encounter a situation that is an immediate life threatening situation, requiring radio use he / she shall precede their message with "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC". All other normal radio traffic shall immediately discontinue and await the emergency communication. Once the air is clear of the Emergency radio traffic the IC shall announce "resume normal I.M.S. radio traffic". All emergency radio traffic shall be repeated to the sender so that no error can be made in the receiving of such a message.

9.6 Supervisors, leaders and staff shall use the radio call sign assigned to them. Personnel numbers shall not be used within the operations if at all possible.

9.7 For the purpose of building evacuation of civilian and fire fighting personnel the following shall apply:

A. "Evacuation" shall be used for the removal of all non-fire and emergency service personnel (Citizens occupying building).

B. "Withdraw" shall mean the orderly withdrawal of all personnel including fire and emergency service personnel. Any time a defensive fire attack mode is announced it shall automatically mean, "Withdraw". Abandon may also be used in the defensive declaration but must be announced separately.

C. "Abandon" Shall mean the immediate and most expeditious withdrawal of all personnel. Equipment that may slow the escape shall be left in place. Take only equipment you may need to escape quickly and safely. *Example: hose line.* All personnel are to leave without regard to any other orders. Immediately assemble at the last assigned safe area and take roll of all personnel. Immediately report any personnel missing. Prepare for mandatory roll call. This order should only be used when a life threatening condition exists or is likely to occur.

9.8 When search and rescue reports are given the term "Nothing found" shall be used by crews performing search operations, groups or divisions, the term "All Clear" is only used by the incident command officer after primary and secondary searches have found nothing. This is normally transmitted to the Dispatch Center, who should repeat the "All clear" announcement.

9.9 Teams of two or more operating within a designated hazardous area shall maintain close communication at all times. This communication shall require visual, tethered, voice or radio contact. When possible more than one method of communication shall be utilized.

## 10.0 HAZARDOUS AREA OPERATIONS

10.1 Except as stated in sections 10.1A, 10.1B, and 10.1C firefighters must not engage in interior structural operations in the absence of at least two standby firefighters normally designated as the Standby Team.. The two standby firefighters must be fully equipped with appropriate protective equipment, clothing, and SCBA. One of these firefighters may be assigned exterior duties when absolutely necessary provided those duties will not interfere with the standby members ability to participate in a rescue as needed. As more units arrive on scene a fully equipped Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) must be assigned and in place ready to facilitate a rescue of our emergency personnel.

*10.1.A Incipient fires where oxygen content in the structure has not been significantly reduced, the fire is producing minute amounts of dangerous gases and the room has a near normal temperature, firefighters are permitted to take actions without the standby personnel. These fires are normally fires that can be extinguished with a fire extinguisher or small hose line easily.*

*10.1B Initial stage fire fighting is allowed when at least one fire department member is outside the hazardous area in full protective equipment including clothing and SCBA donned in the stand by mode and this member is in contact with the minimum team of two firefighters operating in the hazardous area. Initial stage fire fighting is only permitted when there are circumstances that indicate immediate action is necessary to prevent or mitigate the loss of life or injuries to people. In addition this situation shall only be permitted when there is reasonable belief that additional resources are responding and that the full 2 in 2 out rule can be applied as soon as those resources arrive.*

*10.1C Fire fighting teams are not precluded from performing immediate rescue activities before an entire team has assembled. Rescue activities performed without the provisions of this section shall provide that there is a reasonable chance that these rescue efforts could rescue a viable patient.*

10.2 Stand by members must remain aware of the status of the fire fighters in the hazardous area at all times.

## 11.0 REHAB

11.1 As needed crews shall be assigned to a Rehab area (**Crews must report to Rehab intact to facilitate accountability**). For incidents requiring use of S.C.B.A., personnel using two bottles of air should be seen in Rehab before being assigned to another task. When so assigned the Rehab supervisor shall insure the documentation of medical monitoring and fluid replenishment for each person assigned to Rehab.

## 12.0 TRAINING

12.1 All personnel shall be required to complete IC training that covers the terminology, mechanics and general overview of ICS with in the first six months of membership or employment. Such training shall be documented as being completed in the individual training record. An online training course titles (ICSTUT) Incident Command System Tutorial is available at FEMA's National Emergency Training center Virtual Campus. This

course should be considered an adjunct of the training needed and accompanied with department ICS procedures that include scenarios and manipulative skills. (See section 12.3 for web site address and link to NETC)

12.2 Whenever possible, the department shall utilize ICS drills on fire ground operation drills and in a classroom setting training sessions to familiarize them on all positions of the incident command system.

12.3 All fire department officers shall complete training in the National Incident Management System prior to being assigned to a supervisory position. The minimum acceptable training course (or equivalent) is available at FEMA's National Emergency Training Center Virtual Campus. The course is titled (IS700) National Incident Management System, an Introduction. If you have not previously registered as a student with NETC, you will first need to register at:

<http://lstrng1.fema.gov/LearningSpace5/Program/UI/Main/Themes/Kendall/Main.asp>

After registration navigate to course titles and select course IS700. This course takes approximately three hours and has an on line written test. Your completion will be recorded by FEMA and a completion certificate sent to you via mail. You can take a portion of the course as time permits until completion.