

Big Tree Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

Standard Operating Guideline

Incident Command System

Revised June 2, 2002

PURPOSE:

Effective management of an emergency incident scene is vital if the incident is to be mitigated in a quick efficient manner. Failure to establish a command and control function early on in an incident will hinder efforts to meet incident objectives. The larger and more complex an incident becomes, the more essential it is to have a coordinated management system in place. This guideline describes the organization and operations elements of the Incident Command System (ICS). New terminology refers to the ICS as an Incident Management System (IMS). For the purpose of this guideline, we will utilize the ICS nomenclature. However, both ICS and IMS can be used interchangeably.

POLICY:

The Big Tree Volunteer Fire Company shall implement the Incident Command System at every incident, regardless of size. Routine use of the ICS at small incidents will ensure that the ICS is deployed at larger incidents where its use is more critical. Additionally, frequent use of the ICS will ensure that firefighters are familiar and well versed with its use.

The first officer or ranking member on scene shall implement the Incident Command System and assume command (serve as the Incident Commander) until relieved by a higher-ranking officer. The Town of Hamburg Dispatch Office shall be notified via radio that command has been established and shall be advised as to which unit (officer) has assumed command responsibilities. Additionally, if the incident specifics warrant, the Incident Commander shall announce the location of a command post. The Incident Commander shall provide a size-up report to dispatch alerting both dispatch and incoming units as to the nature of the incident. Standard size-up procedures shall be followed. If incident specifics warrant, the Incident Commander shall assign incoming units functional tasks in the Incident Command System as outlined later on in this guideline.

The Big Tree Volunteer Fire Company ICS organizational structure shall develop in a modular fashion based upon the size and type of incident. The management staff shall be built from the top down with the responsibility and performance being placed initially with the Incident Commander. The specific organizational structure that is established for any given incident will be based upon the management needs of the incident. If one

individual can effectively manage all the major functional areas of the ICS, no further organization is required. If one or more functional area develops the requirement for independent management for effective control, an individual shall be delegated responsibility for that area. In determining the necessity for the assignment of additional functional units to the ICS, the Incident Commander shall consider span-of-control issues. Whenever the span of control exceeds the capabilities of the Incident Commander, additional functional units shall be implemented.

Several functional units exist at the command level. Both operational and administrative functional units can be staffed if the need arises. Operational functional units may include (but are not limited to) Safety Officer, Operations Officer, Sector Officers, Public Information Officer, Triage Officer, Treatment Officer, Staging Officer, Transportation Officer, etc. Additionally, it may be necessary to staff administrative functional units such as Planning, Logistics and Finance. The number and type of functional units staffed will depend upon the incident specifics. The various functional units and associated responsibilities are discussed below:

Incident Commander (IC)

The Incident Commander establishes objectives and incident priorities, and has overall responsibility and authority at an incident or event. The Incident Commander shall establish priorities aimed at protecting life safety, stabilizing the incident and conserving property – in this order. Since the Incident Commander is in charge at an incident, he/she must be fully qualified to manage the incident. The Incident Commander need not be (but frequently is) the most senior officer on scene. It may be appropriate to have less senior officers serve as the Incident Commander if they have special expertise to lend or have initiated Incident Command at the onset of an incident and do not require assistance or relief.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer is charged with ensuring the safety of firefighters operating on the emergency scene. If any unsafe situations or operations are encountered, the Safety Officer can immediately direct operations to cease. The Safety Officer does not require the permission of the Incident Commander to issue safety-related directives.

Operations Officer

The Operations Officer is charged with directing operations at the scene of an emergency. While the Incident Commander oversees all aspects of the emergency scene and sets global objectives, the Operations Officer focuses on tactics aimed at achieving a particular goal established by the Incident

Commander. The Operations Officer must keep the Incident Commander apprised of the status of operations and should work closely with the Incident Commander to ensure that all incident priorities are met.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer is charged with dealing with the media and the public. All information releases are arranged by the Public Information Officer and released only after approval of the Incident Commander. The Public Information Officer shall ensure that accurate information is released in a timely manner. At prolonged incidents, it is extremely important to conduct regular press briefings to keep the public informed. The Public Information Officer shall ensure that this occurs.

Triage Officer

In incidents involving multiple patients, a Triage Officer should be assigned. Typically, one of the first arriving EMTs or Paramedics is assigned this duty. The Triage Officer shall be responsible for ensuring that all patients are quickly triaged and tagged with an appropriate triage tag. It is important that the Triage Officer work closely with the Incident Commander in order to ensure that the appropriate resources required to mitigate the incident are secured.

Treatment Officer

In large incidents with multiple patients, the assignment of a Treatment Officer is often necessary. The Treatment Officer is responsible for ensuring that triaged patients receive treatment as quickly as possible. Since resources during an MCI will be limited, the Treatment Officer will need to ration treatment and ensure that the most critically-injured patients are treated first. Close communication between the Treatment Officer and the Incident Commander will be essential in order to ensure that the appropriate resources are secured to properly mitigate the incident.

Equipment Staging Officer

Whenever the potential exists that additional equipment will be required, it is best to stage that equipment close to the incident scene. An Equipment Staging Officer shall be assigned to corral and oversee this equipment. The equipment staging officer shall communicate with the Incident Commander in order to ensure that sufficient reserves are maintained. The Equipment Staging Officer shall maintain an inventory of all equipment in the equipment staging area and track where equipment is disbursed to. Any time the Operations Officer requires equipment, he/she shall contact the Equipment Staging Officer and request such equipment.

Personnel Staging Officer

Frequently, it is desirable to have additional crews ready for deployment in a location sufficiently close to the incident. By establishing a Personnel Staging Area, incoming crews can be assigned to this resource pool. A Personnel Staging Officer shall be appointed to oversee the Personnel Staging Area. The Personnel Staging Officer shall be responsible for deploying personnel to the incident upon request of the Operations Officer. Additionally, the Personnel Staging Officer shall communicate with the Incident Commander to ensure that adequate supplies of "fresh" personnel are available in the Personnel Staging Area.

Apparatus Staging Officer

Many times, the need for additional apparatus may be anticipated. It is advantageous to pre-locate this apparatus in an Apparatus Staging Area near the incident. Doing so can significantly reduce response time. Additionally, some times it is necessary to delay the arrival of equipment on the scene of an incident so that it can be properly and orderly placed. Sending apparatus to a Apparatus Staging Area can be beneficial in these instances. An Apparatus Staging Officer shall be appointed to oversee the apparatus in the Apparatus Staging Area. The Apparatus Staging Officer shall communicate with the Operations Officer to deploy apparatus upon request. Additionally, the Apparatus Staging Officer shall communicate with the Incident Commander to ensure that adequate apparatus reserves are maintained in the Apparatus Staging Area.

Transportation Officer

During MCIs, an adequate number of transportation vehicles will not be initially available. A Transportation Officer will be assigned to sort and oversee transportation of patients. The Transportation Officer will be required to communicate with the Incident Commander in order to ensure that an appropriate number and type of transportation assets are procured. In addition, the

Transportation Officer will be charged with tracking the total number of patients transported as well as the destination facility to which each patient was transported. The Transportation Officer will also be required to work closely with the Treatment Officer to ensure that the most critically-injured patients are transported as quickly as possible.

Liaison Officer

On larger incidents or events, representatives from other agencies may be assigned to the incident to coordinate their agency's involvement. The Liaison Officer will be their primary contact.

Sectoring:

Based on the nature or scope of an emergency, it may be desirable to divide an incident into more manageable parts, or sectors. Sectors may be assigned either to specific operating areas [Roof Sector, Interior Sector, Sector C (side C of a building), First Floor, Second Floor, etc.] or to a function (Medical Sector, Triage Sector, etc.). Sector officers are responsible for the following:

1. Monitoring work progress.
2. Directing activities as required.
3. Coordinating with related activities and/or sectors.
4. Monitoring the welfare of sector personnel.

Sector officers shall report directly to the Operations Officer. Sector officers will operate on the designated incident work frequency, and will be identified by their sector designation. For Example:

"Sector C to Operations" or "Operations to Triage Sector."

Transfer of Command:

As higher-ranking officers arrive on the scene, they may assume command at their discretion. In the event that a higher-ranking officer opts to assume command, the acting Incident Commander shall provide a complete briefing to the senior officer. Dispatch shall be notified via radio that command is being transferred and to which unit (officer) command is being transferred to.

Multiple Simultaneous Incidents:

Situations may arise where several incidents are simultaneously unfolding. In this event, confusion can arise if an effort is not made to clarify communications between both on-scene units off-scene assets. Any time multiple incidents are ongoing, the incidents shall be designed by the name of the street, building or other feature unique to that incident. This designation will be used by the Incident Commander and dispatch office to avoid confusion. For example:

"Baker Street Command to dispatch" or "Dispatch to Wal-Mart Command."

Communications:

Upon arriving at working incidents involving multiple units, Command shall direct that all companies operate on the F4 or F2 frequency, depending upon availability. All communications between Command and dispatch shall remain on F1 unless otherwise directed by dispatch. Whenever possible, on-scene communications shall be made face-to-face in order to avoid excessive radio traffic.

Unified Command:

Any time a large multi-jurisdictional incident occurs, a unified command system shall be implemented. A representative from each responding/participating agency shall report to the command post and participate in the Unified Command System.