
Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

Operations

Subject: Incident Command System
Revised: 7-1-09
Effective: 10-20-09
Approved: 9-24-09 (Fire Chief)
Section: 401.00

401.01 Purpose

On June 6, 2005 the Mayor and City Council adopted Resolution 2005-8 which designated the National Incident Management System as the basis for all incident management in the Town of Ocean City; this was done in order to comply with State of Maryland Executive Order 01.01.2005.09 and with Homeland Security Presidential Directive – 5. The purpose of this document is to identify who is responsible for establishing command and what his roles and responsibilities are once the position has been assumed. It also provides direction for maintaining an appropriate span of control and the transfer and termination of command. The goal of this is to facilitate an organized tactical operation and a more effective and efficient effort on the scene of an emergency incident.

401.02 Policy

- A. All members involved in emergency operations shall be trained to the appropriate level in the National Incident Management System. Those who function in command staff positions shall train further to the advanced ICS levels.
- B. The Incident Command System (ICS) shall be used in all drills and practical scenarios.
- C. The following standard principles of risk for emergency responders shall be followed:
 1. Incidents which pose a high level of risk to responders shall be limited to situations in which there is a potential to save endangered lives.
 2. Emergency operations which are routinely utilized to protect property or the environment shall be viewed as inherent risks and action shall be taken to reduce these risks.

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3. Incidents in which there is no possibility to save lives, property, or the environment emergency operations will not risk the safety of responders.

Note: We will risk a lot to save a lot, we will risk a little to save a little, and we will risk nothing to save nothing.

- D. All command level officers shall have IMS training to include a minimum of three (3) hours of simulation activities based on potential emergencies within the response district. These officers shall also participate in annual IMS continuing education, to include simulated emergencies such as:
 1. Multiple alarm operations.
 2. High rise firefighting.
 3. Natural and man-made disasters.
 4. Hazardous materials incidents.
 5. Other target hazards within the response district.

401.03 Procedures

- A. The first arriving officer or member at an incident shall be in command until relieved and this person shall transmit a Brief Initial Report on the assigned operations channel, to include the following:
 1. Unit identification.
 2. A brief description of the situation found; Building size, construction type, and current conditions. The building will have its sides designated A - D with the address side being side A and lettering is to proceed clockwise.
 3. The officer or member in command and his location.
- B. The exception to Section A, above, will be when all first in members are required to operate during the initial tactical operations in order to ensure a satisfactory outcome. The first Fire Department member not needed to support tactical operations will assume command. It will still be necessary for the first in units to transmit a Brief Initial Report and with incident management responsibility remaining with the most senior member on the scene.
- C. At incidents, which involve medical care, the Incident Commander (IC) shall consult the attending paramedic on scene when making decisions that may affect patient care or medical personnel.
- D. Command – The member in command is responsible for the following:
 1. Assuming an effective, visible command position.
 2. Rapidly evaluate/size-up the situation.
 3. Develop an incident action plan in order to effectively mitigate the incident.

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4. Provide unit assignments as appropriate.
 5. Assign members to a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) whenever there are members operating in an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmosphere.
 6. Provide updates to communications as appropriate.
 7. Provide for an ongoing evaluation of efforts and update the incident action plan as appropriate.
 8. Request additional alarms/mutual aid as needed.
 9. Return units to service as appropriate.
- E. In order to facilitate an effective incident management system, the Incident Commander may assign personnel to the following positions:
1. Operations – This officer is responsible for the management of all tactical operations at an incident and reports directly to the IC.
 2. Planning – This officer is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. Additionally, this individual is responsible for forecasting incident needs and the development of the Incident Action Plan. This officer reports directly to the IC.
 3. Logistics – This officer is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident; this individual manages service and support resources required for the incident. This officer reports directly to the IC.
 4. Finance – This officer is responsible for tracking all incident costs and evaluating the financial considerations of the incident. This officer reports directly to the IC.
 5. Safety – This officer is responsible for monitoring the safety of incident operations. This officer will report directly to the IC, except in the event of an emergency, during which time the Safety Officer has the authority to halt any activity deemed hazardous to personnel operating on the incident. If this should occur the Safety Officer shall advise the IC of the situation and actions taken so that the IC may revise the incident action plan as appropriate.
 6. Liaison – This officer is the point of contact for assisting and coordinating agencies
 7. Public Information – This officer serves to provide the media and public with pertinent incident information, and reports directly to the IC.

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F. Branches

Based on the nature of the incident it may be necessary to divide the incident into smaller, more manageable parts. Branches may be necessary when the number of groups or divisions exceeds the span of control or when large numbers of resources are committed to varying functional activities (i.e. mass casualty incident)

G. Groups/Divisions

Based on the nature of the incident it may be necessary to divide the incident into smaller, more manageable parts. Groups shall refer to functional areas, ones that are performing similar tasks (medical group, triage group, transport group...). Divisions shall normally refer to geographic assignments (division 3 – third floor, rear division – the rear of a structure...). Group/Division officers shall be responsible for:

1. Monitoring work progress.
2. Coordinating activities among related groups/divisions.
3. Assure the welfare of members operating under the officer.
4. Reporting directly to the Operations Officer or the IC if no Operations Officer has been assigned.

H. Companies

These units are responsible for performing assigned tasks while maintaining the integrity of the company. Company members report directly to their company officer, who in turn, will report to the appropriate officer in the chain of command.

I. Strike Teams/Task Forces

Strike Teams/Task Force leaders report to Division/Group supervisors and oversee specific tasks done by Strike Teams (similar type resources deployed to complete a specific function) or Task Forces (multiple resource types assigned to complete a specific task).

J. Transfer of Command

Transfer of Command does not occur automatically upon the arrival of a higher ranking officer. In order to develop future officers, members may be allowed to maintain command of incidents even after the arrival of a higher ranking officers, unless the member requests, or a higher ranking

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officer orders, a Transfer of Command. Transfer of Command will be made, preferably, with a face- to- face briefing. The following information will be given to the new incident commander:

1. Current status of the situation.
2. Resources committed, available and en route.
3. Present organizational structure.
4. Current Incident Action Plan.
5. Assessment of tactical operations.

Transfer of command will be announced by communications over the operations channel.

K. Termination of Command

When the Incident Commander determines that the incident is under control and all involved units have been demobilized command will be terminated.