
Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

Operations

Subject: Strategic Guidelines
Revised: 7-1-09
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Approved: 9-24-09 (Fire Chief)
Section: 411.00

411.01 Purpose

- A. To facilitate more effective and efficient management of emergency operations.
- B. To provide definitions (within the context of Command Operations) of the following terms:
Priorities, objectives, and the four basic strategies.
- C. To provide guidelines for an on-scene emergency operational planning.

411.02 Policy

Personnel shall utilize whenever possible, those guidelines contained within this policy.

411.03 Priorities

- A. Priorities are determined as a result of the on-scene analysis of the emergency situation (size up).
- B. Priorities identify the most important or urgent factors of an emergency situation. Since emergencies are dynamic in nature and change as they progress and/or are affected by the efforts of personnel, the priorities involved, in any given emergency situation will also change.
- C. Priorities provide the basis for determining operational objectives.
- D. In a general sense, the basic priorities may be divided into three broad categories. In basic order of importance, they are as follows:
 - 1. Life Safety – All factors and operations that affect the safety and well being of persons involved in the emergency. Involved persons include victims, bystanders, and emergency personnel.
 - 2. Incident Stabilization – Those operations or activities required in stopping the spread or growth of an emergency incident, and bringing about its final termination.
 - 3. Property Conservation – Those operations or activities required in stopping or reducing additional loss to property.
- E. Although priorities are normally placed into a hierarchy, overlapping can and does occur. Such a case of overlapping may be illustrated by a situation where rapid control of a fire is necessary to provide life safety.

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

411.04 Operational Objectives

- A. Objectives are derived from the priorities, which have been identified. They are specific in nature and must be realistic in the sense that they can be accomplished with the available resources.
- B. They must be identified and communicated in short, easy to understand terms.
- C. Objectives normally follow the same hierarchy as the priorities from which they have been derived. Objectives may; however, also overlap in the same sense as priorities sometimes do.
- D. Objectives change as priorities change. Normally achievement of an objective leads to the next objective in the hierarchy. However, many times objectives may be simultaneously handled by different tactical divisions at the emergency scene. This simultaneous achievement of objectives requires close coordination by the Incident Commander.

411.05 Procedures

- A. Strategies
 - 1. The choice of strategy is dependent upon the objectives, which have been set. As with priorities and objectives, the chosen strategy must change in accordance with changes in the nature of the emergency.
 - 2. The following defines the four (4) basic strategies:
 - a. Offensive – An aggressive attack or effort to bring about rapid control of a problem. Example: A quick attack at the seat of a small fire.
 - b. Offensive/Defensive – An effort to make a direct attack or attempt at control while simultaneously providing back-up resources for confinement operations. Example: Attacking the main body of a fire while simultaneously providing lines to check fire extension.
 - c. Defensive/Offensive – Initial efforts concentrate on achieving confinement of a problem while additional resources are amassed to begin an offensive control operation. Example: Holding a fire in check until more lines can be placed into service for an aggressive attack.
 - d. Defensive – Strictly an effort to confine a problem. Example: Using heavy streams to protect exposures without attacking the main body of the fire.

411.06 Planning And Decision Making

- A. On-scene emergency operation planning and decision making requires analysis of the factors involved; realistic projection and forecasting; identification of priorities, objectives and strategies, and evaluation of results.

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

- B. The following is a guide for on-scene emergency operational planning and decision making;
1. Determine the nature and extent of the problem (size up).
 2. Estimate growth and spread potential.
 3. Determine priorities based on existing and projected conditions.
 4. Determine objectives based on priorities and available resources.
 5. Determine strategy based on objectives
 6. Develop a plan of action based on objectives and strategy.
 7. Establish time frames and points of evaluation.
 8. Modify plans or actions as required by evaluation.