

SECTION VI— INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS)

6.1 GENERAL STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1.1 The purpose of the Washington Township Fire Department incident management system is to provide for fire fighter safety, a clear line of authority, and a chain of command for fire department operations and to comply with various federal and state regulations concerning emergency scene incident management. It is the intention of this SOP to fully comply with N.7.A.C. 5:75 and the inclusive parts of N.F.P.A. Standard 1561-1995. It is additionally intended to provide an organized and logical method for controlling personnel, equipment, and communications during an emergency incident through the use of a single point of contact, the incident commander (IC). Accordingly, a single fire department incident commander shall be in responsible charge at all emergency assignments within the authority of the Washington Township Fire District. A single fire department representative shall be in responsible charge of any department resources deployed to any other emergency assignment not within the authority of the Washington Township Fire District, and shall function as a component of an existing IMS, a division supervisor, or as a component of a "Unified Command" structure.
- 6.1.2 An Incident Management System (Incident Command System) shall be utilized at all incidents involving Washington Township Fire Department resources. If an IMS is not functioning or in place at an emergency where the district's resources are deployed and the incident is not within the authority vested with the Washington Township Fire District, the ranking officer shall implement IMS for the deployed department resources.
- 6.1.3 IMS in part, is based on an organizational chain of command, which specifies the hierarchy of authority on an emergency incident scene, by line office rank. The standard chain of command for the Washington Township Fire Department is as follows:
- District Fire Chief
 - Company Chief
 - Company Assistant Chief
 - District / Company Captain
 - Company Lieutenant
 - Senior Fire Fighter

When multiple positions of generally equivalent rank are held in a given company, assigning a numerical prefix to the rank classification shall specify their relative standing in the chain of command. (i.e. 1st Lieutenant, 2nd Lieutenant, etc.) When officers of the same rank from the district or different companies arrive on a scene (in accordance with the above schedule) the first arriving officer shall have rank over any others of the same rank.

- 6.1.4 The highest-ranking officer present on the scene, as described herein, is responsible for the general overall operations to ensure fire fighter safety and for the completion of the tactics and strategy to safely mitigate an incident. While it

is not necessary for the ranking officer to fill the position of incident commander, the ranking officer cannot be relieved of the ***overall responsibility*** for the incident.

- 6.1.5 The standard chain of command applies to all fire department responses whether single or multiple company.
- 6.1.6 During incidents involving multiple company response, the ranking chief officer on the scene shall be overall responsible for fire department operations. If no chief is present, the ranking officer present will be responsible. The determination of rank on an incident scene shall be based upon the rank structure listed in 6.1.3. Under no circumstances shall command of an incident within the jurisdictional boundaries and authority of the Washington Township Fire District be transferred to authorities or another company from outside of the district organization.
- 6.1.7 Emergency incidents occurring with overlapping jurisdictional authority may require the establishment of a "Unified Command" structure. When participating in a "Unified Command" structure, all agencies participating in the Command organization must have ***statutory authority*** and ***legal responsibility*** to function at the incident. When operating within a "Unified Command" structure, strategic plans and decisions made by the IC must have concurrence of all agencies represented at the command level. An agencies functional task assignment at an emergency incident does not necessarily constitute authority or responsibility for the Command function within IMS.