

## 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. 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## **6.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMAND**

- 6.2.1 The ranking officer or senior fire fighter, if no officer is aboard in the first arriving fire department unit, shall initiate IMS by formally establishing command immediately upon arrival at the incident scene.
- 6.2.2 The ranking officer or senior fire fighter, when establishing command should not commit himself to interior operation unless his direct involvement is necessary to immediately mitigate the incident or his direct involvement will have an immediate positive impact affecting a rescue or fire attack. If the IC finds it necessary to commit to interior operations, the IC shall pass command to the next arriving officer or senior fire fighter as soon as reasonably possible. The officer or fire fighter establishing command shall use clear text terminology (i.e. "10-101 arriving on location, ... operating as Egg Harbor Road Command", "10-302 arriving on location, ... operating as Hollydell Command", "Engine 1023 arriving on location, ... 10-203 operating as Regal Command", etc.).

- 6.2.3 The initial incident commander shall remain in command until properly relieved by a higher-ranking officer. Proper relief includes; 1) a size-up of the incident, 2) a description of what action has been taken, 3) what divisions/resources have been deployed, and 4) any other significant information.
- 6.2.4 After initial size-up and implementation of an action plan, the IC shall take a "command position" or establish a command post. If a formal command post is not established, the accepted "command position" shall be in the general vicinity of Division "A".

### **6.3 INITIAL SIZE-UP & REPORT**

- 6.3.1 Immediately after reporting on location and establishing command, the IC shall perform a size-up of the situation. The initial size-up should be performed as quickly as possible and should include evaluation of the following factors:

#### *FIRE*

- Fire building detail; type, size, height, construction, and general condition.
- Occupancy and contents of the building.
- Fire conditions; location and extent of fire, probable fire behavior, and products of combustion.
- Time and weather considerations.

#### *RESCUE*

- Number of vehicles involved.
- Number of victims.
- Rescue requirements.
- Fire protection concerns.

- 6.3.2 Upon completion of the initial size-up, the IC shall report all necessary findings to the communications center so incoming apparatus may be apprised accordingly.

### **6.4 ACTION PLAN**

- 6.4.1 As soon as reasonably possible, the IC shall develop and implement an action plan to mitigate the situation. It may be necessary to expand, reduce, or revise the action plan as fire or other emergency conditions change.
- 6.4.2 The IC shall determine one of two basic modes of operation when developing the action plan, **Offensive** or **Defensive**, and inform fire fighting units operating which mode is in affect. The mode of operation may be changed by the IC during the course of the incident as fire conditions or other circumstances require. The IC shall insure all operating divisions confirm this mode change. The changing of modes is critically vital when changing from an interior offensive mode to an exterior defensive mode at structure fires.

6.4.3 After determining the mode of operation and considering fire fighter safety and survival, the action plan shall be based upon the following tactical priorities:

- Priority 1 — Rescue
- Priority 2 — Fire Control/Containment
- Priority 3 — Property Conservation

6.4.4 Development of the action plan should include the following basic steps:

- Evaluate conditions
- Develop the tactical approach
- Identify the tactical needs
- Identify the available resources
- Make assignments necessary to commence action

The development of the action plan provides for command and control of the incident and should be completed quickly.

6.4.5 Once the action plan has been completed, the IC must issue directives assigning as many groups or divisions as may be required to accomplish the established objectives.

6.4.6 The IC shall announce when the situation has been mitigated or placed "***under control***". "***Under control***" during actual fire incidents shall mean when the IC has determined that no further fire spread will occur, the incident will not escalate, and that it is unlikely that further resources will be needed. During rescue incidents, "***under control***" shall be understood to mean when extrication is complete, the incident will not escalate, and it is unlikely that further resources will be needed. During other emergency incidents, "***under control***" shall be understood to mean when the emergency incident has in some way been mitigated, the incident will not escalate, and it is unlikely that further resources will be needed.

## **6.5 TRANSFER OF COMMAND**

6.5.1 Command of an incident may be transferred under the following conditions:

- A higher-ranking officer arrives on the scene and has received a brief from the current IC.
- The IC must leave the command post or "command position" and has provided a brief to another officer.
- The incident becomes stabilized, is downgraded, and the IC provides a brief to a subordinate officer.

6.5.2 A higher-ranking officer arriving on an incident scene will ultimately become responsible for the incident. Assumption of command by a higher-ranking officer

is, however, discretionary. A higher-ranking officer who arrives at an incident scene with operations underway will contact the incident commander for a situation status report, after which he will determine whether or not he will assume command. The higher-ranking officer may assume command, remain in an advisory capacity, or take charge of a division at the incident scene. The higher-ranking officer **cannot subordinate overall responsibility for the incident.**

6.5.3 Transfer of command procedures, in accordance with these guidelines, should be completed before the higher-ranking officer assumes command.

6.5.4 The general procedures to be followed when transferring command include the following:

6.5.4.1 The ranking officer will contact the ongoing incident commander directly upon arrival at the incident scene. If possible, he will confer face-to-face with the incident commander.

6.5.4.2 The incident commander will provide the ranking officer with a brief situation status report, which should include the following information:

- General fire conditions, extension, and exposures.
- Current fire control progress.
- Deployed and assigned operating companies.
- Anticipated resource needs.
- Safety considerations.

6.5.4.3 The ranking officer will acknowledge the situation status report and inform the previous incident commander that he will assume command.

6.5.4.4 When an emergency incident is of such scope and when practical, transfer of command should include the use of ICS Forms 201 and 209.

6.5.4.5 The Gloucester County Communications Center should be notified that a transfer of command has occurred.

6.5.5 Transfers of command should be minimized whenever possible in order to promote continuous coordination and control of the incident. When an officer outranking the incident commander arrives on location, and a higher-ranking officer is responding, transfer of command may wait until the arrival of the higher-ranking officer, so that only one transfer is necessary.

## **6.6 ORGANIZATION & CONTROL**

- 6.6.1 Geographical Division of the Incident Scene: Each incident scene shall be organized into standard geographical areas. The purpose of this geographical breakdown of an incident scene is two-fold:
- To ensure clear and consistent understanding of the organization of any incident scene through the use of standard terminology.
  - To provide the incident commander with a standard designated method of dividing an incident scene, so that he can effectively deploy resources for operations within well-defined geographical areas.

These areas shall be identified in accordance with the following guidelines.

6.6.1.1 The four sides of the incident scene shall be designated as Divisions. The incident commander shall designate the side of the incident scene that bears the postal address of the location as Division "A". Where the incident scene has no postal address, the incident commander shall select any side to designate Division "A". Proceeding in a clockwise direction, the remaining sides shall be identified as Division "B", "C", and "D".

6.6.1.2 Multi-story buildings shall have each floor designated as a Division, beginning with the first floor, which shall be designated as Division 1. Subsequent floors shall be designated Divisions 2, 3, etc., corresponding to the actual floor level above the first floor. In relatively small single story buildings, a Division operating on the inside of the building may utilize Interior Division to designate their relative geographical area.

6.6.1.3 The roof and basement of buildings shall be designated Roof Division and Basement Division respectively.

6.6.2 Command Organization: It will be the ongoing responsibility of the incident commander to develop and maintain an organized command structure as required for effective operations. The command structure will be based upon the deployment of divisions or groups, as needed to divide the incident scene into smaller manageable units. This structure will enable the incident commander to maintain a manageable span of control over the entire operation. The command organization must develop at a pace, which stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. As the number of operating divisions and/or groups expands, the IC may assign an operations officer to maintain an effective span of control. The IC shall remain directly responsible for each basic element of the Incident Command System not delegated during the course of an incident.

6.6.2.1 Incident Commander: The IC function of IMS is responsible for the overall command and control of the incident. The IC provides strategic direction for all activities of an incident and provides the process that ensures fire fighter safety and health during an incident. The IC is directly responsible for all other functions and staff positions unless specifically designated during an incident.

6.6.2.1.1 Command Staff: Personnel assigned to perform activities that are not part of the line organization. These positions may include the following:

- Safety Officer
- Information Officer (formerly Public Information Officer)
- Liaison Officer
- Chief's Aide
- Deputy IC
- Scribe

6.6.2.2 Planning Function: The planning function or "chief" provides for the collection of information, evaluating information, and disseminating information to and for the IC. Planning provides for resource accountability, deployment, and status.

6.6.2.3 Logistics Function: The logistics function or "chief" provides for the coordination of facilities, services, supplies, equipment, feeding, medical services, and rehabilitation.

6.6.2.4 Operations Function: The operations function or "chief" provides for the tactical completion of the strategic objectives established by the IC. Operations provides for direct supervision of the emergency incident.

6.6.2.5 Finance Function: The finance function or "chief", depending on the complexity of an incident, provides accountability for the financial resources needed to complete the strategic objectives established by the IC.

## **6.7 ACCOUNTABILITY**

6.7.1 Each fire fighter assigned to a Washington Township Fire Department company shall be issued two (2) accountability tags. These accountability tags shall remain with the member's turn out gear for use during any incident to which the fire department may respond.

6.7.2 When responding to an incident aboard any fire department apparatus, one (1) accountability tag shall be placed on the ring or other device provided by the fire fighter riding aboard the apparatus. Tags placed on apparatus shall be collected from apparatus and organized by the incident safety officer or a designated accountability officer near the IC. The tags will be used to determine incident scene accountability and to organize fire fighters into division to which they may be assigned. Tags placed on apparatus will be further used to transfer the names of fire fighters operating at the incident to standard ICS forms such as ICS Form 201, ICS Form 203, ICS Form 204, ICS, Form 207, and ICS Form 211. Copies of all standard ICS forms are included in the attachment for this SOP.

- 6.7.3 All fire fighters entering a building, structure, other area designated as a hot zone, any other hazardous zone, or another division shall leave their second accountability tag at the entrance door or control point before entering. Fire fighters shall re-acquire their second tag upon leaving the hazardous zone or division.
- 6.7.4 The IC shall ensure that during any emergency incident which requires fire fighters to enter buildings, structures, or any other hazardous area that may be deemed immediately dangerous to life or health, a Fire fighter Assistance and Search Team (FAST) is assembled at the scene. The FAST (team) shall consist of at least two (2) qualified fire fighters with appropriate tools and personal protective equipment.
- 6.7.5 Any fire fighter reporting to an established division shall report to the division officer upon entering the area to receive an assignment.
- 6.7.6 Personnel assigned as division officers shall maintain knowledge of the fire fighters operating within and assigned to their respective divisions.
- 6.7.7 The IC may call for accountability of personnel assigned in any particular division or the entire scene as necessary. The IC shall call for accountability for a particular division or the entire scene should conditions deteriorate causing an imminent hazardous condition threatening fire fighter safety.
- 6.7.8 Appropriate warning shall be provided to all personnel operating at the scene of an incident by use of air horns and radio alert tones signaling accountability and evacuation of the building, structure, other area designated as a hot zone, or any other hazardous zone. Apparatus operators will sound air horns and sirens for approximately thirty (30) seconds to signal evacuation.
- 6.7.9 During accountability, division officers shall report to the IC the status of personnel assigned to their respective division.
- 6.7.10 The IC shall deploy the assembled FAST (team) should a division officer report any missing personnel from their respective divisions. The IC shall establish a FAST division, re-evaluate the incident action plan, and deploy enough resources to affect a safe rescue of missing personnel.
- 6.7.11 Command vehicles will maintain a supply of spare accountability tags for use by mutual aid or other agencies operating under the fire department's jurisdiction. Division officers shall ensure that mutual aid or other agency personnel operating within their respective divisions utilize the accountability system describe within.

## **6.8 EMERGENCY INCIDENT REHABILITATION**

- 6.8.1 The IC shall consider establishing an area designated for fire fighter rehabilitation and shall assign a division officer to supervise the area. The "rehab" division may be supervised by a qualified member of the fire department or by EMS personnel committed to the incident.
- 6.8.2 Provisions within the "rehab" division should include medical evaluation and treatment, food and fluid replenishment, and relief from extreme climatic conditions if possible.
- 6.8.3 The "rehab" division should be established at a relatively safe distance from the "hot zone" of the incident scene.
- 6.8.4 The "rehab" division officer shall determine when a fire fighter may return to an operating division based upon a medical assessment and other circumstances as necessary.
- 6.8.5 Division officers shall monitor fire fighters operating within their control and shall notify the IC when relief and reassignment is necessary for fatigued crews.

## **6.9 STAGING**

- 6.9.1 All apparatus responding to an emergency incident shall proceed directly to the scene as follows:

### *Structure & Fire Responses*

- First due engine to the tactical front considering best operating position for fire attack without compromising fire fighter safety and positioning for the first due ladder company.
- Second due engine to take a position at the nearest water source or in a position to best provide a water supply.
- First due ladder company to take a position for best operating advantage.
- All other apparatus shall utilize Level 1 staging, or shall utilize Level 2 staging if so designated by the IC.

### *Rescue Responses*

- First due rescue and / or rescue engine to the scene to facilitate rescue operations with tools.
  - Second due engine to Level 1 staging and send manpower forward. The IC may order the second due to proceed into the scene to provide fire protection when necessary.
  - All other apparatus shall utilize Level 1 staging, or shall utilize Level 2 staging if so designated by the IC.
- 6.9.2 Level I staging is approximately one (1) block from the incident scene in the direction of travel for the apparatus. Level 2 staging may be some distance from

the scene and is capable of serving as an assembly area for apparatus and is clearly off of any major roadways.

- 6.9.3 All apparatus assigned to staging shall maintain crew integrity except as described above or as designated by the IC.
- 6.9.4 The first arriving line officer shall become the staging officer, unless otherwise designated by the IC.
- 6.9.5 All apparatus arriving at Level I or Level 2 staging will report "... on location Level 1 or Level 2 staging".

## **6.10 COMMUNICATIONS**

- 6.10.1 Clear and concise communications during an emergency incident is essential to fire fighter safety. All fire department personnel shall communicate messages in an effective natural tone of voice. Clear text, the use of plain English in radio communications shall be utilized.
- 6.10.2 Radio communications shall include identification of the unit being called first followed by the unit calling.
- 6.10.3 Specific orders given to units by the IC should be briefly re-stated to confirm the orders when possible.
- 6.10.4 The use of sarcasm, nicknames, profanity, or interference with any other radio transmission shall be strictly prohibited.
- 6.10.5 The use of "PRIORITY" at an emergency incident over the radio should be restricted to emergency situations that may affect fire fighter safety, civilian safety, or another critical circumstance.
- 6.10.6 Whenever practical, face-to-face communication should be used.

## **6.11 ATTACHMENTS — STANDARDIZED ICS FORMS**

- Incident Briefing (ICS Form 201)
- Incident Objectives (ICS Forms 202)
- Organizational Assignment List (ICS Form 203)
- Assignment List (ICS Form 204)
- Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS Form 205)
- Incident Organizational Chart (ICS Form 207)
- Incident Status Summary (ICS Form 209)
- Check-In List (ICS Form 211)
- General Message (ICS Form 213)
- Unit Log (ICS Form 214)

- Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS Form 215)
- Radio Requirements Worksheet (ICS Form 216)
- Radio Frequency Assignment Worksheet (ICS Form 217)
- Support Vehicle Inventory (ICS Form 218)