

SECTION VI— INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS)

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.