

General Order: **99-07**

Effective Date: August 31, 1999

Revision Date:

**City of Lancaster Fire Department
General Orders**

Title: Incident Command Procedures

Originator – Fire Chief (Signature/Date): _____

The following Incident Command System (ICS) procedures are to be used at all emergency operations where more than two (2) LFD companies are working or dispatched, and at any other time where the ICS concept is advantageous, regardless of the size of the incident.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMAND

The first-arriving Company Officer must assume command. The first-arriving Company Officer remains in that function until relieved by the Shift Commander or a Chief Officer.

All command transfers will include face-to-face discussion by the Officers involved, and a radio message to Dispatch that command is relocated to a different unit and/or person. The Incident Commander (IC) who is relieved may be assigned to a sector or may remain at the command post to assist the relieving Chief Officer. The Shift Commander and Chief Officers may exercise an option in regard to assuming command upon their arrival.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

Under the ICS procedures, all radio transmissions shall be to "Command" and/or a "Sector," or between "Command" and "Dispatch." Individual sectors are not to make requests directly to Dispatch; all such messages are directed to the IC, who will handle in an appropriate manner. Radio identifications are to be by fireground assignment when possible ("Interior," or "Command," or "Ventilation," or "Third Floor Sector," etc.). "Engine 3" (or "Engine 2 Officer," etc.) designations may not be used.

The minimum radio messages to Dispatch from Command on all ICS incidents will be as follows:

- Report of conditions on arrival
- Designate command
- All clear (primary search completed – victims removed)
- Fire under control
- Negative CO (Carbon Monoxide) test completed
- Command terminated
- Unit or person in charge of property

These minimums apply to all incidents, including those of minor nature; more complex incidents will necessitate additional communications.

COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to accomplish the following at all incidents:

- Assure Life Safety
- Engage in Fire Control Activities
- Initiate Loss Prevention Measures
- Insure Safety of LFD Personnel

In respect of these responsibilities, the IC must delegate routine decisions, and must restrict him/herself to critical matters.

COMMAND FUNCTIONS

Designate Sectors: The IC must assign personnel to necessary tasks, either as a fraction of or as a complete fire company. Sector names may be related to the function (rescue, ventilation, salvage, etc.), or may refer to their location (interior, rear, east, etc.).

As the operation becomes more complex, and as more apparatus and personnel are put to use, additional sectors will be required. All Lancaster Fire Department incidents which generate a second (or greater) alarm must include the following sectors: Rehabilitation, Safety, and Staging. REHAB is for resting and treatment of exhausted and/or injured firefighters; SAFETY is a roving Officer to observe working conditions and change unsafe situations; and STAGING is for the holding of unused companies and parking for apparatus "taxis." The intent of the above sectors should be utilized on all incidents; however, actual designated sectors will be required on all multiple-alarm incidents. Staff officers or other personnel may be assigned as sector commanders.

Primary Search: The response to all alarms of fire in a structure must include as the first priority a primary search for occupants or victims. **It is mandatory that an "All Clear" radio message be transmitted by the IC to Dispatch for all incidents.** The primary search must include all portions of the building which are in hazard due to the fire and into which firefighters can gain access.

A primary search may only be a visual scan in a situation where no smoke or fire is present; it may be a multiple-company operation in a large apartment building, hotel, or hospital. Any area of a building fully involved in fire is considered to be inaccessible for primary search purposes; this inaccessibility is to be reported to Dispatch by radio.

If a search team locates a victim, that fact is to be radioed to the IC or Sector Commander, along with information regarding building areas yet unsearched. The search team is to rescue the located victim; the IC or Sector Commander will assign the RIT to assist with the rescue, and designate a second search team to complete the primary search.

Secondary Search: This search is conducted during or after fire extinguishment, especially in areas where a primary search was not possible. The secondary search is to verify the absence of (or presence of) victims, prior to overhaul and command termination. Ideally, the secondary search should be conducted by different personnel than those who conducted the primary search.

Terminate Command: At the conclusion of each incident, when companies are de-committed, or when activities are diminished to two-company level, the IC must transmit by radio to Headquarters, "Command Terminated" prior to shutting down the command post. If any LFD units are to remain at the scene, an additional radio message placing a specific company in charge should be included (Example: "Command to Headquarters, Command is terminated, Engine 2 is in charge of this location"). When the last LFD unit clears the scene, that radio message shall include the identity of the person who is left in charge of the building (name, building owner, manager, etc.).

COMMAND TECHNICIAN FUNCTIONS

The Command Technician, when available, is assigned the tasks of resource management and radio communications. On multiple alarm incidents, a Command Technician will operate at the Command Post. The Command Technician will utilize the Tactical Control Sheet, or other department-authorized tracking system, to maintain accurate information regarding fire company locations, sector commander identifications, resources already assigned, resources available, and the location of various sectors. The Command Technician must stay at the Command Post to carry out these functions.

SECTOR COMMANDER FUNCTIONS

It is the responsibility of the Sector Commander to understand any/all assignments from the IC, and to properly accomplish those designated tasks. A Sector Commander is obligated to report these items to the IC: **POSITION, PROGRESS, NEEDS**. The safety of all assigned personnel is paramount in the responsibilities of Sector Commander. The Sector Commander may be a Company Officer or the most senior person in a team; however, the individual assigned as Sector Commander by the IC is in charge of that sector regardless of rank, unless and until replaced by the IC.

Sector Commanders are also obligated to report to the IC when an assignment is completed and their availability for reassignment.

FIRE COMPANY FUNCTIONS

The ICS procedures are designed to maintain and preserve the management concept of "span of control" on the fireground. Fire companies at times may be assigned two tasks to be completed separately, or they may be operated as a complete unit, either as part of or as a whole sector. It is the Company Officer's responsibility to train his/her personnel in the ICS procedures in order to ensure effective operations under all conditions.