



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:
Section:
Original Date:
Revised Date:

PURPOSE

This policy shall provide information on the practical implementation of NIMS objectives as they related to organizing incidents, maintaining span of control, and utilizing appropriate staff functions.

POLICY

This NIMS Model shall be used to maintain an effective span of control and workload for all supervisory personnel.

Definitions

Incident Commander (IC) – The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations.

Officer – A member of the Command Staff; that is, Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, or Liaison Officer. Command Staff report directly to the IC.

Section Chief – A member of the General Staff; that is, Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, or Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Director – An individual responsible for command of a Branch; that is, Suppression Branch Director, Medical Branch Director, or a Service or Support Branch Director.

Supervisor – An individual responsible for command of a Division (geographic area) or a Group (specific function).

Unit Leader – An individual responsible for managing a particular activity in the Operations (Triage Unit Leader under a Medical Group); Planning (Resource Unit Leader); Logistics (Supply Unit Leader); or Finance/Administration Section (Cost Unit Leader).

Command Structure

1. *Establishing Division and Groups*

Divisions are responsible for all activities occurring in their assigned geographic area except for those things specifically assigned to groups (functional assignments). Complex fire situations soon exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. Divisions and groups reduce the span of control of the overall command function to more manageably sized units. They allow Command to communicate principally with division or group supervisors, rather than fire companies, providing an effective ICS structure and fire ground organization.

When effective divisions and/or groups have been established, Command can concentrate on overall strategy and resource allocation. Each group and division supervisor is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at their disposal and for communicating needs and progress to Command. Command determines strategic objectives and assigns available resources to the group or division where they are most needed. See Figure 1.

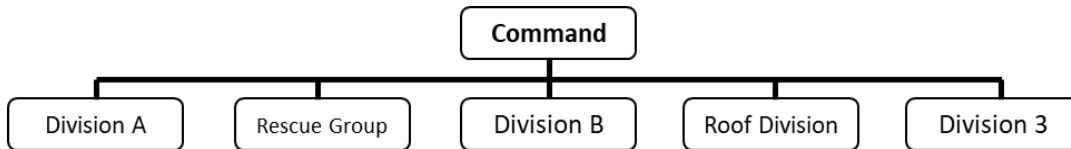
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Figure 1



Group and division supervisors will be responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their group or division. This requires each supervisor to:

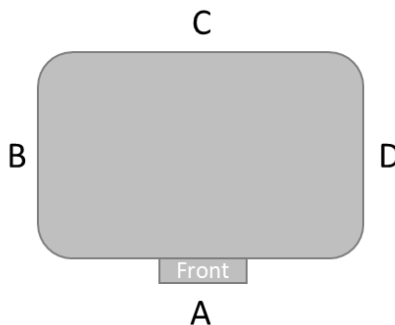
1. Monitor work progress
2. Redirect activities as necessary
3. Coordinate with related activities (i.e.: fire attack group coordinate with the ventilation group)
4. Monitor welfare of assigned personnel
5. Request additional resources as needed
6. Communicate with Command as necessary

Geographic Division Designation:

The front or address side of the building is designated “Division A”, and the remaining sides are given a description of B, C, or D in a clockwise manner. See **Figure 2**.

For clarity purposes during radio communications, the phonetic designations of “Alpha,” “Bravo,” “Charlie,” and “Delta” are suggested. For example, “*IC from Division Delta.*”

Figure 2



2. Establishing Branches

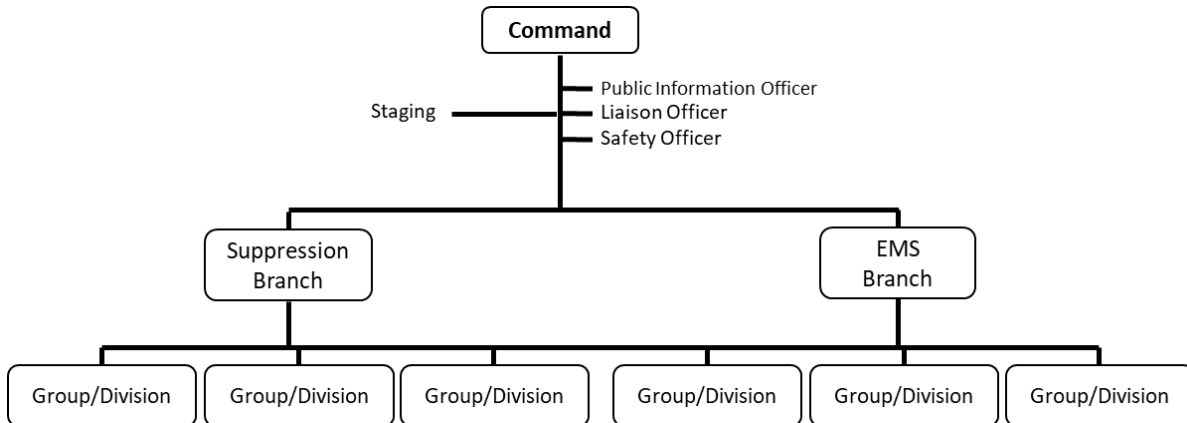
At large scale or complex incidents, the number of groups and/or divisions may create a significant span-of-control problem. When this occurs, consideration should be given to the implementation of Branches. Branches are also of great value when large numbers of resources are committed to a specific functional activity.

A Branch is an organizational level between groups/divisions and Command, Operations, or Logistics. A Branch is responsible for implementing the portion of the incident action plan appropriate for that particular Branch. Branches are managed by a Branch Director. See **Figure 3**.

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Figure 3



3. Establishing Command Staff

At large scale or complex incidents, consideration may have to be given to the functions of safety, liaison, and information officers. These functions should be staffed when their demands begin to affect Command's ability to perform Command functions.

Safety Officer

This officer must monitor and assess the safety hazards and unsafe situations to develop measures for ensuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer has the authority to bypass the chain of command when it is necessary to correct unsafe acts immediately.

Liaison Officer

A Liaison Officer is the point of contact for assisting or coordinating agencies. This is essential to avoid duplication of efforts. Command may establish a liaison when other agencies are reporting to the scene or where Command cannot communicate with mutual aid personnel.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer is responsible for interface with the media and other appropriate agencies. This position must coordinate all releases of significant information with Command.

4. Establishing General Staff

General staff positions are only used at the most complex and large incidents. This is because over a hundred individual resources can be handled effectively before some General Staff positions are necessary. The responsibilities of each General Staff position are described below.

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Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section is responsible for the direction and coordination of all incident tactical operations. The roles and responsibilities of the operations Chief include:

- Manage incident tactical priorities.
- Coordinate activities with Command.
- Implement an incident action plan.
- Assign resources to tactical-level areas based on tactical objectives and priorities.
- Build an effective organizational structure through the use of branches.
- Provide tactical objectives for branches.

Logistics Section Chief

The responsibilities of the Logistics Section include providing services and support to meet all incident or event needs. The specific responsibilities will include:

- Provide medical aid for incident personnel and manage responder rehabilitation.
- Providing and re-supplying all expendable supplies such as air, oxygen, medical supplies, foam, rehabilitation equipment and supplies, etc.
- Providing and coordinating refueling and repair of apparatus.
- Coordinate immediate critical incident stress debriefing functions.
- Provide a communication plan and communications equipment.
- Provide food and associated supplies.
- Coordinate provision of specialized equipment or services required at the scene from other City departments or outside agencies and provide liaison as required.
- Forecast and obtain resource needs (coordinated with Planning).
- Provide incident base/Command facilities.

It is the responsibility of Command to make an early determination of situations requiring the establishment of this section. Command may assign any individual or company to establish a Logistics Section. If not delegated, the responsibility remains with Command.

Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section is responsible for collecting and evaluating incident situation information, preparing situation status reports, displaying situation information, maintaining status of resources, developing an incident action plan, and preparing incident-related documentation. The roles and responsibilities of the Planning Chief include:

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- Evaluate current strategy and plan with Command.
- Maintain resource status and personnel accountability.
- Refine and recommend any needed changes to the incident action plan with input from Operations Chief.
- Evaluate the incident organization and span of control.
- Forecast possible incident outcomes.
- Use technical assistance as needed.
- Evaluate tactical priorities, specific critical factors, and safety.
- Gather, update, improve, and manage situation status with a standard systematic approach.
- Coordinate with any needed outside agencies for planning needs.
- Plan for incident demobilization.
- Maintain incident records.

Finance/Administration Section Chief

The Finance/Administrative Section is responsible for monitoring incident-related costs and administering procurement contracts. The roles and responsibilities of the Finance Chief include:

- Procuring of services and supplies from source within and outside the organization (Coordinates with Logistics Section Chief)
- Document all financial costs of the incident.
- Documentation for possible cost recovery for services and supplies.
- Analyze and manage legal risks for incidents.
- Documentation for compensation and claims for injury.

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