



<b>General Order Number:</b> 06-20	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 2010
<b>Division:</b> Emergency Operations	
<b>Chapter:</b> Incident Management System (IMS)	
<b>By Order of the Fire Chief:</b> Marc S. Bashoor	<b>Revision Date:</b> N/A

**POLICY**

To establish a procedure that will provide for a uniform “on-the-scene” management system for emergency operations.

- Allows for initial implementation of an integrated emergency scene management system during fire/rescue incidents.
- Provides for the escalation of resources and command structure, as necessary, to allow for an orderly transition of command and command functions.
- Can be expanded or scaled down to meet any situation that may be encountered.
- Interfaces with existing applicable General Orders.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Base Staging** – A location remote from the emergency scene in anticipation of use at an incident. This may include an area for the rehabilitation of personnel between shifts at a large scale, long-term incident.

**Branch** – The organizational level in the Incident Management System that brings together multiple elements under Sections. For example, Suppression Branch, Haz Mat Branch.

**Command (Incident Commander)** – Responsible for the overall management.

**Communications Officer** – Responsible for the handling of radio and telephone voice and data communications for the Incident Commander.

**Division** – Responsible for the operations within a defined geographic area under the direction of Command or other designated officer (divisions are locations).

**EMS Officer** – Responsible for the EMS group operations at an incident, appointing EMS functionaries as needed, requesting EMS assets from Command.

**Emergency Command Unit** – A vehicle specifically equipped with communications capabilities and other resources, which may be brought to the scene of an incident to serve as the facility for the Command Post.



**Functional Areas** – Areas of the incident scene requiring identification, including:

- **Command Post** – The physical location from which Command exercises command and control over the entire incident.
- **Public Information Area** – The location where public information reports are disseminated to the media.
- **Single Resource** – The first level of organizational reference (also see “Unit”) in the IMS. Refers to an individual person, with or without a piece of equipment or vehicle.
- **Staging Area** – The location where responding personnel and equipment would assemble for assignment.
- **Triage Area** – The location where injured persons are evacuated for medical survey and emergency treatment prior to transport.

**Group** – Responsible for the operations with a specific functional assignment under the direction of Command or other designated officer. Groups are tasks, i.e., Search Group, Safety Group.

**Liaison Officer** – Responsible for coordinating with other agencies, as needed or requested by Command, including local, state, federal, and private sector.

**Logistics Section** – Responsible to provide facilities, services, and materials.

**Operations Section** – Responsible to implement strategic Command decisions.

**Planning Section** – Responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources.

**Public Information Officer** – Responsible for the dissemination of factual and timely reports to the news media.

**Safety Group Supervisor** – Responsible for assessing hazardous and unsafe situations and developing measures to assure personnel safety.

**Section** – The organizational level having responsibility for primary segments of incident operations such as Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

**Staging Area** – A location near the emergency scene where personnel and equipment are assembled and can be deployed within three minutes.

**Staging Officer** – Responsible for the assembly and accountability of personnel and equipment at the staging area.

**Unit** – The first level of organizational reference (also see “Single Resource”) in the IMS. Refers to a piece of pieces of equipment with a crew of more than one person.



## **PROCEDURES / RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **General Provisions**

The IMS concepts shall be utilized during all incidents.

Upon arrival at the scene of an incident, the first arriving unit officer-in-charge is to complete an initial size-up, and “establish command” or “pass command.” “Passing command” should be limited to those situations where the physical participation of the unit officer is critical to the safe, effective operation of their crew, and will adversely affect their ability to establish command.

### **Establishing Command**

The unit officer establishing command shall:

- Announce the correct address
- Announce number of floors
- Announce type of construction
- Announce type of occupancy
- Announce conditions found or other pertinent information
- Identify the “COMMAND” by name (i.e., Landover Road Command)
- Announce location of the Incident Command Post (ICP)

The first arriving unit officer shall maintain the command, even after “passing command” until the 2<sup>nd</sup> arriving officer or chief officer assumed the command.

NOTE: The “COMMAND” designation shall not change for the duration of the incident.

Personnel shall use the street name or other site-specific identifier for Command reference. The use of community or company names or numbers should be avoided. This will help avoid possible confusion should multiple incidents occur in a specific geographic area.

Example:

Engine 811 arrives at scene of house fire:

“Engine 811 on the scene, 3841 West Street, with a 2 story, wood frame, single family dwelling, with nothing evident. Engine 811 is establishing the ‘West Street Command,’ with the exception of the first due special service, have the remainder of the units proceed” (in accordance with General Order 06-01).

NOTE: In those situations similar to the above, nothing is to prohibit that initial Incident Commander from investigating as part of their crew.



**Public Safety Communications (PSC):**

“Attention units on West Street, Engine 811 will have the West Street Command, with the exception of Truck 801, other units proceed.”

NOTE: Once “Command” has been established in accordance with this Order, PSC will not provide ‘courtesy returns’ to ranking responding officers. Command officers not on the scene shall refrain from making operational decisions or transmissions about the incident unless there is a demonstrable safety concern.

**Passing Command**

When the participation of the first arriving unit officer is critical to the safe, effective operation of that unit, and command functions cannot be appropriately established, he/she shall “pass the command.” When command has been passed, the officer on the 2<sup>nd</sup> due engine company shall establish command of the incident until properly relieved.

Example:

Engine 811 arrives at the scene of a house fire:

“Engine 811 on the scene, 3841 West Street, with a 2-story, wood frame, single family dwelling, with smoke showing and people trapped, Engine 811 is passing the command.”

PSC:

“Attention units on West Street, Engine 811 is passing the West Command to Engine 812” (the 2<sup>nd</sup> due engine).

**Assuming Command**

Upon arrival of the first command officer, transfer of command from the first NON-COMMAND OFFICER incident commander may occur without a face-to-face meeting, provided that the pertinent information is relayed to the assuming command officer.

Example, Battalion Chief 810 arrives to assume command from Engine 811:

“Battalion Chief 810 on the scene assuming West Street Command, Command Post on Side Alpha.”

**Command Post Location**

Incident Commander will select a strategic location for the Command Post to direct all operations.

Command vehicle, lobby of a high-rise, etc., provides ideal location for Command Post.



On major incidents, an Emergency Command Unit shall be dispatched and positioned appropriately on site, to be utilized as the Command Post.

### **Command Control Chart**

Prepared by Command as a tracking tool to provide the current status of the incident and the resources committed. The Incident Commander shall prepare a Command Control Chart on all incidents to which they respond.

Updated and used to review the incident, identify potential needs, and provide other incident management information.

Used on all incidents where three or more units (engine, trucks, and/or rescue squads) are utilized, whether or not there is a command officer responding or on the scene.

As the needs or size of an incident expands, Command shall create sections, branches, divisions, and groups as necessary to handle the various problems encountered.

On larger incidents, Command may need to create additional layers of management to maintain a reasonable span of control.

The optimum span of control for an individual involved in emergency operations is five subordinate personnel, with a range of three to seven.

- The middle layer of incident management may include an Operations Section and Logistics Section to divide the operational and logistical needs of the incident.
- Other divisions of the incident shall be created as needed.

Responding command officers are to report in person to the Command Post for assignment, unless otherwise directed.

At no time shall chief officers self deploy or freelance on a fire scene.

Once Command has been established, all radio transmissions to and from the incident scene shall be directed through Command.

All units on the scene and in staging are to utilize the appropriate channel, as directed.

PSC will advise what channel is to be used by command.

The radio designations of division and group supervisors shall reflect their incident assignment as given by Command.

Normal radio identification names shall not be used after an assignment of incident identifier.



Command shall be the only unit to authorize requests for additional resources.

### **Transfer of Command**

Shall be in accordance with the provision of General Order governing the Chain-of-Command.

Shall generally be face-to-face meeting of the two commanders to review the status of the incident.

The incident status review should include:

- General incident status.
- Location, extent, and conditions of emergency.

PSC shall be notified when the transfer of command procedure has been completed.

The new Incident Commander shall assume the title of "Command."

The relieved officer shall be utilized to be the best advantage of the new Incident Commander.

### **Division and Group Designations**

Divisions shall be assigned based on the geographic location in which they are operating.

For a working incident in a single-family dwelling there shall normally be assigned an Interior Division to coordinate all activities within the structure, although nothing is to prohibit the Incident Commander from further dividing the interior management into multiple divisions, i.e., Basement or Terrace Division, Division 1, Division 2, Roof Division, Attic Division, etc.

When operating in a multi-story structure, it will usually be necessary to designate division locations by floor. This system of geographical designation uses the floor number, as shown above to designate divisions. Divisions shall be numbered in accordance with the convention already established within the building. For example: Floors designated as Floor 1 = "Division 1;" Parking level or P1 level = "Division P1;" or Mezzanine level 4/5 = "Mezzanine Division 4/5."

Groups shall be assigned when specific tasks require dedicated attention. Group assignments will likely crossover multiple geographic divisions.

Group supervisors shall be made on the needs of the specific incident. The designation of the group shall be made according to the function on the incident, i.e.: Ventilation Group, Search Group, Triage Group, EMS Group, etc.

Group Supervisors will be responsible for the accountability of all personnel operating under their direction. Because groups can be operating throughout the incident scene, group Supervisors will be responsible to advise Division Supervisors when they have personnel operating in their geographical area for accountability purposes.



## Termination of Command

Command shall be in effect until the release of all units. As the incident is scaled down, command may be relinquished to subordinates with the appropriate transfer of command procedures.

## Responsibilities

Command shall be responsible for the overall management of the incident including:

- Establishment of the “2 in, 2 out” crew prior to interior firefighting operations or entry into an Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmosphere occurs, as outline in General Order 06-01. The Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) shall be established as additional units begin operations and shall be maintained until the situation is declared under control by the Incident Commander and the safety survey of the structure is complete.

NOTE: If, upon arrival at the scene, personnel find an immediate life-threatening situation, where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with less than four personnel on the scene, subject to a size-up and risk benefit analysis by the on-scene Incident Commander. Operations that present a significant risk to the safety of members shall be limited to situations where there is a potential to save endangered lives.

- Accountability of all personnel operating on the emergency scene.
- Development and implementation of strategic decisions.
- Designation of Safety Group supervisor on all incidents.
- Organization of a Management Team capable of handling the incident, including:
  - Identifying Division and Group Supervisors.
  - Preparing a Command Control Chart.
  - Authorizing the addition or release of units, etc.
- Identify areas or functions that need specific attention and organize appropriate divisions or groups.
- Appoint division and group supervisors to command those assignments until relieved.
  - Units assigned to divisions/groups report directly to division/group officer.
  - Division/group supervisors shall be responsible for providing Command, or section/branch leaders with progress reports that contain:
    - Current information about needs and accomplishments of the division or group.
    - Accountability of all personnel operating in the division or group.
    - Completion of specific tasks.
    - Other pertinent information.



NOTE: For accountability purposes, and because groups can be operating throughout the incident scene, group supervisors will be responsible to advise division supervisors when they have personnel operating in their geographical area.

- The division and group supervisors shall be identified for radio purposes by the function or area for which they are responsible.
  - Command shall assign the identifier when creating the division or group.
  - The division or group supervisor shall answer by the division or group name instead of normal unit identifier.

Examples:

“Roof Division”  
“Division 2”  
“Evacuation Group”  
“Haz Mat Group”

- Colored vests or armbands shall be used by designated division and group supervisors and other appropriate command officers as practical, and when available, with the following guidelines:
  - On second alarms, hazardous materials incidents, and other major incidents deemed necessary by Command.
  - Color coding of the vests and armbands shall be in accordance with the Council of Governments Mutual Aid Operations Plan (see Attachment #1).
  - Appropriate armbands will be utilized on the emergency scene as designated by Command.
  - Command vests shall be carried on the Emergency Command Unit.

### Safety Group Supervisor

In general, responsible for ensuring that all safety procedures and practices are observed on the emergency scene.

- Observe existing conditions.
- Identify potentially hazardous conditions that may develop.
- Once identified, formulate measures to protect the safety of personnel.

The Safety Group Supervisor shall have the authority and responsibility to halt unsafe acts that may occur on the emergency scene, including, but not limited to:

- Authority to halt or alter any emergency scene operation that is determined to be unsafe.
- Authority to order personnel to immediately comply with all safety regulations and Departmental safety procedures.
- Authority to order non-compliant personnel from the emergency scene (with the consent of the Incident Commander).





No provision in this Order shall relieve any officer of firefighter from the responsibility of halting any unsafe act or behavior on the emergency scene.

- The prevention of unsafe conditions/acts is the responsibility of all personnel operating on the emergency scene, regardless of rank or position.
- Violations are to be reported to the Safety Group Supervisor or Incident Commander for appropriate action.

### Operational Guidelines

The Incident Commander will be responsible for scene safety until the Safety Group Supervisor is established.

### Safety Group Supervisor Criteria

- Appointed by the Incident Commander when the Incident Management System is implemented.
- Identified as Safety Group Supervisor.
- Normally a Command Officer, as outlined in General Order 11-06, Chain-of-Command. This is to ensure the requisite experience and authority inherent to the rank.
- A subordinate officer and/or crew may be appointed to assist with the Safety Group Supervisor or to assist as Secondary Safety Group Supervisor. This shall be coordinated with the Staging Officer and the Incident Commander.

PSC shall keep the Incident Commander advised of other responding command officers so that the Incident Commander may designate an appropriate Safety Group Supervisor.

PSC shall ensure that a second command officer is dispatched in the event that only one is responding to a “working” incident.

The Safety Group Supervisor shall normally report to the Command Post.

- He/she will have to be flexible and mobile on the scene to best survey overall operations.
- The Safety Group Supervisor shall don a red armband or vest.

The Safety Group Supervisor and subsequent safety officers/companies shall not engage in operations unless safety is jeopardized.

### Safety Group Supervisor

- Shall enforce all safety regulations in a fair and equitable manner.
- Shall ensure all personnel are appropriately attired on the emergency scene.
- Shall establish safety zones to protect personnel or bystanders.



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

- Shall maintain liaison with the Incident Command Post to advise of changing conditions or hazards.
- Shall halt any operations deemed unsafe to personnel or bystanders.
- Shall assist in critique as it pertains to scene safety.
- Shall prepare written statements of unsafe, flagrant, or repeated safety violations, including personnel involved, and forward such reports to the Incident Commander and Department Safety Officer.
- Shall assist in the investigation of firefighter injuries and deaths.
- Shall ensure accountability of all personnel operating on the emergency scene.

### **REFERENCES**

Attachment #1 - Function Color Coding

Attachment #2 - Scenario

Attachment #3 - Diagram

### **FORMS / ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

Chart 1

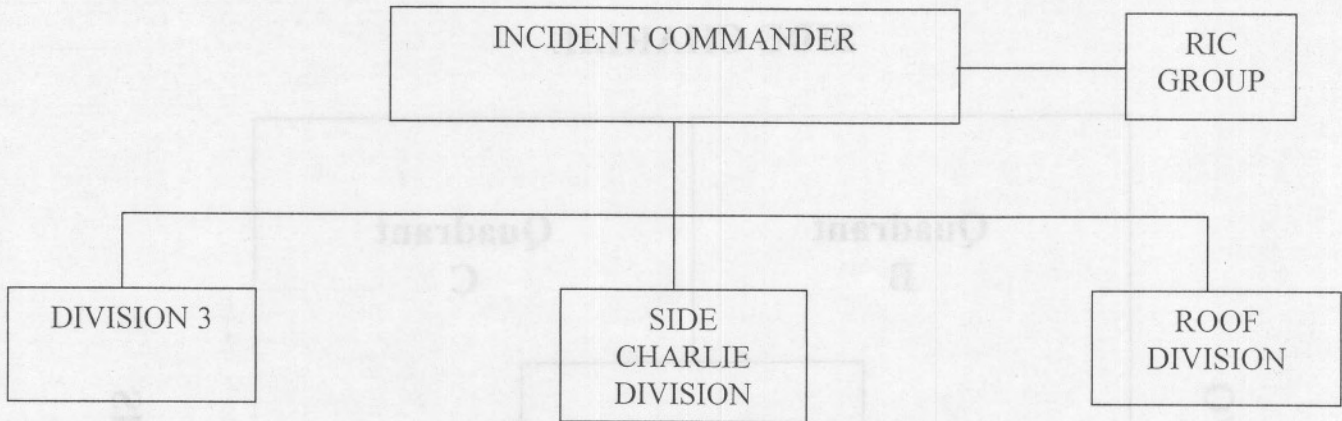
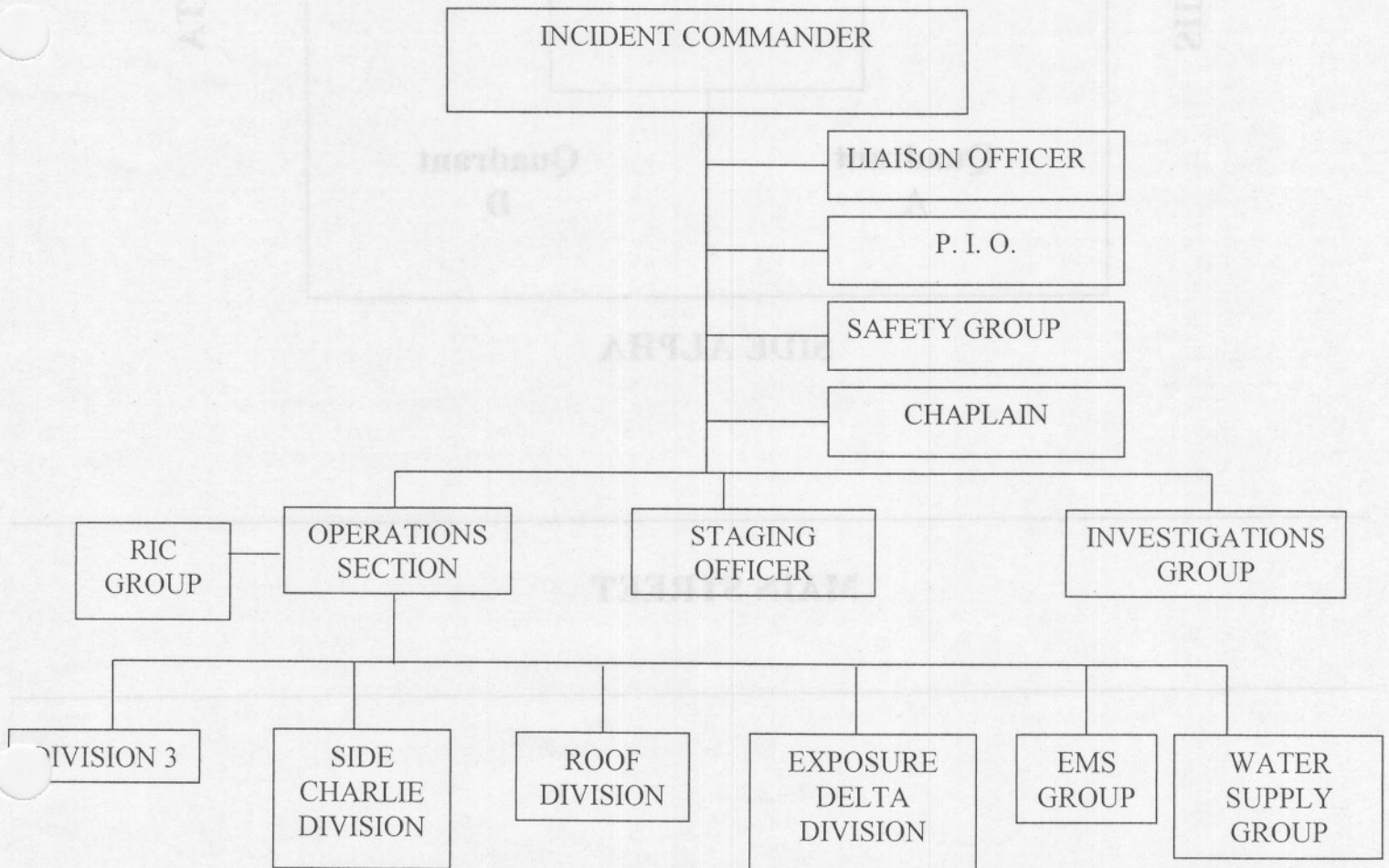


Chart 2

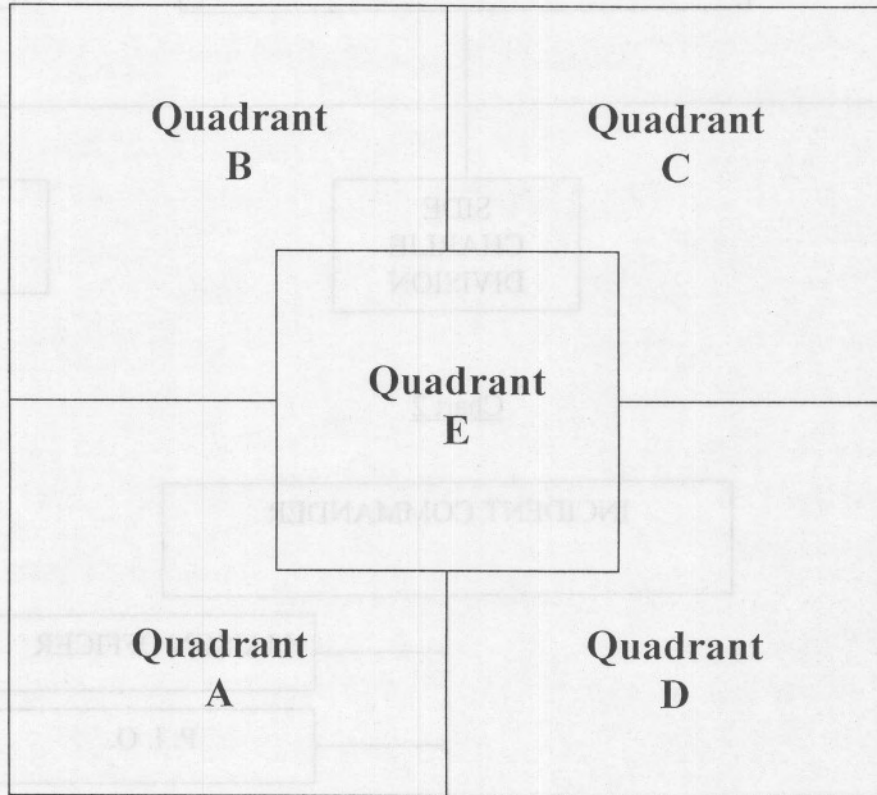


Attachment 3

**SIDE CHARLIE**

**SIDE BRAVO**

**SIDE DELTA**



**SIDE ALPHA**

**MAIN STREET**

