

VALLEJO FIRE DEPARTMENT
INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

I. PURPOSE:

- A. To provide for a systematic development of a complete, functional command organization designed to allow for single or multi-agency use.
- B. To provide standard procedures for establishing and transferring command.
- C. To identify command responsibility and options.
- D. To insure that strong, direct and visible command will be established as early as possible in the operation.
- E. To identify the personal techniques, traits and abilities associated with effective command.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

- A. All officers and acting officers of the Vallejo Fire Department shall be familiar with and be able to perform according to the policies outlined.
- B. All other members shall be familiar with the content of this document.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. The Incident Command System, as universally adopted by the fire service, has an extensive set of terms which are used to define various components and operations within the system. Attachment A is an inclusive list of these terms. Personnel should refer to Attachment A if they are unclear as to the meaning of a particular term used in this procedure.

IV. SCOPE:

- A. The Incident Command system shall provide for those actions required at all incidents.

V. PROCEDURE:

Every fire department can increase the effectiveness of their incident control and rescue efforts through the development of standard procedures that relate to emergency incident operations. It is impossible for a department to operate with any consistent effectiveness without such directives. These directives describe the standard procedures that the department applies on any incident within the framework of local conditions, capabilities, limitations and problems. These directives must also outline the expectations the department has for each operating unit. No amount of tactical training on the part of the individual department members will substitute for a lack of such standard procedures. These directives should assume a written form that can be instructed, reinforced and regularly reviewed and revised, as needed.

The following set of procedures relates to the rules and principles that regulate incident operations. These rules will universally apply to emergency situations regardless of the characteristics of the local area, size of the department or operating approach. The on-going application of these principles will produce standard and more predictable rescue and incident control results. Conversely, non-effective application of these principles will produce consistent incident dysfunctions, which is also quite predictable. This set of procedures is not exhaustive as they are necessarily restricted by time and space and are meant to offer only a basic and very simple conceptual framework for emergency incident operations and command. The following set of procedures offers a simple guide to a basic Incident Command System.

- A. On any emergency incident certain outcomes must be expected. The Incident Commander must assume overall responsibility for the following outcomes:
1. Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
 2. Incident stabilization.
 3. Conserve property after incident control is achieved.
 4. Provide for the safety, accountability and welfare of all personnel.

B. In order to complete the above responsibilities, the Incident Commander must perform the following functions:

1. Assume an effective command location/position and confirm command.
2. Transmit a brief initial radio report.
3. Rapidly evaluate conditions.
4. Develop an action plan.
5. Assign units as required.
6. Develop an organizational structure.
7. Provide continuing command.
8. Review and evaluate action plan and revise as required.
9. Request and assign additional units as required.
10. Demobilize and return companies and terminate command.

C. The Incident Command System describes a standard way of dividing Incident Command into smaller command units or areas. The effective Incident Commander must be able to organize his/her operations. The following principles must be applied to meet expectations of results:

1. Complex situations soon exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operations. The filling of Incident Command System positions will reduce the span of control of the overall command function to more manageable sized units (Figure 1). This allows command to communicate principally with Incident Command System position officers, rather than individual companies, providing an effective command structure and incident organization.

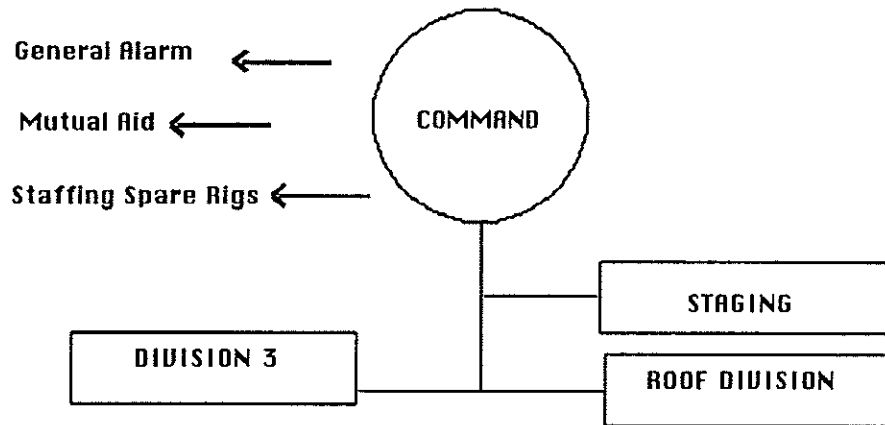


Figure 1

2. Filling the Incident Command System positions provides a system for Command to divide large scale operations geographically or functionally into effectively sized units. These positions are then responsible for operations involving a manageable number of companies in close proximity to each other.
3. When Incident Command System positions have been established, Command can concentrate on overall strategy and resource allocation. Each Incident Command System position officer is then responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at his/her disposal and for communicating needs and progress to his/her organizational supervisor. Command determines strategic objectives and assigns available resources to an area where they are most needed.
4. The filling of Incident Command System positions reduces the overall amount of incident radio communications. Most routine communications are conducted in a more effective face-to-face mode within the operating unit between the fire companies and their assigned organizational officers. This process eliminates many of the details of company operations from radio communication.

5. Safety of firefighting personnel represents a major reason for filling Incident Command System positions. Each organizational officer must maintain the capability to communicate with forces under his/her command so that he/she can control both the position and function of his/her assigned companies.
- D. The Incident Commander should begin to appoint Incident Command System positions based on the following factors:
1. When the Incident Commander forecasts situations which will eventually involve a number of companies beyond his/her capability to directly control. In such cases, early recognition and delegation are critical.
 2. When the Incident Commander can no longer effectively cope with the number of companies currently involved in the operation.
 3. When companies are involved in complex interior operations.
 4. When companies are operating from tactical positions over which command has little or no control.
 5. When the situation is such that close company control is required (i.e., structural conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load, marginal offensive situations and others).
- E. All subordinate Incident Command System positions created by command will be regulated by the following guidelines:
1. It will be the ongoing responsibility of command to assign organizational positions, as required, for effective incident operations.
 2. The number of companies assigned to an organizational position depends upon conditions within that assignment. Five companies represent the recommended Incident Command System span of control. Command will maintain an awareness of the number of companies operating under the Incident Command System positions and the capability of that officer to effectively operate.

3. Incident Command System positions established at an incident may be designated in the following manner:
- a. INCIDENT COMMANDER - Incident name (i.e., Sonoma Command)
 - b. STAGING AREAS - Geographical name (i.e., Hogan High)
 - c. BRANCHES - Numerical (i.e., - Branch 1) or Functional (i.e., Medical Branch)
 - d. DIVISIONS - Alphabetical (i.e., Division A); Geographical (i.e., Roof Division); or, Numerical [high rise only] (i.e., Division 9).
 - e. GROUPS - Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division.

i. Single-story Structure

Only two geographical divisions may be used. (Roof Division or Interior Division - Figure 2).

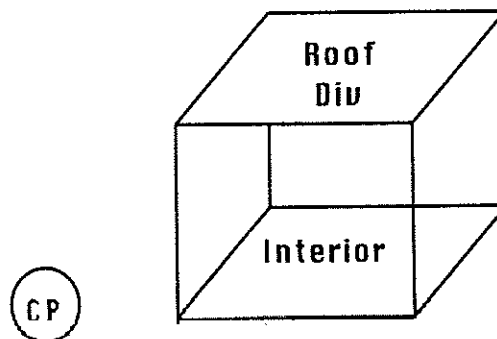


Figure 2

ii. Single-story structure with basement

Only three geographical divisions may be used. (Roof Division, Base Division or Interior Division - Figure 3).

In multi-story structures, all other interior division will be designated numerically in association with the floor the division is preparing on. (Three or more stories).

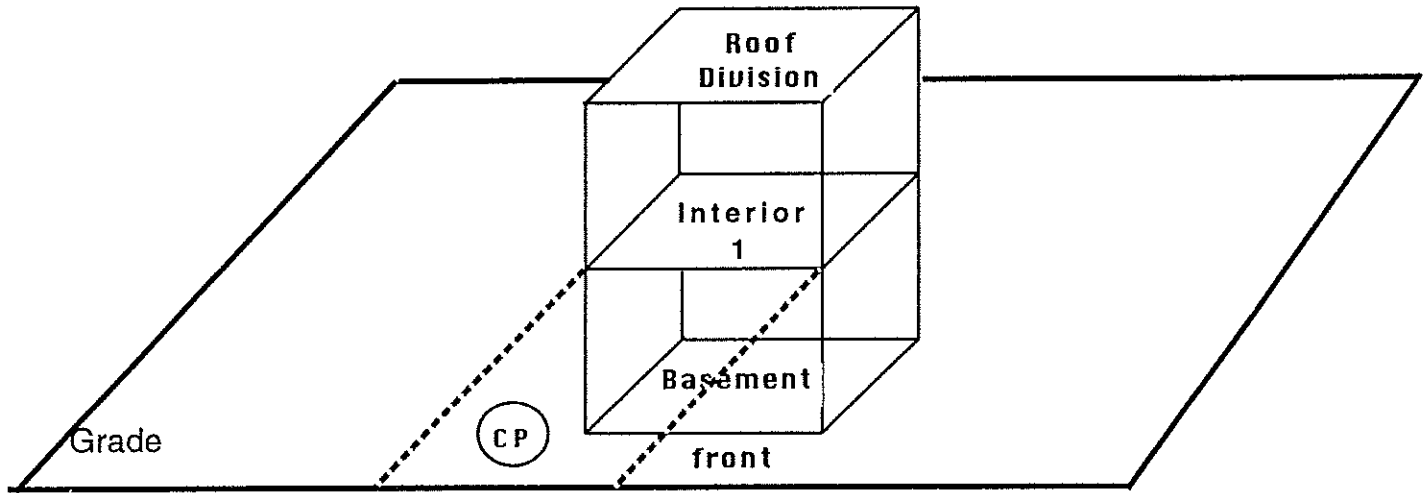


Figure 3

iii. Exterior (Figure 4)

Exterior operations should be designated as Division A, B, C or D, correlating to the actual side of building if the operation is geographical in nature.

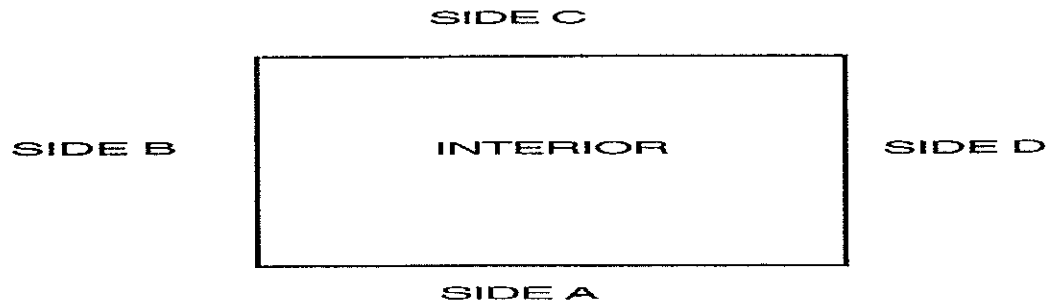


Figure 4

STREET SIDE

4. Incident Command System position officers will use the position designation in radio communications.
5. Incident Command System positions can be filled by chief officers, company officers or any other department member designated by Command.
6. In some cases an officer will be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions. He/she will advise Command of needed resources. An Incident Command System position officer may also be designated during the course of ongoing operations. He/she will receive an assignment from Command along with assigned resources. He/she will then proceed to his/her position, evaluate conditions and assume command of an area/function.
7. In many cases, the initial Incident Command System position assignment shall be given to the company officer who receives the initial assignment to a basic tactical area/function. These officers must then use their personnel as aides, assign them to another company or have them operate under the leadership of a qualified company member. Command will assign a command officer to relieve the company officer as quickly as possible to allow the company officer to resume supervision of his/her own unit.
8. Incident Command System position officers will be in command and control of all assigned operations within their area /function. In accomplishing this, he/she will be responsible for:
 - a. Monitoring work progress.
 - b. Redirecting activities as necessary.
 - c. Coordinating with related activities.
 - d. Monitoring the welfare of personnel.
 - e. Requesting additional resources as needed.
 - f. Communicating with Command as necessary.
 - g. Reallocating resources within his/her area/function.

9. Incident Command System position officers will keep command informed of conditions in his/her area/function through regular progress reports. He/she will advise Command immediately of significant changes in conditions in his/her area/function, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete his/her mission, hazardous conditions, accidents, or collapse.
 10. When a company is assigned from Staging to an operating division/group, the company will be told to what division/group he/she is assigned, where it is located and to what officer to report. The Incident Command System position officer will be informed which particular companies have been assigned to him/her.
 11. Position officers must be sufficiently mobile to be able to supervise the work of their assigned companies. They must be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.
 12. The primary function of the company officer working within a division/group is to direct the operations of his/her crew in performing assigned tasks. Company officers will advise division/group supervisors of position, progress and needs.
 13. Company officers will direct communication to their division/group supervisors and should use non-radio modes (face to face) whenever possible.
- F. The effective functioning of department units and personnel at operating incidents requires clear decisive action on the part on an Incident Commander. The following section identifies the standard operating procedures to be employed in establishing command and operating a command post. It also fixes responsibility for the command function and its associated duties on one individual at any time during incident operations.
1. The I.C. is responsible for the command function at all times. As the identity of the I.C. changes, through transfer, this responsibility shifts with the title. The term command in this procedure refers jointly to both the person and the function.

2. Command procedures are designed to accomplish the following:
 - a. Fix the responsibility for command on a specific individual through a standard identification system depending on arrival sequence of members, companies and officers.
 - b. Insure that a strong, direct and visible command will be established as early as possible at an incident.
 - c. Establish an effective framework outlining the activities and responsibilities assigned to command.
 - d. Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning and decision making.
 - e. Provide a system for the orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers.
3. First Arriving Company
 - a. The first department unit or officer to arrive at the scene of multiple unit responses shall assume command and remain in command until relieved or pass command or the incident is terminated.
 - b. The first arriving unit or officer shall transmit a brief initial radio report including:
 - i. Unit identification on the scene.
 - ii. Incident description (i.e., occupancy, size, hazmat release, MCI, etc.)
 - iii. Obvious conditions (i.e., working fire, hazmat release, multiple patients, etc.).
 - iv. Operating mode (i.e., fire attack, rescue etc.).
 - v. Initial company assignments.

- c. To facilitate assumption of command, all officers responding on multiple unit assignments will record the following information:
 - i. Address of alarm
 - ii. Proper radio channel/fire ground frequency
 - iii. Responding units
- d. All units responding to multiple unit responses will follow standard operating and staging procedures to support command establishment.

4. Command Options

- a. In cases where the initial arriving officer is a chief officer his/her efforts should automatically be directed toward assuming a command position and fulfilling the required responsibilities.
- b. An initial arriving company officer must decide on an appropriate commitment for his/her company. This will usually fall into one of three general modes as listed below.

- i. Investigative Mode

These situations generally require investigation by the first arriving company. The officer will go with the Company to check while utilizing his/her portable radio to communicate conditions. All units will continue to respond Code 3 unless specifically instructed to reduce to Code 2 by the officer in command. Command functions will remain with the first-in officer.

- ii. Attack Mode

Situations that require immediate action to stabilize and require the company officer's assistance and direct involvement in the attack. In these situations, the company officer goes with the crew

to provide the appropriate level of supervision. On arrival of the second-in company, command will automatically transfer to that officer unless assigned a task by the initial company officer. This sequence will continue until the arrival of a chief officer or command can be assigned to an on-scene (unassigned) company officer on the exterior of the structure.

Where intervention is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the company officer's involvement in the attack without neglecting command responsibilities. The Attack Mode should not last more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

- The situation is stabilized.
- The situation is not stabilized and the company officer must withdraw to the exterior and establish a Command Post. At some time, the company officer must decide whether or not to withdraw the remainder of the crew, based on the crew's capabilities and experience, safety issues and the ability to communicate with the crew. No crew should remain in a hazardous area without radio communication capabilities.
- Command may be transferred to the next arriving officer until the duty chief arrives or another higher ranking officer. When a chief officer is assuming command, the chief officer may decide to return the company officer to his/her crew or assign him/her to a subordinate position.

iii. Command Mode

Certain incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate strong, direct, overall command. In such cases, the company officer will initially assume an exterior,

safe and effective command position and maintain that position until relieved by a higher ranking officer. A tactical work sheet shall be initiated and utilized to assist in managing this type of incident.

If the company officer selects the Command Mode, the following options are available regarding the assignment of the remaining crew members:

- The officer may "move up" within the company and place the company into action with two or more members. The senior firefighter on crew will be responsible for continued fire attack and should be provided with a portable radio. The collective and individual capabilities and experience of the crew will regulate this action.
- The officer may assign the crew members to work under the supervision of another company officer. In such cases, the officer assuming command must communicate with the officer of the other company and indicate the assignment of those personnel.
- The officer may elect to assign the crew members to perform staff functions to assist command.

5. Transfer of Command

- a. The first Fire Department member or officer to arrive on scene will assume and retain command until relieved by a ranking officer within the following guidelines:
 - i. The first arriving company officer will assume command.

(Note exception: This does not preclude the option of the first arriving company officer having another company officer arriving at the same time or close behind, take command. This may be pre-arranged or may be necessitated by circumstances or radio.)

- ii. If the first member to arrive on scene is below the rank of captain, the first arriving company officer will assume command after the transfer of Command Procedures have been completed.
 - iii. Assumption of command by an assistant chief is discretionary. If the assistant chief decides not to take command then he/she may be assigned other duties on scene by the Incident Commander.
 - iv. Assumption of command is discretionary for the deputy chief or the fire chief.
- b. Within the chain of command indicated, the actual transfer of command will be regulated by the following procedures:
- i. Arriving ranking officers assuming command will communicate with the officer being relieved by radio or preferably face-to-face on arrival.
 - ii. The officer being relieved will brief the officer assuming command indicating the following:
 - General situation status (i.e., fire location, extent, condition and extension).
 - Progress towards completion of the tactical objectives.
 - Deployment and assignment of operating companies and personnel.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Appraisal of needs for additional resources at that time.
 - iii. The officer being relieved should review the "Tactical Worksheet" (Attachment B) with the new Incident Commander. In complex situations, this guide provides the most effective framework for command transfer as it outlines the location and

status of resources in a standard form that should be well-known to all members.

- c. Command officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding, unless such communications are required to insure that command functions are initiated.
- d. The arrival of a ranking officer on the scene does not mean command has been transferred. Command is transferred only when the outlined procedures have been met.
- e. The officer relieved of command will be utilized to the best advantage by the officer assuming command.
- f. In cases where command is effectively handling a situation, is completely aware of the location and function of operating companies and the general status of the situation, it may be desirable for that officer to continue in an active command role. In these cases, the ranking officer may assume a supportive role in the overall command function.

6. Command Structure

- a. It will be the responsibility of command to develop an organizational structure utilizing Standard Operating Procedures as soon as possible after arrival and after the implementation of initial tactical control measures. The size and complexity of the organizational structure, obviously, will be determined by the scope of the emergency.
- b. The ideal structure of a complex incident should include four (4) levels:
 - i. Strategy Level (Command)
 - ii. Control Level (Operations)
 - iii. Tactical Level (Branches, Division, Groups)
 - iv. Task Level (Companies)

- c. Command - refers to those functions necessary for the overall control and accomplishment of strategic objectives. The command level should be staffed by the highest ranking officer available. They will plan overall strategy, develop an adequate and effective command structure and fireground organization and provide the necessary support to meet these objectives.

- d. Operations - refers to those organizational elements in situations that are complex enough to require an intermediate, or control level, in the organizational structure. Operations is an optional level which may be implemented when command finds it necessary to group operational elements together to lessen command's span of control. Generally, Operations will assume command of several divisions/groups and will answer to command. This level should usually be staffed by chief officers who can plan and control the functions of several divisions.

If another Operations position, such as Medical Group, is required, another officer, or a medically qualified company officer, may be assigned to that function. That officer would be responsible for the various Medical Groups such as triage, treatment and transportation. The officer would answer to "Medical Group" and the Fire Operations Officer would then answer to "Operations" to lessen the confusion.

- e. Divisions are identified as the immediate tactical level of command in the organizational structure. Divisions are commanded by a company or chief officer and concentrate on the more specific areas and tasks needed to meet the overall operational objectives. The Division supervisor answers to "Division ____" (the blank being filled in with a geographical designator, such as "Division 3" for the 3rd floor; "Interior Division" for the interior area operation of a two-story or less structure; or, Side B exterior operations.) The division will report to "Operations" if it has been established. If it has not, the division reports directly to "Command" by radio. The individual companies working for division will talk only to division, preferably face-to-face or by radio, if necessary, but they should refrain from talking directly to "Command."

Groups are identified as another immediate functional level of command in the organizational structure. Groups are commanded by company or chief officer level and concentrate on specific functions and tasks needed to meet the overall operational objectives (i.e., Air Support group; Ventilation group; Medical group; and, Water supply group, etc.).

Either a single unit or several companies can be assigned to a group with a group supervisor answering to "_____Group" (the blank being filled in with a numerical designator if there is more than one specific group). Also, a single pumper can be called by its numerical designator "Engine 2", when it is acting as part of the Water Supply Group, and no confusion will occur from such a transmission. However, if the water supply problem is complex, due to relay pumping or supplying various parts of a yard hydrant and sprinkler system, along with normal pumping operations, then it may be advisable to designate a specific individual as "Water Supply Supervisor" and address all water problems to that person. Group will report to "Operations", if it has been established. If it has not, then Group reports directly to "Command" by radio.

In many cases, individual companies working for Group cannot use face-to-face communications with Group; therefore, use radio communications sparingly.

- f. The task level, in the organizational structure, refers to the evolution-oriented functions, or company level operations and individual accomplishments which, when assimilated, add up to the achievement of operational objectives.
- g. In order to promptly provide the resources for an effective major incident, the dispatch system will provide for response of key personnel (Fire Chief, Off-duty Assistant Chiefs, Training Officer, Fire Marshal, etc.) to assume support functions.

G. Additional Resource Management

1. The decisions required to provide for adequate resources are an important factor in effective fire forecasting. The Incident Command must balance the tactical problems with the resources required to control those problems and stay ahead of projected problem development. Beware of "Crisis Management" - situations grow at a rate faster than the response rate to that situation and Incident Command ends up with an out-of-control situation and inadequate resources to control it.
2. Many times the Incident Command will reach a point where he/she begins to debate (with him/herself) to call another alarm or not. In such cases, call for it. Always opt for the extra in the "Should I or Shouldn't I" stage. If you don't actually need the extra resources send them home. Companies cannot do anything more important (in the immediate sense) than respond to a fire.
3. The Incident Command should resist the temptation to bring in help in piece-meal fashion.
4. It is the continuing responsibility and function of the Incident Command to determine the resources required to control the situation and to provide for the timely call for assistance.
5. The Incident Command must be aware of both the capability and response time of additional resources and effectively integrate these facts into his/her call for assistance. Calling additional alarms is the most expedient way to get the closest resources in a timely manner. A second alarm will get the Incident Commander two additional engines and initiate automatic move-ups to cover vacant stations. A third alarm has been requested, additional requests for resources shall take the form of mutual aid immediate need. Since alarms bring the closest units and strike teams and task forces do not, all two alarms should be ordered before requesting additional resources from Solano County.
6. Some tactical situations move slow - some move very quickly. The Incident Command must call for assistance at a rate that stays ahead of the incident. Some situations require the categorical call for additional alarms upon knowledge of

particular characteristics/conditions. On other situations, the Incident Command will initiate some fire control activities, ask for reports and, based upon receipt of bad news, will strike more alarms.

7. As the Incident Command calls for additional resources, he/she must build a corresponding command organizational structure to manage those additional resources. The Incident Command cannot encounter a complex incident, call additional alarms and then expect to stay in a single alarm command mode and effectively manage the incident.
8. The Incident command should summon additional resources when:
 - a. An actual or potential situation exists and the life hazard exceeds the rescue capabilities of initial alarm companies.
 - b. An actual or potential fire situation exists and the property protection (both internal and external) exceeds the capabilities of initial alarm companies.
 - c. The number, location and condition of victims exceeds the rescue/removal/treatment capabilities of companies.
 - d. All companies have been committed and the incident is not controlled.
 - e. Incident conditions become more severe or the situation deteriorates significantly.
 - f. Forces are depleted due to exhaustion or injury or are trapped or missing. (Incident Command must forecast the effect the fire will have on personnel and provide for the support of such personnel in advance.)
 - g. The Incident Command runs out of some resource such as personnel, units, water, equipment, command staff or other.
 - h. There is evidence of significant problems but companies are unable to determine location and extent.

- i. The commitment of companies is not effective.
- j. Companies cannot effectively perform early salvage operations.
- k. Situation becomes so widespread/complex that the Incident Command can no longer effectively "cope"; the situation requires a larger command organization and/or more divisions/groups.
- l. The Incident Command instinctively feels the need to summon additional resources (don't disregard intuition).

H. Command Communications

1. Company Officers must maintain their unity of command and maintain an awareness of the arrival of units. It is important that the first arriving unit, absent of a duty chief on scene, direct the arriving companies to the need of the incident. The first arriving unit must:
 - a. Give an Initial Size-up, an important step in the initial command phase is size-up. Command must gather all the facts available to him/her to evaluate the situation. This consolidates observations by Command, pre-plan information, information from dispatch, persons at the scene and reports from other units. This information is used to formulate the action plan and includes building information, life hazard, and fire hazard analysis and associated facts with an appraisal of the situation's potential. All personnel of the Vallejo Fire Department shall include the following in their initial report to dispatch based upon their size-up:
 - i. Unit identification on the scene
 - ii. Building description (occupancy, arrangement, construction, correct address and size)
 - Small - a house 1,000 SF, or small commercial building (B-2: i.e., 7-11 food store)

- Medium - multiple occupancy (duplex apt) or commercial (i.e., McDonald's Restaurant)
 - Large - 3 or more stories (Holiday Inn) or commercial (Home Depot)
- iii. Obvious fire condition:
- Nothing showing - will need to investigate
 - Smoke showing (nature, extent, location)
 - Fire showing (nature, extent, location)
 - Working fire (all units in initial assignment will probably be needed); indicate percentage involved (25, 50, 75, 100%); location of fire (A, B, C or D side); notify assignment of responding companies.
 - Fully involved (entry, primary search precluded)
- iv. Operating mode - investigative, attack, command
- b. The first-in company will respond directly to the scene, announce its arrival and will assume the designation of "Incident Commander/Command." Once command has been established, all communications with dispatch should come from Command. The rest of the first alarm assignment will respond to a staging location one block from the scene and announce to Incident Commander/Command that their unit/s are staging at that location and direction (i.e., Engine Seven staging west on Redwood Parkway).
- c. A primary search shall be conducted on all structural fires where conditions permit entry. Command will radio an "All Clear" or notify dispatch that a primary search is not possible. Dispatch will acknowledge this message from Command only. The only exception for the need of a primary search and "All Clear" signal is when the first arriving company announces, "Fully Involved."

- d. On all incidents, once the situation has been stabilized, an "Under Control" report must be made to dispatch who will then acknowledge this report from command only.
 - e. Progress reports should be utilized to evaluate, review and revise incident decisions and require the effective interaction of Command, dispatch and all incident elements. Operating elements should automatically give brief, periodic reports indicating position, progress and needs.
 - f. A clear statement must be made to dispatch to indicate Command has been transferred.
 - g. When Level II staging is designated, command will notify dispatch that it has been activated along with its location. At a high rise or other major building complex incident, the designator "Base" will be used.
 - h. Units arriving at the staging area or base will report to the Staging Manager personally and not by radio.
 - i. Incident Command System positional elements shall use a non-radio mode with assigned companies as much as possible, but will keep Command informed, via radio, on the command frequency.
 - j. Staff members with incident responsibilities will announce, face-to-face if possible, their presence on the scene to command. All staff communications shall be of the non-radio type, if possible.
 - k. Only command can release units assigned to an incident. He/she will utilize the standard term "hold" followed by the units required to control the situation (i.e., "Hold Engine 3 & Truck 1"). Dispatch will re-transmit this report from Command and the balance of the assignment will be returned to service. This process will normally require no further communication.
- I. The following set of notes relates to some of the functional characteristics of those who are called upon to assume command. They cause effective action on the emergency incident scene to occur. The

effectiveness of those serving as the Incident Commander is regulated to a significant extent by their personal techniques, traits and abilities. It is the intent of this section to only identify an array of characteristics and arrange them in major categories. It is hoped that a review of this material will produce a useful framework for examination and reflection by those Incident Commanders with the courage to critique the effectiveness of their approach.

1. Decision Making

The effective Incident Command regards all emergency situations as basically having the same elements and applies a standard decision making approach based upon:

- a. A standard set of principles, rules and priorities.
- b. An effective approach to incident information management.
- c. The ability to quickly make the decisions required to establish the plan of attack and initiate action. Many times he/she must make these decisions by him/herself and in a decisive manner.
- d. The ability to distinguish between decisions based upon assumptions and those made upon facts. He/she must be able to initiate operations on assumed (and somewhat incomplete) information and then improve the quality of information and decisions as the operation grows longer.
- e. The ability to maintain an open and flexible approach to updating decisions during on-going operations. He/she is able to utilize (and require) feedback to revise decisions, tactical positions and approach.
- f. The ability to realize he/she cannot make all of the on-going incident decisions and, after initiating action, he/she must shift to a management role that basically involves the delegation of responsibility for tactical decision making into Incident Command System position elements.

- g. The ability to develop a standard response to reported/viewed conditions. He/she requires a particular piece of information before reacting and will obtain certain needed facts to avoid premature commitment.
- h. The ability to quickly prioritize problems in their order of importance and develop solutions (responses) to those problems.
- i. Avoiding "dead-end" decisions. He/she develops decisions that are expandable/open-ended that can be built upon.
- j. The ability to effectively forecast conditions, evaluate potential and develop decisions that keep him/her ahead of the fire. He/she does not let the fire make decisions for him/her.
- k. The inclination as a manager to rely less on his/her ability to personally view the entire situation and rely more upon delegated information retrieval.
- l. Decision making should be based upon information that is:
 - i. Timely/current
 - ii. Accurate
 - iii. Localized
 - iv. Specific
 - v. Directed
- m. The longer you wait to make a decision or revision, the less options you have to choose from.
- n. He/she is able to ask for the right information to make a decision and to gain information in the sequence required to complete priorities (i.e., must obtain fact #1 to make decision #1, etc.).

- o. He/she comprehends a wide variety of factors/information and is able to widen his/her perspective and apply a "panoramic" view to the situation.
- p. The effective Incident Command is able to screen information, pick out the vital parts and channel information into the appropriate unit.
- q. He/she possesses the ability to effectively record and organize incident intelligence and not exceed his/her mental capacity to deal with information.
- r. He/she knows where to find reference information and is able to utilize it effectively.

2. Effective Fireground Communications

- a. Be concise, brief and short.
- b. Keep it simple silly (KISS).
- c. Be explicit, specific and eliminate options.
- d. Utilize common language/standard firefighter terms.
- e. Do not use trick words.
- f. Be clear, calm and reflect self-control and composure.
- g. Avoid (uhhh) mannerisms.
- h. Be firm, confident and speak with authority.
- i. Consecutive orders must be well-spaced between different orders/companies.
- j. Communications must be well-timed, integrated and prioritized during the on-going communications function (with regards to other transmissions).

- k. Order the function (what) and location (where) - not the details (how).
- Indicate the objective of the order.
 - Orders must fit the profile and capability of the receiver.
 - Companies will fix on the first order, always invest time in changes.
 - Know the capabilities and limitations of your communications equipment.
 - Maintain radio discipline and avoid informality.
 - Be well organized and systematic/reflect a plan.
 - Incident Command must receive an acknowledgment to complete the communications process.
 - A brief restatement of an order is a better acknowledgement than "10-4".
 - All communications participants must identify themselves throughout the process.
 - Communications must be two-way, reflecting both functional talking and effective listening.
 - Do not think you are communicating because you are talking.
 - The Incident Command must control the communication/order function.
 - Reduce the number of actors in the communications process.
 - Think before you transmit.
 - Don't keep secrets and don't produce surprises.

- The entire process presupposes a capable sender and a willing receiver.
 - l. The Incident Command must identify tactical needs, translate needs into tasks and then into the form of orders.
 - m. The Incident Command must secure acknowledgement that the company is in an available status before issuing an order.
 - n. After receiving an acknowledgement, the Incident Command issues the order to the company
 - o. If the order is not understood, receiver must ask for additional information/clarification.
 - p. The Incident Command must receive acknowledgement from the company that they received and understood the order. The best acknowledgement is a brief restatement of the ordered task.
 - q. Company extends effort toward task accomplishment.
 - r. Companies should extend brief incremental progress reports to the Incident Command to advise of the current state of task accomplishment.
 - s. Company must advise Incident Command that the task is completed or not completed.
 - t. If the ordered task cannot be completed by the company, the Incident Command must evaluate and react.
 - u. When task is completed, company must report readiness for reassignment and Incident Command must reorder.
3. Command and Control
- a. Is anxious to accept responsibility and assume command when times are tough.

- b. Applies and directs control efforts for the sake of achieving results, not simply for the sake of control.
- c. Selective Democracy: Incident Command must be able to distinguish between the times you can and cannot vote.
- d. Stress Management: Ability to effectively divide up the overall problem into parts and delegate authority and stress for the parts into Incident Command system positional elements. This process will reduce the number of subordinates he/she deals with and allow him/her to effectively maintain overall control.
- e. Confusion Administration: Incident Command must continue to work the confusion out of the problem until it is right. He/she will not give up until the plan works.
- f. Incident Command must require that everyone make decisions and do their job.
- g. Has the ability to apply flexible control levels depending upon conditions.
- h. Incident Command cannot be destroyed or distracted by visual conditions. Turn your back on the fire, if you must.
- i. Incident Command must be able to look at a tactical situation in laboratory terms; identify the elements, put them in order and deal with them effectively.
- j. He/she regards fire in enemy oriented and somewhat pessimistic terms. He/she must understand fire behavior.
- k. He/she must select an effective command position and stay there. You absolutely cannot command anything while running.
- l. Incident Command must regard command time tradeoff in realistic terms. Two minutes, at the beginning of the operation invested in effective command, will save two hours at the end of the operation.

- m. When in command, the building belongs to you.
- n. Lone Ranger Management: The Incident Command must be able to act as a singular command actor, particularly during the initial stages of command situations.
- o. Incident Command has the ability to operate in a manner that minimizes luck.
- p. Details Delegation: Incident Command does not get hung up with details. He/she can order what and where without ordering how.
- q. Midpoint Management: Incident Command must be able to "inherit" on-going situations after initial commitment and actions have been started.
- r. Incident action should be the result of a conscious decision.
- s. Scarce Resource Management: Incident Command must be able to allocate and manage during fire stages when needs exceed resources.
- t. He/she will give up overall command and assume subordinate command role as "superiors" arrive.
- u. Incident Equality: Incident Command should attempt to develop a standard capability from all officers and companies under his/her command. Until he/she can achieve this long range (and somewhat idealistic) objective, he/she must realize the differences in capability, motivation, intelligence and experience of actors and be able to place people in the best position, thereby realizing their best potential.
- v. "Let's put it out before the Chief gets here." - Incident Command must operate in a manner that is supportive of the overall command process and that which effectively integrates his/her efforts with others operating in various command positions. The command function should be strengthened as more commanders arrive.

4. Evaluation and Review

- a. Incident Command must have consistent preoccupation with effective results. He/she operates, manages and evaluates in a way that is performance oriented.
- b. He/she evaluates and reviews in accordance with a high set of standards and expects a high level of performance from subordinates. He/she will consistently react to substandard output.
- c. He/she integrates evaluation and revision into an overall management approach.
- d. He/she has consistent willingness to make both strategic and tactical revisions.
- e. He/she consistently utilizes progress/condition reports from sub-units for revision/reinforcement.
- f. Must be willing to accept the fact that a mistake has been made and/or conditions have changed and correct the commitment. He/she will not live with a bad situation.
- g. Incident Command must basically apply a pessimistic, critical approach to the review of vital fireground elements if he/she doesn't believe the incident is under control.
- h. The expectation for effective behavior, ability and performance should correlate with rank. The higher the rank, the more critical the review of these areas should be.
- i. Incident Command has the ability and fortitude to straighten out an unusual situation as-well-as the confidence to sit back and quietly monitor one that is going well. He/she should also have the intelligence to know the difference between the two.
- j. Incident Command must ask him/herself: "What action am I going to take if what I'm doing right now doesn't work?" He/she must always think ahead and operate with a backup.

- k. He/she is not reluctant to disagree with a decision and/or to countermand an order, but is able to do so in a constructive manner.
- l. Incident Command must be able to identify both the nature and rate of "deterioration" of incident conditions and effectively react to worsening conditions.
- m. Evaluation and review many times produces revisions that assume the form of re-deployment. Incident Command must relate to a standard set of rules, principles and priorities for such re-deployment activities.
- n. Incident Command must realize the reporting limitations of an area and space. Reports generally relate only to conditions in the local area of the company making the report.
- o. Incident Command must consider the differences in reporting position and approach of officers operating outside and companies operating inside.
- p. Realistic: Does not expect anything from subordinates that has not been taught.
- q. Incident Command must realize the actual fire scene is a poor setting to either teach or discipline. Incident Command must assume a positive and supportive leadership role when things go wrong and work to correct incident dysfunctions, thereby producing positive results.
- r. He/she utilizes the post fire review/critique as a learning tool and is able to give credit where it is due; identify substandard performance; correct the employee and have the employee survive in a positive manner - intact.
- s. He/she evaluates information based on the capabilities of the reporter.
- t. Incident Command must be willing to compliment, praise, reward and generally reinforce superior performances. The employee must know he/she will receive positive strokes if he/she excels.

- u. He/she uses direct constructive criticism to the participant, not the spectators, both inside and outside the organization.
- v. Incident Command must accept review, revision and constructive criticism, as well as give it.

5. Personal Characteristics

- a. Number one personal characteristic: Ability
- b. Must have the inclination to manage and command, rather than act and be free of "nozzle man" inclinations.
- c. Has the ability to control temper. He/she will absolutely not get angry during difficult times, in a negative way.
- d. Has a high psychological endurance; remains focused for long periods of time.
- e. Sanity maintenance: Must regard the fire and its outcome in clinical terms and regard him/herself in philosophical terms.
- f. Must realize that fireground command is not a popularity contest and that he/she has a low need to affiliate with subordinates during fireground situations.
- g. Has both the ability and inclination to listen.
- h. Must communicate and operate in a manner that does not confuse the troops.
- i. Must possess a reasonable degree of courage.
- j. Risk taking: Will take reasonable, well-timed risks and realize he/she is in a risk mode and operate effectively with the odds involved in the risk.
- k. Regard him/herself as a resource allocator.
- l. Offer a positive example.

- m. Realize limitations; self, equipment, personal, etc.
- n. Provide a constructive/supportive presence, particularly when things go wrong.
- o. Accept responsibility for mistakes and learn from them. Realize when another mistake occurs, it should be treated as a new one.
- p. Have the ability to face unpleasantness/unhappiness in a straightforward and constructive manner.
- q. Organization person: Has established procedures and an inclination to work within the system.
- r. Has a basic concern for firefighting personnel.
- s. Boy Scout words which also describe an effective Incident Command: Confident, consistent, uniform, calm, cool, composed, aggressive, pragmatic, straightforward, positive, durable and disciplined.

6. Fireground Etiquette

- a. Extends reasonable deference to rank, seniority.
- b. Does not take advantage of rank, authority or seniority.
- c. Does fair share of the work.
- d. Supports the less able.
- e. Respects the task.
- f. Exhibits the strength to control all situations.
- g. Is sensitive to the needs and situations of his/her personnel.
- h. Provides support and a resolution to personnel experiencing a major problem.

- i. Displays a fair but resolute demeanor to personnel who err in judgment, yet has the ability to manage a substandard performance in a functional setting.
- j. Does not debate, argue or vote.
- k. Does not take advantage of confusion.
- l. Does not utilize assignments as punishment.
- m. Forgets personalities, politics and personal quirks on an emergency incident; works for the person who has the incident responsibility.
- n. Does not "get even" on an emergency incident.
- o. Does not play favorites.
- p. Eliminates multiple standards.
- q. Remains pleasant.


FIRE CHIEF

ATTACHMENT A

Agency Representative - Individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated full authority to make decisions on all matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident. Agency representatives report to the incident liaison officer.

Aerial Torch - An ignition device suspended under a helicopter, capable of dispensing ignited fuel to the ground for assistance in burnout or backfiring.

Air Tanker - Any fixed-wing aircraft certified by FAA as being capable of transport and delivery of fire-retardant solutions.

Allocated Resources - Resources dispatched to an incident that have not yet checked in with the incident communications center.

Assigned Resources - Resources checked in and assigned work task on an incident.

Assisting Agency - An agency directly contributing suppression, rescue, support or service resources to another agency.

Available Resources - Resources assigned to an incident and available for an assignment.

Branch - That organization level having functional/geographic responsibility for major segments of incident operations. The branch level is organizationally between section and division group.

Camp - A geographical site within the general incident area, separate from the base, equipped and staffed to provide food, water and sanitary services to incident personnel.

Check in - Locations where assigned resources check-in at an incident. The locations are: Incident Command post (resources unit); incident base; camps; staging areas; helibases; and division supervisors (for direct line assignments). Check-in at one location and complete required ICS Form.

Clear Text - The use of plain English in radio communications transmissions. No ten codes, or agency specific codes are used when using clear text.

Command - The act of directing, ordering and/or controlling resources by virtue of explicit legal, agency or delegated authority.

Command Staff - The command staff consists of the information officer, safety officer and liaison officer, who report directly to the Incident Commander.

Communications Unit - A vehicle (trailer or mobile van) used to provide the major part of an incident communications center.

Company - Any piece of equipment having a full complement of personnel.

Coordination - The process of systematically analyzing a situation, developing relevant information and informing appropriate command authority (for its decision) of viable alternatives for selection of the most effective combination of available resources to meet specific objectives. The coordination process (which can be either intro or interagency) does not in and of itself involve command dispatch actions. However, personnel responsible for coordination may perform command or dispatch functions within limits, as established by specific agency delegations, procedures, legal authority, etc.

Cooperating Agency - An agency supplying assistance other than direct suppression, rescue, support, or service functions to the incident control effort (e.g., Red Cross, law enforcement agency, telephone company, etc).

Dispatch - The implementation of a command decision to move a resource/ resources from one place to another.

Dispatch Center - A facility from which resources are directly assigned to an incident.

Division - That organization level having responsibility for operations with a defined geographic area or with functional responsibility. The division level is organizationally between the strike team and the branch. (See also "Group").

Dozer Company - Any dozer with a minimum complement of two persons.

Engine - Any ground vehicle providing a specified level of pumping water and hose capacity, but with less than the specified level of personnel.

Engine Company - Any ground vehicle providing specified levels of pumping, water, hose capacity and personnel.

Food Dispenser - Any vehicle capable of dispensing food to incident personnel.

Fuel Tender - Any vehicle capable of supplying fuel to ground or airborne equipment.

General Staff - The group of incident management personnel comprised of the incident commander, incident logistics chief, operation chief finance chief and the planning chief.

Group - A functional division (e.g., air support, salvage, structure protection, etc.).

Hand Crew - Predetermined individuals that are supervised, organized, and trained principally for clearing brush as a fire suppression measure.

Heavy Equipment Transport - Any ground vehicle capable of transporting a dozer.

Helibase - A location within the general incident area for parking, fueling, maintenance and loading of helicopters.

Helibase Crew - A crew of three or more individuals who may be assigned to operations or to support helicopter operations.

Helicopter Tender - A ground service vehicle capable of supplying fuel and support equipment to helicopters.

Helispot - A location where a helicopter can take off and land. Some helispots may be used for temporary retardant loading.

Helitack - The initial attack phase of fire suppression using helicopters and trained airborne teams to achieve immediate control of wildfires.

Helitack Foreman - A firefighter trained in the tactical and logistical use of helicopters for fire suppression.

Helitanker - A helicopter equipped with a fixed-tank or a suspended bucket-type container that is used for aerial delivery of water or retardants.

Incident - An occurrence or event, either human-caused or natural phenomena, that requires action by emergency service personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources.

Incident Action Plan - The incident action plan, which is initially prepared at the first meeting, contains general control objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy and specific action plans for the next operational period. When complete, the incident action plans will have a number of attachments.

Incident Base - That location at which the primary logistics functions are coordinated and administered. (Incident name or other designator will be added to

the term "Base". The incident command post may be co-located with the base. There is only one base per incident.

Incident Commander (I/C) - The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations.

Incident Command Post (ICP) - That location at which the primary command functions are executed and usually located with the incident base.

Incident Command System (ICS) - The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure with responsibility for the management of assigned resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertaining to an incident.

Initial Attack - Resources initially committed to an incident.

Infrared (IR) - A heat detection system used for fire detection, mapping and hot spot identification.

Infrared (IR) Ground link - A capability through the use of a special mobile ground station to receive air to ground infrared imagery for interpretation.

Jurisdictional Agency - The agency having jurisdiction and responsibility for a specific geographical area.

Management by Objective (MBO) - Top down management so that all involved know and understand the objectives of the operation.

Message Center - The message center is part of the communications center and is collocated or placed adjacent to it. It receives, records and routes information about resources reporting to the incident, resource status and administration and tactical traffic.

Mobilization Center - An off incident location at which emergency service personnel and equipment are temporarily located pending assignment, release, or reassignment.

Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) - The combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications integrated into a common system with coordination responsibility of assisting agency resources and support to agency emergency operations.

National Interagency Incident Management System (NIMS) - Consists of five major sub-systems which collectively provide a total systems approach to all-risk incident management. The sub-systems are: The Incident Command system; training; qualifications and certification; supporting technologies; and, publications management.

NOAA Weather Station - A mobile weather data collection and forecasting facility (including personnel) provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration which can be utilized within the incident area.

Operations Coordination Center (OCC) - The primary facility of Multiagency Coordination System. It houses the staff and equipment necessary to perform the MACS functions.

Operational Period - The period of time scheduled for execution of a given set of operation actions as specified in the incident action plan.

Orthophoto Maps - Aerial photographs corrected to scale whereby geographic measurements may be taken directly from the prints. They may contain graphically emphasized geographic features and may be provided with overlays of such features as: Water systems, important facility locations, etc.

Out-of-Service Resources - Resources assigned to an incident but unable to respond for mechanical, rest or personnel reasons.

Overhead Personnel - Personnel who are assigned to supervisory positions which include: Incident Commander; command staff; general staff; directors; supervisors; and, unit leaders.

Patrol Unit - Any light, mobile unit having limited pumping and water capacity.

Planning Meeting - A meeting that is held, as needed, throughout the duration of an incident to select specific strategies and tactics for incident control operations and for service and support planning.

Radio Cache - A cache may consist of a number of portable radios; a base station; and, in some cases, a repeater stored in a predetermined location for dispatch to incidents.

Reinforced Attack - Those resources requested in addition to the initial attack.

Reporting Locations - Any one of six facilities/locations where Incident Command post-resources (RESTAT) are located. They are: Base, camp, staging area, helibase or division supervisor for direct line assignments. (Check-in at one location only.)

Rescue Medical - Any manned ground vehicle capable of providing emergency medical services.

Resources - All personnel and major items of equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incident tasks on which status is maintained.

RESTAT - An acronym for resource unit; a unit within the planning section.

Section - That organization level having functional responsibility for primary segments of incident operations such as: Operations, planning, logistics and finance. This section level is organizationally between branch and Incident Commander.

SITSTAT - An acronym for the situation unit; a unit within the planning section.

Span of Control - The supervisory ratio of from three to seven individuals, with five being established as a general rule of thumb.

Staging Area - That location where incident personnel and equipment are assigned on a three-minute available status.

Strike Team - Specified combinations of the same kind and type of resources with a common communication and leader.

Task Force - A group of resources with common communications and a leader temporarily assembled for a specific mission.

Technical Specialists - Personnel with special skills who are activated only when needed. A technical specialist may be needed in the areas of fire behavior, water resources, environmental concerns, resource use and training areas.

Tractor Plow - Any tracked vehicle with a plow for exposing mineral soil, this in addition to transportation and personnel for its operation,

Unified Command - A method for all agencies or individuals who have jurisdictional responsibility and, in some cases, those who have functional responsibility at the incident to contribute to determining overall objectives for the incident and selection of a strategy to achieve the objectives.

Unit - That organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistic or finance activity.

Water Tender - Any ground-vehicle capable of transporting specified quantities of water.