



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



COMMAND FUNCTION #8 - CONTINUE, SUPPORT & TERMINATE COMMAND

Effective: July 30, 2021
Scheduled Review: July 30, 2024
Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. COMMAND FUNCTION #8 – CONTINUE, SUPPORT & TERMINATE COMMAND

Provide enough command to manage the required units for the necessary length of time in order to achieve the tactical priorities and protect all of the hazard zone workers.

The IC's ability to conduct command operations over this time period determines the entire operation's overall effectiveness. Every tactical situation involves a different combination of elements that affect the operation's length and intensity.

II. ASSUME, MAINTAIN & UPGRADE AN EFFECTIVE COMMAND POSITION

Offensive incident operations usually begin with a company officer IC (IC#1) operating in the fast-attack position. This ends when the incident problem is solved or when command is transferred to an IC who will operate in the command position (IC#2). Command is then reinforced as later-arriving chiefs arrive on the scene and support the IC.

Depending on arrival order, rank and SOPs, later-arriving chief officers can be assigned to the following standard command support positions:

- SDG Officers
- Support Officer (S/O)
- Senior Advisor (S/A)
- Branch positions
- Section positions

III. USE STANDARD COMMAND TRANSFER (BOTH WAYS)

To a major extent, command effectiveness is directly connected to regular command positioning; the entire command system revolves around the rapid establishment of a stationary, remote IC, operating in a standard CP.

The first arriving chief officer will respond directly to the scene. If an active hazard zone still exists, or if there is still tactical benchmarks to coordinate, command should be upgraded into the command position.

This command transfer significantly improves IC #2 position and their ability to perform and manage the eight command functions and the corresponding strategic safety requirements for the entire operation. Placing the IC in a standard CP position where they can focus exclusively on incident management enhances and facilitates both the completion of the tactical priorities and firefighter task-level safety.

If this level of command does not bring the incident under control, the IC will need support. This support comes when subsequent-arriving chief officers fill the standard command support positions.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



As the hazards subside and incident operations wind down, command will be transferred from the current IC to a company officer or other person who will remain on scene until the very end.

- Normally done at the end of the incident
- All the tactical priorities have been achieved
- No Hazard Zone present

We use the same system to de-escalate command that we used to escalate it, always matching the level of command to the current situation.

IV. DEVELOP & MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE FIREGROUND COMMUNICATIONS

Command positioning plays a big part in effective fireground communications:

- Fast-attacking IC will run the incident over a portable radio. Worst communications position, can only operate one radio channel.
- IC working in a command position unsupported. Much better communications position, can only operate one radio channel.
- IC working in a command position supported. Best command position, can operate multiple radio channels.

The IC requires a support system that allows them to stay in constant, undistracted contact with all the companies/SDGs operating in the hazard zone.

V. SHARE ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION

Sharing information is how we keep the IAP current and make sure our actions match conditions. The goal of the system is to place an IC in the command position as quickly as possible. The IC can then monitor the overall operational effect on the incident problem.

The IC then receives IAP information from operating S/Ds. This information should include a description of the critical factors, the tactical priorities completed, and should start to reveal any critical unknowns on the emergency scene. The IC can see overall conditions from the command post and can determine whether conditions are getting better or worse.

We must share with everyone any critical information that affects all operational areas and/or has an impact on firefighter safety. The best way to do this is through the use of priority and emergency traffic reports.

VI. CONSIDER THE TIME IT TAKES TO COMPLETE EACH TACTICAL PRIORITY

The tactical priorities represent the core of the IAP at any given point during incident operations. The IC begins incident operations by estimating the total length of time it will take to complete incident' tactical priorities. This estimate allows the IC to break the entire incident operation into smaller pieces and time frames that correspond with the strategy and IAP that the IC implements, manages and revises throughout the incident. Estimate how long each tactical priority will take, along with how many people or crews it will take to accomplish them. This should give the IC a general idea of how many command officers they will need to request to the scene. These forecasted additional Command elements need to be estimated and call for when requesting additional resources.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



VII. ESTIMATE THE DURATION OF COMMAND

The IC should forecast how long incident operations will last and how large the command organization needs to be based on the critical factors of the incident. This determination should occur very quickly in the operation.

Time and intensity determine how long the IC and the rest of the command team can remain in charge of an event. Long, slow-moving events (burning debris piles with no exposures, defensive fires with no exposures, etc.) are not as stressful as more complex incidents with personnel operating in a hazard zone.

If the incident is going to last beyond the time a command team can reasonably manage, a schedule should be developed. This schedule should manage command-team rotations, as well as rotations for any other staffing positions filled throughout the event.

VIII. DEVELOP & SUPPORT AN ORGANIZATION THAT OUTLASTS THE INCIDENT

The response and arrival of additional command officers strengthens the overall command organization. As the incident escalates, the IC should use the subsequent arriving command officers to fill S/D officer or command support positions. Filling these different command/tactical roles:

- Improves safety
- Decreases the span of control
- Improves communication
- Improves accountability
- Improves management of the S/Ds created

IX. IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT SECTIONS & BRANCHES AS NECESSARY

The command team's main goal and focus is managing the workers operating in the hazard zone. This includes providing whatever technical support necessary, e.g., special operations, technical rescue.

Large, complex incident operations require a larger command staff to manage any additional organizational positions. These positions provide logistical, planning and administrative support; they also fill safety and branch officer roles where needed.

As incident operations escalate in time, size and complexity, the strategic-level responsibilities can overwhelm the command team. To avoid this command "overload," we can quickly expand the incident organization by assigning section-level positions. These positions include:

- A. Logistics
- B. Planning
- C. Operations
- D. Admin
- E. Safety

One of the keys to effective incident management is building the properly sized incident organization and support staff.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



The command team uses the section positions to delegate functional and support responsibilities. This allows the IC and the command team to focus solely on managing the resource in the hazard zone.

A. Logistics Section is the support mechanism for the organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. The Logistics Section will operate on its own radio channel. Roles and Responsibilities:

- Provide rehab.
- Manage staging
- Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment.
- Forecast and obtain future resource needs (coordinate with the Planning Section).
- Provide any needed communications equipment.
- Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment.
- Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per command.
- Provide food and associated supplies.
- Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities.
- Provide any other logistical needs as requested by command.
- Collect and provide information for an After Action Review.
- Supervise assigned personnel

B. Planning Section is responsible for gathering, assimilating, analyzing, and processing information needed for effective decision-making. The Planning Section serves as the Incident Commander's "clearing house" for information. This allows the Incident Commander to have a single person provide him/her with information instead of having to deal with dozens of information sources. Information should be used to make long-range plans. The Planning Section Chief's goal is to plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources before they are needed. Roles and Responsibilities:

- Evaluate current strategy and plan with the Incident Commander.
- Refine and recommend any needed changes to plan.
- Evaluate Incident Organization and span of control.
- Forecast possible outcome(s).
- Evaluate future resource requirements.
- Utilize technical assistance as needed.
- Evaluate tactical priorities, specific critical factors, and safety.
- Gather, update, improve, and manage information with a standard systematic approach.
- Liaison with any needed outside agencies for planning needs.

C. Administration Section evaluates and manages the risk and financial requirements for the Fire Department's involvement in the incident. Roles and Responsibilities:

- Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the fire department or city as requested by Command (coordinates with Logistics).



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT



Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command

- Documenting all financial costs of the incident.
- Documenting for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies.
- Analyzing and managing legal risk for incidents such as, hazardous materials clean up.
- Serves as the Incident Commander's liaison with: city officials, litigators (and other lawyer types) regulatory agencies, e.g., DEQ, MDOT, MIOSHA.
- Monitors and coordinates emergency service delivery to the rest of the community during major incidents to ensure adequate coverage.
- Serves as the E.O.C. representative in the Command Post and provides briefings to the E.O.C. staff.
- Manage investigations (arson, etc.).
- Collect and provide information for an After Action Review.

The Administration Section is responsible for obtaining any and all needed incident documentation for potential cost recovery efforts, or litigation, including criminal charges.

D. Operations Section: is responsible for the tactical priorities, accountability, and the safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Hazard Zone. The Operations Section Officer uses the tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to S/D Officers and/or Branch Officers. Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate activities with the Senior Advisor.
- Implement the Incident Management Plan.
- Assign units to SDG/Branches based on Tactical Objectives and priorities.
- Build an effective organizational structure through the use of SDG's and/or Branches.
- Provide Branches and SDG Tactical Objectives.
- Manage Operation Section activities.
- Personnel Accountability.
- Provide for life safety.
- Determine needs and request additional resources.
- Consult with and inform other Sections and the Incident Command Staff as needed.
- Collect and provide information for an After Action Review.

E. Safety Section: This includes the concept of “embedding” safety elements and the communications flow plan the command team uses to connect all the different organizational elements to ensure workers’ safety in the hazard zone.

X. IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE BRANCHES WHEN REQUIRED

Rarely on the local level will an incident require most, if not all, of a community’s resources (and the neighbor’s community as well). These big-time, major incidents can quickly overwhelm command with multiple SDGs.

The next subdivision between command and SDGs is a branch. Branch officers operate on the coordination level and manage several SDG officers that command assigns to them.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



(The SDGs are typically grouped in the standard branches shown above). Command should consider implementing branches when:

- The incident is forecasted as a major event that will eventually need many SDGs
- The incident has two or more large, distinctive components, e.g., haz mat, evacuation, medical.
- The incident covers a large geographical area
- Anytime the number of SDGs starts to overwhelm command

The activation of branches signifies that the incident is going to be split into large, separate pieces. Each branch should operate on its own radio channel when managing and directing the activities of SDG Officers. Branch officers will communicate with command on a separate radio channel designated by the IC. The radio designation of branch officers should reflect the function or geographic area of the branch.

When command implements branch officers the IC will assign a separate radio channel (not the tactical channel) for communications within the branch. SDG Officers should be notified by Command of their new supervisor. This information should include:

- What branch the SDG's is now assigned to.
- The radio channel the branch (and SDG's) is operating on.

Branch officers operate in forward positions. They should utilize a command officer's vehicle as a forward branch command post (when feasible). In these situations, command must assign officers in the command post to monitor each branch radio channel.

Branch Officers are not limited to Operations. Any of the Section Officers may implement Branches within their individual sections as needed.

XI. PROVIDE REHAB, ROTATION & RELIEF

The IC, command team, SDG Officers, section chiefs and everyone else operating at the incident scene will need periodic rehab, rotation and relief during the course of the incident.

Extended fire-incident operations are generally slower-moving, defensive events. During these types of operations, where no one operates within a hazard zone, a well-supported IC may be able to stay in command for several hours. Incidents that last many hours or days require some type of rotational roster requires for the cycling of companies in and out of incident operations as well as the command staff required to control operations.

XII. REDUCE THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

We use the same system to conclude incident operations that we use to expand the command structure for escalating events. As we complete the tactical priorities, obtain PARs and wrap up incident operations, the IC needs to develop a plan for the closing phases. At this point, the IC needs to get out of the command post and tour the incident site. During this “walk about,” the IC gets a firsthand look at the incident scene, talks with crews, decides what remains to be done and formulates a plan for scaling back the operation.

The command transfer is generally accomplished by transferring command back to an officer of a unit who will remain on the scene until the event is complete.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



XIII. ENSURE THAT AN ADEQUATE AFTER ACTION REVIEW IS UNDERWAY BEFORE DE-COMMITMENT

The after action review (AAR) process is how we figure out what went well and what we could have done better. This is a key piece of the action-management cycle—develop SOPs, training, application, critique and revision. Revision (and improvement) is only possible if we conduct regular critiques.

Small-scale incidents generally end pretty quickly. This facilitates conducting the AAR prior to everyone leaving the scene. The IC should lead this process and base the AAR on the department's SOPs, the incident conditions upon arrival (critical factors), the actions taken, communications and the overall incident outcome.

It is more difficult to conduct on-scene critiques at incidents that require large amounts of resources. These events tend to last longer, and the initial-arriving companies have often times been released from the scene by the time the operation ends. These incidents should be critiqued at a later date and the lessons learned distributed throughout the entire department.

The most important goal of any critique, regardless of the incident size, is to improve our operations. Any significant lessons learned, both good and bad, should be shared with the rest of the organization. These lessons learned should be incorporated into department SOP's and training.

XIV. PLACE RESOURCES BACK INTO SERVICE

The IC's demobilization plan should begin with replacing the most fatigued companies first. If it will take some length of time to get these ready for service, they can remain unavailable until they get their rig restocked (hose loaded, fluids topped off, tools and equipment restocked, etc.).

For large-scale incidents, the IC needs to ensure that the correct number and type of units will remain on scene until all the incident's needs have been met. This includes making sure the customer(s) have any needed after-incident support (Red Cross, social services, insurance company, family support, etc.)

XV. PROVIDE REQUIRED CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT

Incidents that involve trauma, death and loss can be very difficult on responders. The critique offers an excellent forum for the IC to sit down with all the incident players to find out how well they are coping with the event.

The post incident review with your boss and co-workers to help make sense of what just happened can be therapeutic. The IC needs to use this time to make sure that everyone is stable, both physically and mentally, before placing them back into service.

The best critical incident support happens before we respond to emotionally charged incidents. Working for an organization that cares about its members is the best preventive medicine.



ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedures - 3.08 Continue, Support & Terminate Command



The organization shows its regard for the members in everything it does. The main areas include:

- A. How the bosses treat the workers
- B. How the workers treat one another
- C. How everyone treats the customer
- D. The training and skill level of the workers
- E. The apparatus and equipment (is it adequate?)
- F. The systems (IMS, safety, accountability, etc.) that we use when we deliver service

Running an organization in a manner where the members and the customers (our work) come first is worth much more than a hospital full of mental-health professionals when it comes to taking care of people and keeping them mentally fit.