

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 1 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Incident Command System (ICS) procedures.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief authorizes this policy.

IV. POLICY

A. Incident Command

The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for developing incident objectives and strategy, establishing incident priorities, assigning resources to meet objectives, and maintaining accountability of all resources.

B. Establishing Incident Command

1. The first fire operations officer or ranking lifeguard to arrive at the scene of a multiple-unit response shall assume incident command and remain in command until any of the following occurs:
 - i. Relieved by a higher-ranking officer
 - ii. Incident command is passed to the next arriving engine company or lifeguard resource
 - iii. The incident is terminated
2. If the first arriving officer is a truck or specialty unit captain, they shall assume incident command and transfer it to the first arriving engine company captain.
3. A multiple-unit response is defined as two or more emergency response units. Formal announcement of incident command and naming of the incident will be at the discretion of the arriving unit or officer. It may not be practical for routine emergencies such as medical aids, boat tows, or water rescues of a limited scope.

C. Incident Resource Accountability

1. To facilitate the assumption and transfer of incident command, all officers responding to multiple unit assignments will maintain resource accountability. Use of a tactical worksheet or an electronic resource accountability system is encouraged.
2. All units responding to multiple unit incidents will follow SDFD standard operations and staging procedures.

D. Incident Command Responsibilities

The initial Incident Commander shall complete the first five initial tasks. The continuing responsibilities stay with incident command if transferred.

1. Initial tasks:

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 2 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

- i. Establish an effective Incident Command Post (ICP)
 - ii. Transmit a brief initial radio report including:
 - a) Unit arriving on the scene
 - b) Brief description of the incident situation (building size, occupancy, HazMat release, multi-vehicle accident, etc.)
 - c) Brief description of actions/strategy
 - d) Any obvious safety concerns
 - e) Assume incident command and name the incident
 - iii. Conduct rapid hazard assessment and risk analysis
 - iv. Develop incident objectives and implement action plan
 - v. Assign units as required and establish staging/base, if needed
2. Continuing responsibilities:
- i. Provide continuing overall incident command and progress reports within the framework of FIREScope Field Operations Guide (FOG), ICS 420-1 and SDFD operational procedures
 - ii. Monitor actions and safety conditions for progress and effectiveness, revising the incident action plan as needed
 - iii. Request and assign additional resources as necessary
 - iv. Mitigate public hazards, return companies to service, and terminate incident command

E. Fire Operations Incident Command Options

In cases where the first arriving officer establishes incident command, efforts should be directed toward establishing an ICP.

The first arriving officer must determine the appropriate actions based on the incident. Actions will generally be determined by one of two modes as listed below:

1. **Nothing Showing / Investigating:** These situations generally require investigation by the first arriving company while holding staged companies at a distance. The officer can go with their company to investigate while utilizing the portable radio to continue incident command.
2. **Incident Command Mode:** Situations that require by virtue of the size of the emergency strong, direct, overall incident command from the outset. When establishing incident command, the officer will determine actions from one of the following two options:
 - i. Maintain command, develop the incident action plan, establish objectives, and complete or assign a 360 survey.
 - ii. Pass command to another engine at scene when appropriate:
 - a) Immediate rescues
 - b) First arriving truck or rescue company
 - c) Probationary crews
 - d) Short-staffed crews

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 3 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

It may be necessary to pass command when the initial Incident Commander needs to be task-oriented or provide direct supervision. The officer will assist their company while maintaining incident command responsibilities until command is transferred. The initial actions and intent to pass command should be announced on the radio.

3. If a company officer establishes incident command, the officer may assign their crew:
 - i. A task-level assignment
 - ii. To perform staff functions
 - iii. To another company officer (the receiving officer must acknowledge the assignment)
4. The modes identified are not strict rules but general guidelines to assist an officer in planning their actions.

F. Transfer of Incident Command

1. The first officer or ranking lifeguard to arrive on scene will establish incident command until relieved by another officer or ranking officer within the following guidelines:
 - i. Truck or rescue officers will pass command to the first arriving engine company officer.
 - ii. The first arriving battalion chief or ranking officer will assume incident command after the transfer of incident command procedures has been completed.
 - iii. Later arriving, higher-ranking chief officers may choose to assume incident command or assume staff or advisory positions.
2. Incident command is transferred when:
 - i. Arriving ranking officers communicate with the IC by radio or face-to-face; and
 - ii. The incident commander briefs the officer assuming incident command with the following:
 - a) Situation status
 - 1) Incident conditions (fire location and extent, number of patients, rescue activity, hazards etc.)
 - 2) Incident action plan
 - 3) Status of tactical objectives
 - 4) Safety considerations
 - b) Resource assignment, status and accountability
 - c) Additional resource needs
 - d) Review of the tactical worksheet or the electronic resource accountability system
3. The officer assuming command will announce the transfer of command and new assignments on the command channel to the Emergency Command and Dispatch Center (ECDC) or LCC.
4. The arrival of a ranking officer on scene does not mean incident command will be transferred to that ranking officer.

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 4 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

- i. If the IC is effectively handling a de-escalating incident, it may be desirable for that officer to continue as the IC.
 - a) In these cases, the ranking officer may assume an advisory role in the overall incident command function.
 - b) A ranking officer electing not to assume incident command may not delegate their responsibility for properly managing an incident.
 - c) Coastal Cliff Rescue Command will be transferred in accordance with Lifeguard Services Division Policy Coastal Cliff Rescue Procedures.

G. Incident Communications

1. Incident Communications for Fire Operations

- i. Units will use the following radio channels accordingly:
 - a) Command channel
 - 1) All units will advise IC that they are on scene unless responding to staging with an established staging channel. Once assigned, the unit will be directed to switch to the assigned tactical channel.
 - 2) IC communicates with ECDC
 - 3) Division and group supervisors will communicate with the operations section chief on the command channel if established
 - 4) On all vegetation fires, division supervisors will communicate with IC or Operations on the command channel
 - b) Tactical channel
 - 1) Division/group supervisors will communicate with their assigned resources
 - 2) Assigned resources will communicate between themselves
 - c) Air-to-ground channel
 - 1) IC/Operations Section Chief will communicate with:
 - 1) Assigned Copters
 - 2) Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) once established
 - 3) Air Tactical Group Supervisor (Air Attack)
 - 2) Divisions or branches when aircraft are assigned to them by HLCO or the ATGS.
 - d) Unassigned Frequencies
 - 1) The only channels to be utilized will be the channels assigned to the incident.
 - 2) The IC may request the use of additional tactical channels or direct tactical channels as necessary.
 - 3) Under no circumstances will crews utilize other channels, or other radio devices.

2. Incident Communications for Lifeguard Division

- i. At working incidents, the IC shall establish a communications plan.

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 5 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

- a) The IC shall establish a command channel in which to communicate with the Communications Center.
- b) This channel is to be used only by the Lifeguard Communications Center (LCC) and the IC.
- ii. If necessary, the IC will establish a tactical communications channel in order to communicate with operations personnel and units.
- iii. Additional channels may be assigned as the incident grows in scope.

H. Incident Command Structures

- 1. It will be the responsibility of incident command to develop an organizational structure utilizing standard operating procedures as soon as possible after arrival.
- 2. The size and complexity of the organizational structure will be determined by the dimensions of the incident.
- 3. The ideal structure of a complex incident should include four levels:
 - i. Strategy Level (Incident Command)
 - ii. Control Level (Operations)
 - iii. Tactical Level (Divisions/Branch)
 - iv. Task Level (Companies)



I. Incident Command System

The FIREScope FOG provides guidance on the application of the incident command system to any planned or unplanned event. Position descriptions, checklists, and diagrams are provided in the FOG. The information in the FOG is intended to enhance the training, education and experience of the user. What follows is a summary of the information provided in the FOG.

- 1. Command Staff

TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE
SUBJECT COMMAND PROCEDURES	SECTION 01	PAGE 6 of 6	EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2025

- i. Incident Commander
 - ii. Safety Officer
 - a) The safety officer (SOF) is responsible for developing and recommending measures for assuring personnel safety, and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations. Having the full authority of the incident commander, the safety officer can exercise emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe acts.
 - iii. Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - a) The public information officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations
2. General Staff
- i. Planning Section Chief (PSC)

The planning section chief is responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination and use of information about the development of the incident and status of resources.
 - ii. Logistics Section Chief (LSC)

The logistics section chief responsible for providing facilities, services and materiel in support of the incident.
 - iii. Operations Section Chief (OSC)

The operations section chief is responsible for the management of all operations directly applicable to the primary mission. The operations chief activates and supervises organization elements in accordance with the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

 - a) Branch Director

Branch directors are responsible for the implementation of the portion of the IAP appropriate to the branches. A branch director supervises divisions and/or groups.
 - b) Divisions or Groups

Divisions (geographical) or groups (functional) are identified as the intermediate tactical level. Divisions are supervised by battalion chiefs, captains or medical supervisors who concentrate on specific areas and tasks.
 - c) Companies

Companies and individuals perform task level functions.

 - 1) The staging area manager, when activated, reports to Operations, or if not activated, reports directly to incident command.