# Missouri Valley Fire & Rescue Department

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## STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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# 301

**Chronological History**
**Effective: January 1, 2010**

### INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

**1.1** **Purpose:** The purpose of this guideline is to establish the Incident Command System for the Missouri Valley Fire Department.

**1.2** **Scope:** This guideline follows the Incident Command System adopted by the National Fire Academy and should be used by all officers/firefighters on the scene of any emergency to which the fire department responds. This document is designed as a guide to assist the Missouri Valley Fire Department in the implementation of an Incident Command System. It provides an easily understood organizational structure and procedures to follow during emergency incidents.

**2.1** **Command Procedures:** These guidelines are designed to fix the responsibility for command on a specific individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies and chief officers. Additionally, command procedures will;
    a.    Ensure that a strong, direct and visible command will be established from the onset of the incident.
    b.    Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the incident commander and to other individuals operating within the Incident Command System.
    c.    Provide a system to process information to support incident management, planning and decision making.
    d.    Provide a system for the orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers.

**2.2** **Responsibilities of Command:** The incident commander is responsible for the completion of the tactical priorities, which include:
    a.    Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
    b.    Stabilize the incident and provide life safety.
    c.    Conserve property
    d.    Provide for the safety, accountability and welfare of personnel **(This priority is ongoing through the incident).**

**2.3** **Function of Command:** Function of command includes:
    a.    Assume and announce command and establish an effective operating position **(Command Post).**
    b.    Rapidly evaluate the situation **(Size Up).**
    c.    Initiate, maintain and control the communication process, identify the overall strategy, develop an

incident action plan and assign companies and personnel consistent with plans and standard operating procedures.

    d.      Develop an effective Incident Command Organization.

    e.      Provide tactical objectives.

    f.      Review, evaluate and revise (as needed) the incident action plan.

    g.      Provide the continuity, transfer and termination of command.

**2.4    Establishing Command:** The first unit or member on the scene must initiate whatever part of the Incident Command System that is needed to effectively manage the incident scene.

A single company incident (trash fires, vehicle fires, animal rescues, etc.) may only require the company or unit acknowledgment of their arrival on the scene.

For incidents that require the commitment of multiple companies or units, the first unit or member on the scene must establish and announce "COMMAND" and develop an incident command structure appropriate for the incident.

**THE FIRST ARRIVING FIRE DEPARTMENT UNIT ACTIVATES THE COMMAND PROCESS BY GIVING AN INITIAL RADIO REPORT.**

The radio report should include:

    a.      Unit designation of the unit arriving on the scene.

    b.      A brief description of the incident situation (building size, occupancy, hazmat release, multiple vehicle accident, etc.)

    c.      Obvious conditions (working fire, hazmat spill, multiple patients, etc.)

    d.      Brief description of action taken

    e.      Declaration of strategy (this applies to structure fires)

    f.      Any obvious conditions

    g.      Assumption, identification and location of command

    h.      Request or release resources when necessary

**2.5    Radio Designation:** The radio designation COMMAND will be used along with the street or geographical location of the incident. This designation of COMMAND will remain with the officer currently in command of the incident throughout the event.

**2.6    Command Options:** The responsibility of the first arriving unit or member to assume command of the incident presents several options, depending on the situation.

    a.      Nothing showing mode:

These situations generally require investigation by the initial arriving company while other units remain in staging mode.

    b.      Fast attack mode:

Situations that require immediate action to stabilize and require the company officers assistance and direct involvement in the attack. In these situations, the company officer goes with the crew to provide the appropriate level of supervision.

NOTE: Where fast intervention is critical, utilization of a repeater radio or portable will permit the company officers involvement in the attack without neglecting command responsibilities. The fast attack mode should not last more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

        a.    The situation is stable

        b.    The situation is not stable and the company officer must withdraw to the exterior and establish a COMMAND POST.

        c.    Command is transferred to another higher ranking officer

**2.7 Staging Mode:** The staging location is that area where incident personnel and equipment are assigned on an immediately available status. There are two types of staging: Level I and Level II.

    a.    LEVEL I - The first arriving apparatus proceeds to the scene, all other apparatus will remain staged by the first arriving officer.

    b.    LEVEL II - establish a designated staging area with a staging officer.

**2.8**    **Command Mode:** Certain incidents by virtue of their size, complexity or potential for rapid expansion requires immediate strong, direct and 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.

**2.9**    **Passing Command:** When a chief officer arrives on the scene at the same time as the initial arriving company, the chief officer should assume command of the incident. In a situation where the chief officer is not on the scene upon arrival, the chief officer shall contact the company officer before assuming command.

**2.10**    **Transfer of Command:** Command is transferred to improve the command process. The transfer of command should go as follows:

    a.    The first fire department member on the scene will automatically assume command. This in most cases will be a company officer but, if not, will be the most qualified senior fire department member.

    b.    The first arriving chief officer should assume command of the incident following transfer of command procedures.

    c.    The second arriving chief officer should report to the command post for assignment.

    d.    Later arriving chief officers should report to the command post for assignment on the command staff.

**2.11**    **General Considerations:** The response and arrival of additional ranking officers, mutual aid chief officers and other specialized functions on the incident scene strengthens the overall command function. As the incident escalates, the incident commander should use these personnel as needed.

**THE INCIDENT COMMANDER HAS THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THE INCIDENT. HE HAS THE AUTHORITY.**

**2.12**    **Command Structure:** Basic organization

**STRATEGY**

COMMAND

TACTICAL_____TASKS
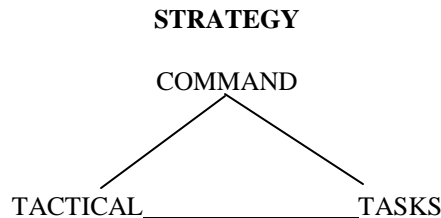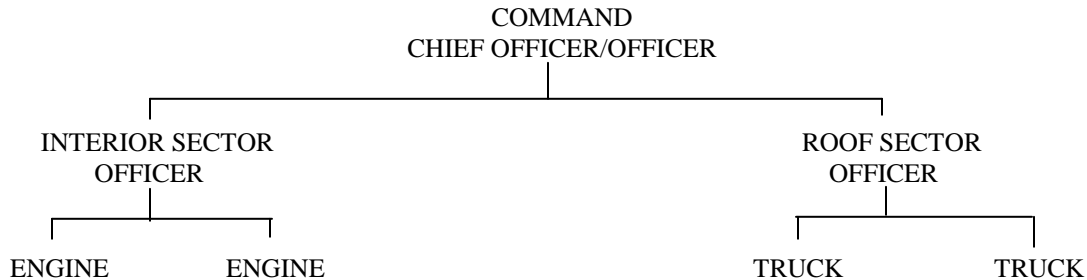
This is usually a single engine response. The company officer determines the strategy and tactics and supervises the crew doing the task.

COMMAND

| ENGINE | ENGINE | ENGINE |
|--------|--------|--------|
| TASK | TASK | TASK |
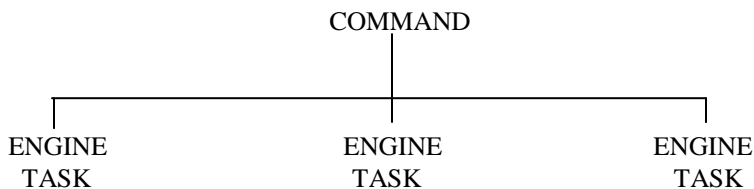
Usually, this is the structure for a routine incident involving a small number of companies requiring only two levels of command structure. The role of the command combines the strategic and tactical levels. Companies report directly to command and operate at the task level.

The term sector is a tactical level management unit that groups companies. The term can be used both for geographic and functional operations.

**2.13**    **Tactical Level Officer:** As the incident escalates, the incident commander should group companies to work in sectors.

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                          COMMAND
                    CHIEF OFFICER/OFFICER
            ┌───────────────┴────────────────┐
    INTERIOR SECTOR                      ROOF SECTOR
       OFFICER                            OFFICER
    ┌─────┴─────┐                      ┌─────┴─────┐
  ENGINE     ENGINE                  TRUCK       TRUCK
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**2.13.1**   **Sector Designation**
- a.    Tactical assignment for a multiple story incident.
- b.    For situations where the incident has an odd geographical layout, the front of the building is designated as side 1 and the remaining sides are given a radio designation of 2, 3 and 4 in a clockwise manner.
- c.    Sector designation
- d.    The use of sectors in the command organization provides a standard system to divide the incident scene into smaller management units or areas.
- e.    Complex emergency situations often exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. Sectors allow the incident commander to communicate principally with these organizational groups.
- f.    When effective sectors have been established, the incident commander can concentrate on overall strategy and resource assignments allowing the sectors to manage their assigned units.
- g.    Sectors reduce the overall amount of radio communications. Most routine communications within a sector should be conducted in a face-to-face manner between company officers and their sector. This process reduces unnecessary radio traffic and increases the ability to transmit critical radio communications.
- h.    When establishing a sector, the incident commander will assign each sector:
  - Tactical objectives
  - a radio designation (roof sector A)
  - the identity of resources to the sector

**2.14**    **Sector Guidelines:** Sectors <u>will be</u> regulated by the following guidelines:
- a.    It will be the ongoing responsibility of command to assign sectors as required for effective emergency operations.
- b.    Command shall advise each sector of specific tactical strategy and plans so each sector will have some idea how their assignment fits into the overall plan.
- c.    The number of companies assigned to each sector will be determined by condition of the incident. Command will maintain an awareness of the number of companies working within a sector. In most cases, five companies represent the maximum span of control for a sector.
- d.    The incident scene should be subdivided in a manner that makes sense. This can be accomplished by assigning sectors to geographic locations (roof sector, ventilation sector etc.).
- e.    Sectors will be commanded by chief officers, company officers, public safety officer or any other fire department member designated by command.
- f.    The guideline for span of control within a sector is a maximum of five.
- g.    The sector officer must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will

require the sector officer to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for their area of responsibility.  An officer assigned within a hazard zone must be accompanied by a partner.

**2.15    Responsibilities for each sector officer:** Each sector officer is responsible for the following:
a.    Complete objectives assigned by command
b.    Account for all assigned personnel
c.    Ensure that operations are conducted safely
d.    Monitor work progress
e.    Redirect activities as necessary
f.    Coordinate actions with related activities and adjacent sectors
g.    Monitor welfare of assigned personnel
h.    Request additional resources as needed
i.    Provide command with essential and frequent progress reports

Command must be advised immediately of significant change, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous conditions, accidents, structural collapse, etc.

**3.1    Expanding the organization:**

As a small incident escalates into a major incident, the incident commander can become quickly overloaded with information management, assigning companies, planning, forecasting, requesting additional resources, talking on the radio and fulfilling all other functions of command. As additional ranking officers arrive on the scene, the command organization may be expanded through implementation of branches and sections and the involvement of officers and staff personnel to fill command and general staff positions.

The transition from the initial phase of the incident, the incident commander normally carries out these four functions:
a.    Operations
b.    Planning
c.    Logistics
d.    Finance/Administration

These comprise the general staff within a fully expanded incident command structure.

**3.2    Incident Commander:**

Once the operations section is in place and functioning, the incident commander's focus should be on strategic issues, overall strategic planning and other components of the incident. The focus is to look at the "BIG PICTURE" and impact of the incident from a broad perspective. The incident commander should provide direction, advice and guidance to the command and general staff in directing the tactical aspects of the incident.

1.    Roles and Responsibilities
a.    Review and evaluate the plan and initiate any needed changes.
b.    Provide on going review of the overall incident **(BIG PICTURE)**
c.    Select priorities
d.    Provide direction to the command and general staff officers
e.    Review the organization structure, initiate changes or expansion to meet incident needs.
f.    Stage command and general staff functions as necessary
g.    Establish liaison with other internal agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants
h.    Incident command shall establish command post
i.    Establish liaison officer for personnel accountability in accordance with the Crosby
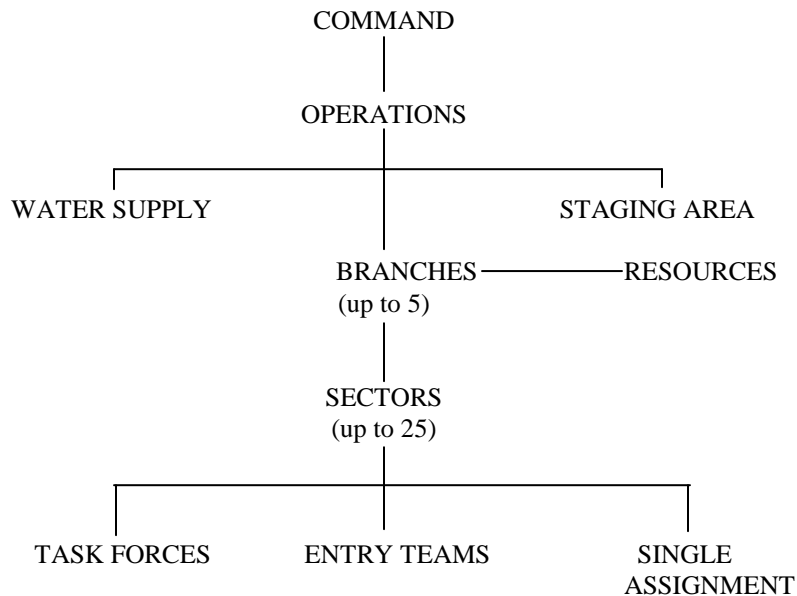
Volunteer Fire Department's SOP on accountability.

**3.3** **Command staff officers:** Command staff positions are established to assume responsibility for key activities, which are not part of the line organization. Three specific activities, which are not a part of the line organization, are "INFORMATION OFFICER, SAFETY OFFICER, and LIAISON OFFICER".

**3.4** **Duties of staff positions:**

1. INFORMATION OFFICER
   a. Responsible for formatting and disseminating factual and timely reports about the incident to news media and other appropriate agencies.
2. SAFETY OFFICER:
   a. Responsible for monitoring and assuring the safety of all personnel and equipment within secured area. Review incident activity for hazards and establish rest and personnel treatment areas.
3. LIAISON OFFICER
   a. Responsible for coordinating with incident commander other appropriate agencies as needed, including local, federal, state and private agencies.

**3.5** **Operations section officer:** The incident operations section officer is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities and should have direct involvement in the preparation of the action plan for the period of responsibility.
1. Roles and Responsibilities
   a. Manage incident tactical activities
   b. Coordinate activities with the incident commander
   c. Implement the incident action plan
   d. Assign resources to tactical level areas based on the tactical objectives and priorities.
   e. Build an efficient organizational structure through the use of branches.
   f. Provide tactical objectives for branches
   g. Control staging and air operations
   h. Provide for life safety
   i. Determine needs and request additional resources.
   j. Consult with and inform sections and the incident commander staff as needed.

COMMAND

OPERATIONS

WATER SUPPLY                    STAGING AREA

BRANCHES ————— RESOURCES
(up to 5)

SECTORS
(up to 25)

TASK FORCES          ENTRY TEAMS          SINGLE
                                          ASSIGNMENT

**3.5.1** **Duties of unit officers:** The following are the duties of the sector, entry team, and staging officer.

1. SECTOR OFFICER - Responsible for the implementation of the assignment portion of the incident action plan, assignment of resources within the sector and reporting progress of control operations and status of resources within the sector.

2. ENTRY TEAM OFFICER - Responsible for performing tactical assignments to the entry team. The leader reports work progress, resources status and other important information to a sector officer.

3. STAGING OFFICER - Responsible for the assembly of personnel and equipment at the staging area.

### 3.5.2   Staging Officer:

1. Identify and locate staging area locations designed within the incident area, which are used to temporarily locate resources, which are available for assignment.

2. In the expanded organization structure, staging reports to the operations section officer. The operations section officer may establish, move and discontinue the use of a staging area. Staging will request logistical support (food, fuel, sanitation etc.)

3. Roles and Responsibilities
   a. Obtain situation briefing from operations section officer
   b. Assess situation
   c. Appoint a brief staff
   d. Locate, prepare and identify staging area

4. Consider:
   a. Safety and accessibility
   b. Traffic control must be monitored
   c. Order and dispense resources as directed by the operations section officer
   d. Maintain predetermined resources inventory
   e. Coordinate with logistics section officer/chief and anticipate changes in requirements.
   f. Keep record of resources requirements staffing/equipment
   g. Determine support needs: fuel, food, sanitation and security
   h. Establish and maintain a check in log

### 3.5.3   Water supply officer

1. The water supply officer is responsible for the development of adequate water sources in fire suppression situations and to implement the tactics as outlined by the incident commander. The water supply officer shall perform the following;
   a. Obtain a situation briefing from the operations section officer
   b. Locate and prepare primary and secondary water sources
   c. If necessary, appoint and brief a staff
   d. Coordinate the source and dump sites

### 3.6   Planning section officer

1. The planning section officer is responsible for the collection, evaluation and processing of information needed for effective decision making. Information management is a full time job at a complex incident. Critical information should be forwarded to command immediately. Information should be used to make long-range plans. The planning section officer goal is to plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources before they are needed.

2. Roles and Responsibilities
   a. Evaluate current strategy and plan with the incident commander
   b. Maintain resources and personnel accountability status
   c. Refine and recommend any needed changes to plan with operations input
   d. Evaluate incident organization and span of control

e.       Forecast possible outcome
f.       Evaluate future resource requirement
g.       Utilize technical assistance as needed with outside agencies
h.       Gather, update, improve and manage situation status with a standard systematic approach
i.       Plan for incident demobilization
j.       Maintain incident records

### 3.7    Logistics section officer

1. The logistics section officer provides services and support systems to all organizational components involved in the incident including facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment, maintenance, fueling, feeding, communications and medical services including responder rehab.
2. Roles and Responsibilities
     a.    Provide for medical aid for incident personnel and manage responder rehab.
     b.    Coordinate critical incident stress debriefing function
     c.    Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment
     d.    Forecast and obtain future resources needs (coordinate with the planning section)
     e.    Provide for communications plan and any needed communications equipment
     f.    Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment
     g.    Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per command
     h.    Provide food and needed supplies
     I.    Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities
     j.    Provide any other logistical needs as requested by command
     k.    Supervise assigned personnel

### 3.8    Medical unit EMS officer

1. Responsible for providing medical services to on scene personnel. The medical unit EMS officer will follow the EMS medical command protocol.

### 3.9    Finance/Administration

1. The finance/administration section is established on incidents when the department who is involved have specific needs for financial services. Not all incidents will require this service.
2. Roles and Responsibilities
     a.    Procuring of services and supplies from sources within and outside the fire department as required by incident command (coordinates with logistics)
     b.    Documenting all financial costs of the incident
     c.    Analyzing and managing legal risk for incident (hazardous material clean up)
     d.    Documenting for compensation and claims for injury
3. The financial/administration section officer is responsible for obtaining any needed incident documentation for potential cost recovery efforts.

**By Authority of:**
**Fire Chief**

**_Eugene Shaeffer_**