

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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1. **PURPOSE:** To define and describe the Incident Management System to be utilized by the South Portland Fire Department.

2. **PROCEDURES:**

ICS/IMS/FGC System

The South Portland Fire Department adopts by reference the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as published by the Department of Homeland Security. In conjunction with this system we may use certain strategic and tactical priorities as well as other information from the Fireground Command System by Brunicini and others, as detailed below. The phrases Incident Command System (ICS), Fireground Command System (FGC) and Incident Management System (IMS) may be used interchangeably without inference that a particular “brand” of system is intended.

Command Designation

Every incident has someone who is in charge and is the Incident Commander. “Command” shall be the radio designation of the entity managing or commanding an incident. This applies to incidents where literature may describe a “fireground commander” (FGC), multiple jurisdictional response using a “Unified Command” or incidents referring to “Incident Management”. With multiple incidents the radio designation may be modified by a location designator to differentiate between incidents. Examples would be the designators “Sawyer Street Command” or “Hannaford Command”.

Assumption of Command:

Command is established by the highest ranking FD person *first on scene* and that person will remain in command of the incident until:

- Command is passed
- Command is transferred
- The incident is resolved

Command is only assumed once (in the beginning when it is established) after that it is either passed or transferred.

Tactical Priorities:

Tactical priorities for Command are as follows

- Safety – Includes the entire operation and the below listed priorities
- Rescue/Life Safety
- Scene Stabilization

- Property Conservation

Providing Initial Report:

Upon arrival the first IC, over the radio:

- Will announce unit designation and that he/she is establishing command.
- Will provide a quick size up including the following:
 - A basic description of building.
 - School, Residential, Hotel, Etc.
 - Describe what you see.
 - Nothing showing, smoke showing, fire showing 2nd floor.
 - Any other immediately pertinent information.
 - Building evacuated/not evacuated, exposures, closest hydrant.
- Will announce your Operational Mode:
 - Investigation Mode: Nothing showing and you will initially be “mobile command” and simultaneously be the “Investigation Group”.
 - Rescue Mode: people are reported trapped or still in the building, all units currently on scene will be involved in the rescue operation. Normally you would “pass” command to a responding unit who may not be on scene yet.
 - Attack Mode: Fire showing and beginning offensive operations such as stretching a line and making an interior offensive attack on the seat of the fire. A crew would be assigned to provide the “2 in/2 out” function prior to entry. Rarely would this Command be Mobile (i.e. it would be outside not inside)
 - Defensive Operation Mode: The fire is already too large to conduct an interior operation, outside suppression operations only. Command is fixed outside.

Example: Engine 5 is on scene at a 3 story apartment building with nothing showing from 2 sides, will have Mobile Command and in Investigation Mode.

Command Changes:

For various reasons during an incident, Command may be transferred.

- Command may be transferred to a more experienced officer
- Command may be transferred at the end of an operational work period
- Command may be transferred to lower ranking personnel as an incident contracts or for technical reasons.

The announcement of a change of command is normally not required. Post incident reports shall describe the changes of Command and at larger or longer duration incidents may be recorded by Fire Alarm.

Command may be changed by either a Transfer of Command or a Passing of Command.

Transfer of Command

- The transfer of command from one person to another may occur at any point during an incident. When a Transfer of Command takes place it must involve a briefing of the new Incident Commander(s) by the outgoing Incident Commander(s). Ideally this

should take place face to face but may be done over the radio for very simple briefings or early in an incident.

Passing of Command

- The passing of command from one person to another should only take place very early in an incident. This happens when the first arriving unit has determined that they will be physically needed due to the intensity of the incident, usually for life safety reasons. In this case the first unit shall perform a size up, develop an initial action plan, relay the units planned actions over the radio and direct the next arriving unit to assume command on arrival. The philosophy is such that the physical involvement of the first arriving officer is critical to the outcome of the incident and the next arriving officer will find little changed since he or she is expected to arrive within moments. If the second arriving officer will be several minutes away then the first unit must retain command until it can be transferred upon the arrival of the next unit.

Emergency Change of Command

- In extremely rare instances it may be necessary for another person to suddenly assume command without either a transfer or passing of command. This may occur if a sudden collapse, explosion or other catastrophe occurs and the previous command is incapacitated or out of communication. In this event another person may assume command after sizing up the situation and notifying Fire Alarm. If the initial command unit regains communication then command shall be transferred back to that person. Fire Alarm shall be notified and announce the change of Command.

A large percentage of South Portland “fire” calls are handled using the Investigation Mode. The first arriving FT Engine Company will normally establish “Mobile” Command while simultaneously being the Investigation Group. They will still be identified as Command (not Investigation). The second arriving engine company is normally also a FT company and should initially take a hydrant (as per SOG). “Mobile” Command has the option of keeping Command if the investigation is nearing completion (i.e. it was a pull station at the front door) and they will be releasing companies soon. If the event is not so straight forward (i.e. a large building with multiple smoke detectors) “Mobile” Command should request the second engine company move up and transfer Command to them. The second engine company will acknowledge the transfer by confirming they have Command and Mobile Command is now reassigned Investigation or Division 1 as examples).

Command Responsibilities:

Initial Operations:

- Assume effective Command Position (Front of building preferably using a Chief’s vehicle as a Command Post)
- Size up the scene
- Transmit brief report and assignments (Fire on the 2nd Floor / E-8 will be stretching a line to the second floor and will be Division 2)
- Determining strategies
- Select tactics

- Assign ICS positions (Safety, Accountability, Manpower, EMS, Rehab)
- Assign units as required by the tactical priorities and consistent with level 1 staging.

Continuing Operations:

- Provide overall Command, including Unified Command as appropriate
- Develop the IAP
- Expand the IMS system as needed
- Review and evaluate efforts, revise plan as needed
- Request and assign additional units
- Return units to service.

Communications:

- Command shall be called “Command”, when more than one incident is occurring; command should have a geographic modifier (such as Shaw’s Command), especially with merger of the radio system and dispatch.
- Designated Divisions/Groups will be called by its function or geographic location. For example, Division 1, Investigation Group, Charlie Division, or Ventilation Group.
- Command will make sure that as teams enter they are aware of their:
 - Assigned task(s)
 - Assigned location
 - Radio designation
 - Who to report to
- Transfer of Command shall be face to face as much as practical.

Groups/Divisions/Branches:

Work areas or jobs will be broken down as described in NIMS using any of the following designators.

- Groups: Work unit defined by a functional responsibility i.e. Ventilation Group
- Divisions: Work unit defined by geographic responsibility i.e. Division One
- Branches: Larger work unit organizationally between Division/Groups and the Operations Section. Branches are identified by the use of functional name (e.g., Medical, Security, or Hazmat).

Groups/Divisions/Branches will be tailored by Command based upon the situation, manpower limitations and safety needs.

Group/Division/Branch leaders shall:

- Monitor welfare and safety of personnel
- Monitor work progress
- Reallocate resources within the group or division
- Coordinate with related activities
- Request of Command for additional resources needs
- Provide Command with progress reports
- Redirect activities as necessary

Standard Geographic Terminology:

The following terminology shall be used to identify the applicable geographic locations and directions.

Building Orientation:

Sides of the building shall be lettered starting with “Side Alpha” at the front of the building and proceeding sequentially (Bravo, Charlie, Delta) in a clockwise direction around the building. Regardless of configuration, buildings shall only have four sides or quadrants. Irregularly shaped buildings shall be enclosed within an imaginary four sided plot to conform. Sides will be referred to by phonetic labeling, i.e. Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta.

Corners of building shall be identified by the intersection of the two applicable sides, i.e. Bravo/Charlie Corner.

Front of the building shall normally be the “main entrance” side or “address side”. Usually this will be the location of the first arriving engine and command post. In the event of unusual buildings or circumstances, Command shall designate and announce a clarification of the Alpha side.

Exposures:

Exposure buildings shall be identified by referring to the side designation of the incident building, i.e. Exposure C-1 is the exposure located on the Charlie side area of the building. When necessary due to multiple exposures on the same side, a numeric indicator will be added. For example: the third building over on the Delta side would be on the exposure D-3. This is most likely applicable for exposures which are physically connected such as strip malls.

Internal Sub-units:

When the interior of a building is to be further divided into smaller work units from the Interior Division, this shall normally be done by floor and assigned a Division designation based on the floor label. The third floor would be referred to as Division 3, and Division 5 would be the fifth floor. The basement would be the Basement Division.

Termination of Command:

At the conclusion of an incident when all units have been released and the property turned over to the owner or another agency Command will be terminated or ended. Command shall notify Fire Alarm to return remaining units and state that Command is terminated. Coverage units may remain in place for use by Fire Alarm while units return to service but the Command system for the incident is no longer in place.

3. REFERENCES:

- None

By Order Of:

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