Issued by: Fire Chief Scott E. Goldstein

Policy Number: 24-01

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-3 (b)

Supersedes: Policy and Procedure 20-02 *Incident Command System* 3/19/2002

FCGO 16-02 *Incident Command Teams 01/27/2016*

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

SECTION 1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Incident Command appendix is to provide guidance for the command and control of fire/rescue incidents.

SECTION 2. Applicability:

All MCFRS personnel while participating in MCFRS activities and personnel from other organizations while operating in Montgomery County.

SECTION 3. Background:

MCFRS is an all-hazards fire/rescue service organization that uses a modular and scalable standard Incident Management System. This system is referred to as the Incident Management System (IMS) in this document.

The IMS is the regional organizational structure protocol that supports an Incident Commander and is intended to promote communication, coordination, accountability, and effective action to when responding to a natural disaster or other emergency. The IMS is based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which was created to enhance the management of emergency incidents by establishing a single, comprehensive plan for responding to these incidents.

This appendix of the Incident Response Policy is consistent with, constrained by and subordinate to Executive Regulation 16-05AM: Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS). The scope of this appendix is limited to those incidents that are normally within the sole responsibility of MCFRS to manage.

The use of a standardized IMS is required by the IECS policy. IMS provides key elements critical to effective emergency incident management including: expandable and redundant system structures and components, standard terminology, a focus on the development and management of incident objectives, and a systematic and scalable deployment of resources to meet the objectives under the direction and control of an Incident Commander.

This appendix focuses on the components of IMS that MCFRS uses on a regular basis. Most incidents do not require extensive activation of most IMS components. Also, there are incidents where MCFRS is involved but plays a supporting role. While other county agencies use the IMS, the specific application is not governed by this document.

POSITION STATEMENT

For every incident, there is an Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that the incident management processes are consistent with the organization's policies, procedures, values and principles and with ensuring that all the basic functions common to all incidents are carried out.

The incident command process begins with a scene size-up; an assessment of the incident. Based on that assessment, the Incident Commander must develop incident objectives. Those objectives may be embedded in a standard operating procedure or the Incident Commander may have to develop them in the moment.
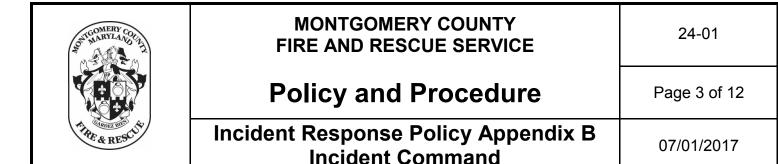
Effective incident command requires the Incident Commander to establish objectives, but also to ensure the initiation and monitoring of action. The monitoring of action speaks to the need to continuously evaluate the validity of the stated objectives and to ensure that the configuration of personnel and other resources is optimized to meet the objectives. The incident scene is dynamic and therefore it is necessary to make on-going observations and assessments throughout the incident. As the incident progresses the Incident Commander must ensure harmony between strategy, tactics, and available resources.

The application of incident command is scalable, beginning with a single unit response where a unit officer is in command, and expanding as necessary to ensure a reasonable span of control. As the risk or complexity of an event increases, the capabilities of the IMS must increase proportionately. However, at all times, there is only one Incident Commander. This is known as the continuity of command.

Operations must be directed toward clearly defined and attainable objectives. All fire/rescue events require action and that action must be driven by the incident objectives.

While there may be many concurrent objectives there can be only one primary objective at any one time. All other objectives are supporting objectives. Any objective related to life safety must always be the primary objective. All objectives must be identified and communicated in concise, easy to understand terms. The simultaneous achievement of objectives requires close coordination by the Incident Commander.

Incident command for complex incidents is more effectively executed when there are at least two Certified Chief Officers (CCO) operating inside a stationary vehicle-based command post. The

second CCO's role will change based on the nature of the event, but their primary function is to enhance the situational awareness and cognitive bandwidth for the Incident Commander.

Developing comprehensive situational awareness is difficult for the first arriving CCO. While they do have the benefit of the initial on scene report from unit officers, they are not usually able to visually inspect the scene before initiating command functions. While there is a benefit derived from the first arriving CCO conducting their own scene size up, this benefit is almost always outweighed by the need to quickly establish Command.

The second arriving CCO is not restricted in this way and has the ability to develop additional situational awareness and bring that information back to the command post.

The pace of communications and actions for complex events such as structure fires or mass casualty incidents can quickly overwhelm a single person. This is especially true when incident communications are divided across multiple talk paths, such as a second tactical talkgroup or when the use of the talk around channel is required. Having a second CCO in the command post reduces the chance of missing critical communications.

The intent of command operations is to form an Incident Command Team (ICT) with the first two CCOs and to have that team operate from one of the Battalion Command Platforms (BCP). It is also the intent of command operations to have the representation of both career and volunteer CCOs in the incident command post.

SECTION 4. Definitions:

See Appendix Q.

SECTION 5. Policy:

   a. It is the policy of MCFRS that there is an Incident Commander for every incident.

   b. The Incident Commander must use all available training, education, and tools to create and communicate a vision for a successful incident outcome. This vision is communicated by the issuance of clear incident objectives.

      1. Incident objectives may be embedded by a standard operating procedure.

      2. SOPs do not restrict the exercise of discretion by an Incident Commander.

   c. The Incident Commander must ensure effective command which means ensuring that all the basic incident management functions are accomplished. Those functions are:

      1. Situational Awareness;

      2. Accountability;

      3. Effective Communication;

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4. Risk Assessment;

5. Established Objectives;

6. Initiating and Monitoring Action.

d. There is a fundamental difference between the command function as exercised by a Primary Unit Officer (as defined in the IECS Policy) and the command function as exercised by a CCO operating from a stationary command post. The Primary Unit Officer cannot work with their crew and simultaneously provide effective command for complex incidents.

e. Complex incidents require the presence of a CCO operating from a stationary command post whenever possible.

f. When a stationary command is established by a CCO he/she:

1. Must attempt to position in a way that allows a view of at least two sides of the structure from the command post;

2. Should move to the first arriving BCP unless there is a compelling reason not to.

3. If the incident command post is not based in a BCP, the first arriving rostered Battalion Chief must report to the incident command post with at least a MDC and the standard accountability and staffing documents;

4. Must use a tactical worksheet to track the incident objectives, resource allocation, and progress towards established objectives; and

5. Must ensure that the changes in strategy are deliberate and communicated.

g. Status updates intended for Command must follow the Location-Conditions-Actions-Needs (LCAN) format.

h. Exercising the Command Function

1. It is possible for units to respond to what was dispatched as a basic incident and find a complex one. When personnel arrive and find a complex incident they must ensure that a command officer is alerted.

2. Any unit officer may announce via radio that they have Command for an incident when the unit officer believes that announcing who has Command will improve incident operations.

3. As per the IECS policy, An EMS Unit Officer may act as Incident Commander only if another unit officer is not on the scene of an incident.

4. Whenever an EMS Unit Officer establishes Command the first arriving Primary Unit Officer must assume .

5. Primary Unit Officers are required to announce the unit identifier of the Incident Commander and "name" the Command - typically using the street name - for every complex event.

6. MCFRS recognizes two methods of managing incident command within the scope of this document: Tactical Command and Stationary Command.

   A. Tactical Command

      i. Tactical Command describes the situation where the Primary Unit Officer is engaging in direct action with his/her crew.

         (a) Tactical Command is in effect simply by virtue of a unit being on the scene of an incident.

         (b) Tactical Command can be used for both initial incident investigation and for initial engagement in emergency operations.

      ii. Tactical Command is designed to be used for a short duration.

         (a) If the entity with Tactical Command cannot resolve the incident in short order and no CCO is on the scene, the Incident Commander must either pass the Command or establish a Stationary Command.

         (b) Special service officers may not establish Tactical Command of structure fires. They must establish Stationary Command.

   B. Stationary Command

      i. Stationary Command describes when a Primary Unit Officer or CCO is dedicated solely to performing the incident command function from a fixed location.

i. Transfers and Assumptions of Command

   1. Any unit officer who establishes Tactical Command must also maintain the integrity of their crew.

   2. One Primary Unit Officer may not assume Command from another Primary Unit Officer.

   3. If an EMS Unit Officer has established Command, they must pass it to the first arriving Primary Unit Officer.

   4. The first arriving Primary Unit Officer may pass Command to another on scene Primary Unit Officer, who must then maintain a Stationary Command until relieved.

   5. Command can only be passed once from one Primary Unit Officer to another.

   6. When the first CCO arrives he/she will assume a Stationary Command, generally after being provided a L-C-A-N report from the unit originally establishing Command.

   7. Command may be transferred between CCOs as determined by the IECS.

   8. Senior ranking CCOs may assume Command of incidents as allowed by the IECS.

j. The Battalion Command Platform is typically the most effective vantage point from which to conduct incident command operations.

1. The Battalion Command Platform must not be used if the view from the platform is more restrictive than another viable option.

2. Exercising Stationary Command from the officer seat of fire apparatus, while not forbidden, represents a deficit in capability and is an option of last resort.

k. Use of IMS Components

1. All of the listed functions/positions are assigned by the Incident Commander or by standard operating procedure.

2. Only the Incident Commander may assign IMS roles.

3. The Incident Commander should only use the components of IMS as necessary to maintain a reasonable span of control.

4. The IMS must be expanded as necessary to maintain an effective span of control.

5. Common IMS Components:

A. The list below contains common IMS terms and how they are expected to be applied on incidents within the scope of this policy.

   i. Incident Scene Safety Officer (ISSO)

      (a) A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations, and for developing measures for ensuring personnel safety.

      (b) The ISSO may have Assistants.

      (c) The ISSO must not engage in tactical operations.

      (d) If an imminent life threatening situation exists, the ISSO has the authority to stop or alter the action.

      (e) If this action is taken it must be immediately reported to the Incident Commander.

   ii. Liaison

      (a) A member of the Command Staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies, such as Red Cross, the shelter task force, utility company representatives, building management, etc.

   iii. Branches

      (a) The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions.

      (b) Branch Directors are responsible for command, control, and accountability of all assigned resources.

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        (c) This function is most commonly used on special operations calls and mass casualty incidents.

    iv. Groups

        (a) Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a specific function.

        (b) Groups are not confined by geographic area.

        (c) The Group Supervisor is responsible for ensuring the completion of all objectives assigned to his/her group and maintaining accountability of all assigned resources.

    v. Divisions

        (a) Divisions are used to divide an incident into geographical areas of operation.

        (b) Divisions are generally identified by alphabetic characters for horizontal applications and typically by floor numbers when used in buildings.

        (c) The Division Supervisor is responsible for ensuring the completion of all assigned objectives in his/her area of operations and maintaining accountability of all assigned resources.

    vi. Field Observer

        (a) A Field Observer is assigned by Command to gather information about the incident scene for the purpose of enhancing situational awareness.

        (b) The Incident Commander may use a CCO as a Field Observer temporarily before completing the command team if the additional situational awareness is necessary.

        (c) When a Field Observer is assigned they should be designated by their location, e.g, Charlie Observer, Alpha Observer, or Outside Observer.

l. Incident Duration Reminders

    1. It is important for the Incident Commander to track elapsed incident time.

    2. This information is valuable for many reasons, including the establishment of work cycles, determining the need for additional resources, and evaluating of the impact of fire on structural components.

    3. The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) must provide incident duration reminders (IDRs) at regular intervals throughout an incident.

    4. The first IDR must be provided by ECC 10 minutes after incident dispatch and at intervals not greater than 10 minutes as measured from the time of dispatch.

    5. The ECC may delay an IDR in order to avoid interference with incident operations but must provide the IDR as close to the designated time as possible.
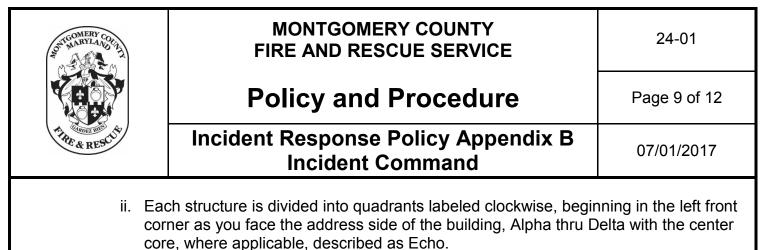
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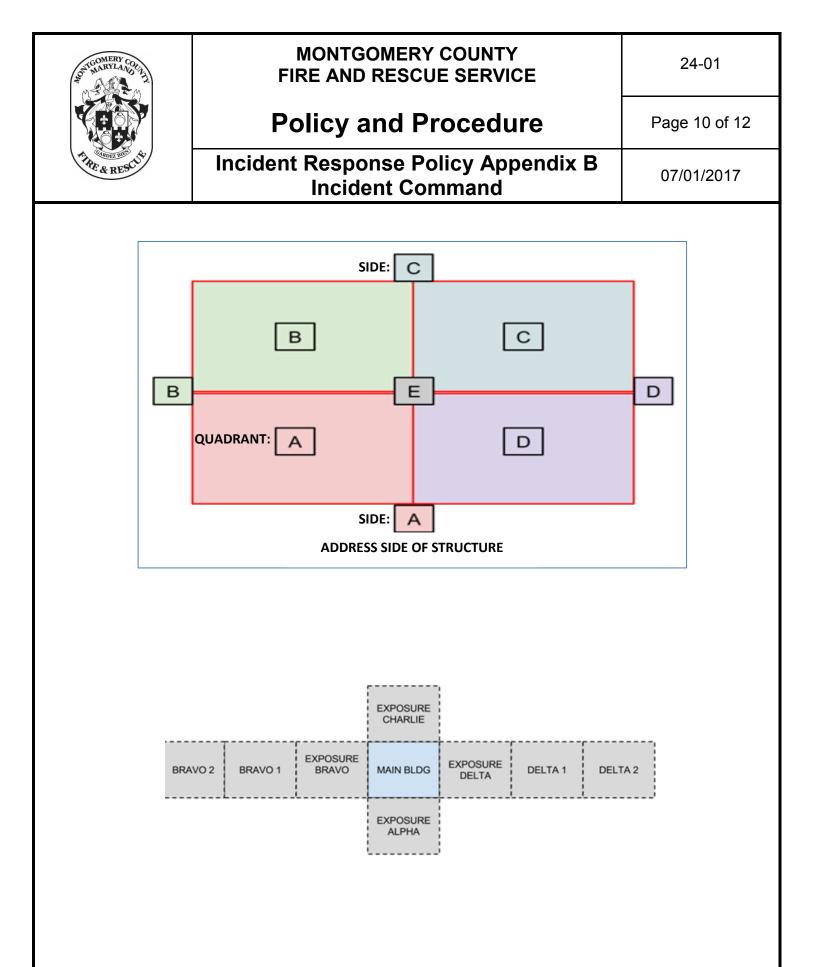
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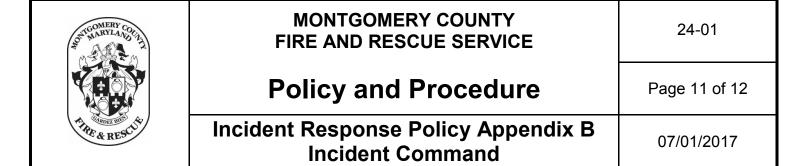
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6. When the IDR is delayed, the ECC will provide the actual elapsed time post-dispatch.

7. Only the Incident Commander can cause the IDR cycle to be stopped and only after at least one announcement.

m. Resource Staging

1. There are cases where the Incident Commander decides to stage additional resources. He/she may stage units to allow time for reconnaissance or to determine the most appropriate location for unit placement. There are three types of staging:

   A. Tactical Staging

      i. Units take assigned positions, lay supply lines, provide required size-up reports, but the personnel remain on their apparatus prepared to immediately engage and complete assigned duties until otherwise directed.

   B. Remote Staging

      i. Units stage 600 feet or 2 blocks, whichever is greater, away from the incident without engine companies passing the last available water source.

   C. Base Staging

      i. Units are assigned to a specific staging area.

      (a) The location is determined and announced by Command.

2. The first primary unit in staging will be the Staging Area Manager.

   A. The Staging Area Manager must:

      i. Account for all resources assigned to staging.

      ii. Assign units as appropriate to Command when they are requested.

3. Greater alarms are typically dispatched on a subordinate talkgroup in an incident talk block. For units dispatched on a greater alarm such as a fire task force, second alarm, EMS task force, etc., the first arriving Primary Unit Officer will act as the Staging Area Manager. If Command has not established a base staging area the first arriving Primary Unit Officer will contact Command (if it can be done without disrupting the incident) and query Command about the preferred staging location. In the absence of direction from Command, units will remote stage until called by Command.

n. Geographic Designations

1. MCFRS uses standard geographic designations to refer to structures.

   A. Building Sides and Quadrants

      i. It is assumed that each structure has generally four sides with the address side of the structure referred to as Side Alpha.

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ii. Each structure is divided into quadrants labeled clockwise, beginning in the left front corner as you face the address side of the building, Alpha thru Delta with the center core, where applicable, described as Echo.

iii. While the address side of the building is typically designated as Side Alpha, the Incident Commander may designate any side of the building as Side Alpha and the other sides will then be designated clockwise using the conventions outlined above.

B. Exposures

i.   The designation of exposures is based on the designation of "sides". The exposure immediately adjacent to a given "side" assumes the same designation as that side.

ii. In a multi-story structure, the two floors above the fire and the floor below the fire are generally considered exposures.

C. Floors

i.   Unless otherwise designated, floors will be numbered up from the ground entrance level with the entrance level being known as the first floor. Some buildings are arranged such that the ground level entrance is numbered other than first, when this is the case the floor will be known by its given designation.

ii. The floor designation is not a functional designation. The third floor is the third floor not Division 3. Division 3 is a designation given by the Incident Commander typically to personnel on the third floor, but not necessarily.

iii. In many multi-family dwellings, there is a terrace level. A terrace level means that the primary entrance to the living space is via an interior common area (corridor or stair), but there is also a ground level exit through the rear of the main living area.

iv. There are structures that do not follow normal conventions and/or do not fit within the descriptions above. When this situation is encountered, the unit officers must advise Command of the building layout and the Incident Commander must ensure that the various levels of the structure are clearly designated.

SIDE: C

B

C

B

E

D

QUADRANT: A

D

SIDE: A

ADDRESS SIDE OF STRUCTURE

EXPOSURE CHARLIE

BRAVO 2 | BRAVO 1 | EXPOSURE BRAVO | MAIN BLDG | EXPOSURE DELTA | DELTA 1 | DELTA 2

EXPOSURE ALPHA

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o. Isolation Zones and Action Circles

1. Some incidents require the establishment of isolation zones. Isolation zones define incident action areas based on their relative hazard. Isolation zones are not always based on concentric circles. The nature of the incident hazards determine the shape of the zones. The Incident Commander should ensure that the zones are clearly identified.

2. The hot zone is where the incident action is occurring and represents the area of the highest hazard.

3. The warm zone is an area of lesser hazards that represents a transitional space between the high hazard area and the no hazard area.

4. The cold zone is an area free of incident hazards. The incident command post is located in the cold zone.

5. For some events, such as vehicle collisions, these hot and warm zones may be referred to the inner and outer circle respectively.

SECTION 6. Responsibility:

All personnel.

SECTION 7. Procedure:

a. Tactical Command

1. The first arriving Primary Unit Officer will:

A. Conduct a size-up viewing all sides of the structure/area whenever possible;

B. Determine if there is an applicable SOP;

i. If there is an applicable SOP, it must be used

C. Exercise the appropriate method of command;

i. Name the Command using a geographic designation, normally the street name.

D. Determine the incident strategy (announce as required by other incident response policy appendices);

E. Request additional resources as required;

F. Announce their initial objective(s) as appropriate;

G. Provide direction to incoming units if there is no applicable SOP;

H. Engage as necessary with their crew to manage the incident; and

I. Provide radio reports and updates as required by other policies.

b. Stationary Command

1. The Incident Commander in Stationary Commande must:

    A. Ensure all aspects of the Tactical Command procedures have been met;

    B. Receive a report from the initial Incident Commander before establishing a stationary command if necessary;

    C. Develop situational awareness;

    D. Establish incident objectives;

    E. Provide effective command and control for the duration of the incident;

    F. Develop a command team as necessary and appropriate;

    G. Track crew accountability;

    H. Assign an ISSO as necessary;

    I. Use the Command Platform with the most effective combination of visual coverage of the incident scene AND the best complement of command aides, radios, MDC, maps, etc., typically the Battalion Command Platform;

    J. Use a paper-based tactical tracking mechanism for monitoring action and crew accountability;

    K. Use a visual method to track elapsed incident time;

    L. Initiate and monitor incident actions;

    M. Provide regular incident updates on the lead tactical talkgroup; and

    N. Conduct personnel accountability report (PAR) checks at regular intervals throughout the incident when units are operating in hazardous areas, at intervals not greater than 20 minutes.

SECTION 8. Cancellation:

This policy cancels and supersedes: Policy and Procedure 20-02 *Incident Command System* 3/19/2002, FCGO 16-02 *Incident Command Teams* 01/27/2016.

SECTION 9. Attachments:

None.

Approved:

Scott Goldste

Scott E. Goldstein   April 14, 2017
Fire Chief