

## INTRODUCTION

The Structure Fire Module is designed to provide the organization structure to assist with command and control at all structure fire incidents. Structure fires are short-term incidents (less than one operational period). Due to the compressed time frame, most structure fire incident command systems incorporate only the Command and Operations function. The Incident Command System (ICS) provides an organized method to apply goals and objectives to structure fire incidents.

The content shown herein is pulled directly from [ICS 500](#)

The foundational elements of command include:

- Incident Priorities
  - Life Safety
  - Incident Stabilization
  - Property Conservation
  - Environmental Protection
- Strategic – Overall direction of the incident
- Tactical – Assigns operational objectives
- Task – Specific tasks assigned to companies

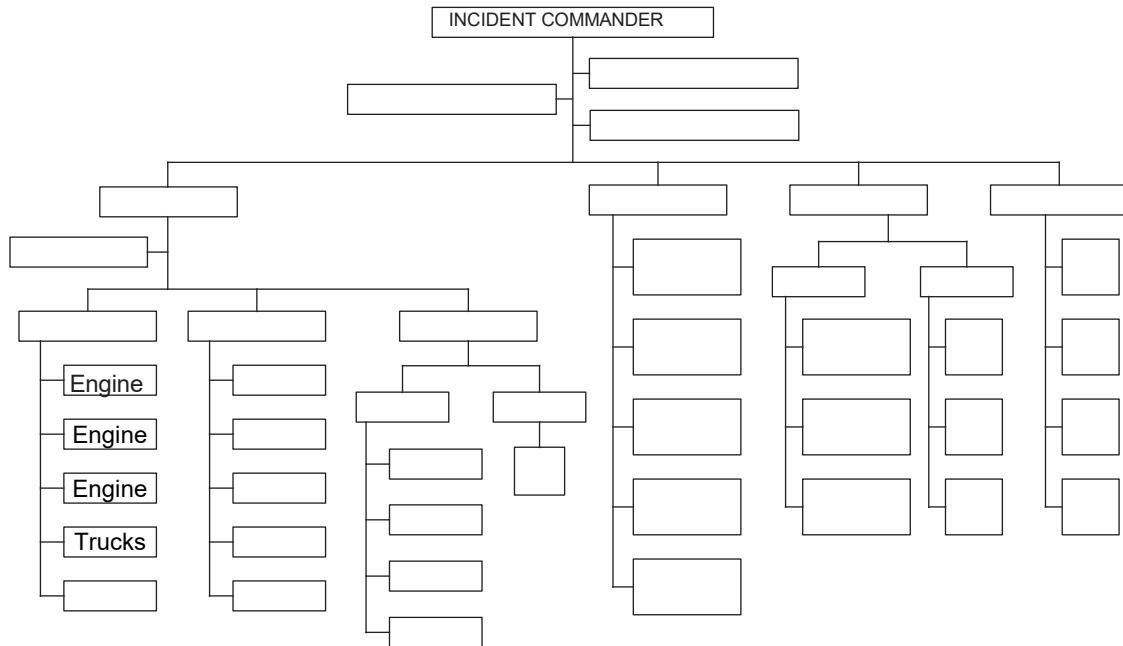
## MODULAR DEVELOPMENT

Initial Response Organization: The Incident Commander sets up ICS and manages the initial response resources as well as all Command and General Staff responsibilities.

Reinforced Response Organization: The Incident Commander should assign companies to work in Division/Groups as an incident escalates, and incident needs arise. A department must have a designated method of dividing an incident scene to use Division/Group terminology effectively. Assigning Divisions/Groups enables the Incident Commander to concentrate on overall strategy and resource assignment, communicating this through the chain of command.

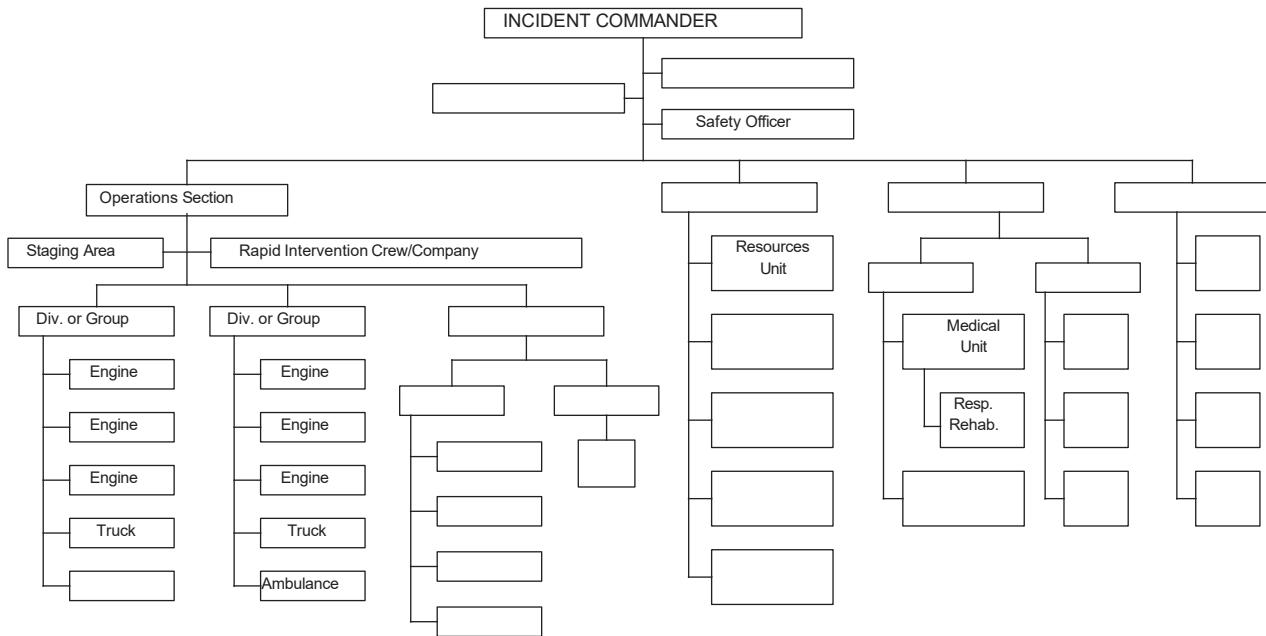
Multi-Branch Response Organization: As the span of control expands, the incident becomes more complex, or has two or more distinctly different operations (i.e., Fire, Medical, Evacuation, Rescue, etc.), the organization structure can be further expanded into Branches.

## **STRUCTURE FIRE - INITIAL RESPONSE ORGANIZATION**



**Structure Fire - Initial Response Organization:** The most basic ICS organization combines all three levels of command (Strategic, Tactical, and Task). The initial structure for a "routine" incident involving multiple companies requires Strategic/Tactical and Task levels of command. Companies report directly to the Incident Commander and operate at the task level. If these resources can handle the incident and no escalation is anticipated, no further ICS development is advised.

# **STRUCTURE FIRE - REINFORCED RESPONSE ORGANIZATION**

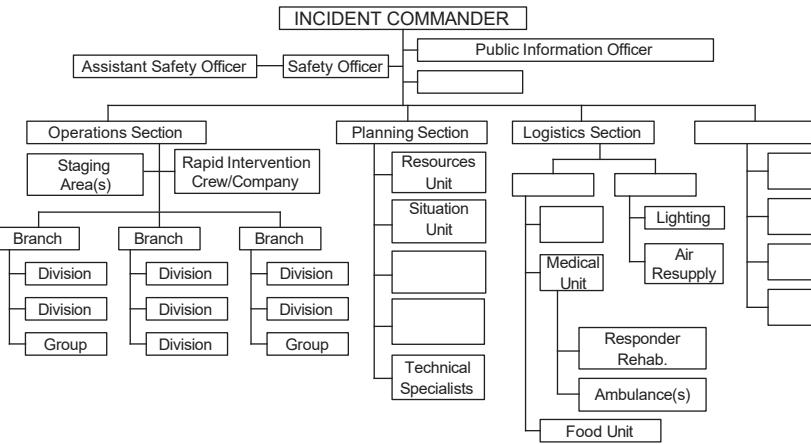


**Structure Fire - Reinforced Response Organization:** As the incident expands, and additional resources are deployed, Division or Group Supervisors are used to organize companies at the tactical level, ensuring accountability of resources assigned. Divisions/Groups allow the Incident Commander to communicate principally with these organizational levels rather than multiple individual Company Officers, providing for effective command, incident organization, and oversight of resources.

Each Division/Group Supervisor is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources assigned to complete the objectives established by the Incident Commander. Through the chain of command, each Division/Group Supervisor is responsible for communicating to the Incident Commander conditions, actions, and needs (CAN) through regular progress reports to effectively handle tactical priorities.

Further development of the Operations Section could include either Divisions (Division Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, and Roof or Division 1, 2, etc. for multi-story buildings) or Groups (Fire Attack, Search, Ventilation etc.), or a combination of both (Division 1, 2, 3 and a Salvage Group).

# **STRUCTURE FIRE - MULTI-BRANCH RESPONSE ORGANIZATION**



**Structure Fire Multi-Branch Response Organization:** The Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief should establish a multi-branch command structure when the number of Divisions/Groups exceeds the recommended span of control (3-7) for the Operations Section Chief.

In general, branches may be established for the following reasons:

- Geographical
- Span of Control
- Functional
- Multi-jurisdictional

When Branch Directors are established, the Division/Group Supervisors should be notified of their new supervisor.

This information should include:

1. Which Branch Director each Division/Group is now assigned to
2. The radio channel the Branch and Division/Group will be utilizing
3. Branch responsibilities (Functional/Geographical)

\*See FIRESCOPE 420-1 Section 8-4

# ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

## Risk Assessment

Risk assessment involves identifying and prioritizing hazards, as well as applying appropriate control measures to reduce or eliminate their effect on victims and firefighters. Risk assessment is a continuous process throughout the incident and only terminates when the incident is mitigated.

Risk management principles:

1. Extend VIGILANT and MEASURED Risk to Protect and Rescue SAVABLE LIVES
2. Extend LIMITED Risk to Protect SAVABLE Property
3. DO NOT Risk Your Life for Lives or Property That Cannot Be Saved

**Foundational Elements of Command include:**

- Identify incident priorities
- Establish overall incident objectives
- Develop, implement, and evaluate an Incident Action Plan
- Request and assign resources

## **Command Process**

The first fire department member to arrive is the Incident Commander. The initial Incident Commander shall remain in command until command is passed, transferred, or the incident is stabilized and terminated.

## **Initial Radio Report**

The first arriving resource initiates the command process by giving an initial radio report. The following items are recommendations, and official initial radio reports may be agency specific.

- Unit designator
- Incident location
- Description of the building
- Incident conditions
- Description of actions taken
- Safety hazards
- Incident Indexing ("A side" is address side unless otherwise stated)
- Incident Commander location
- Request *additional* resources as necessary

## **360 Assessment**

The initial IC must attempt to perform a 360 assessment. An updated radio report will be given after the 360. If a 360 cannot be completed due to the size of the building or extenuating circumstances, assign this task to another resource to complete. If conditions do not allow a 360 to be completed, it should be verbalized over the radio as incomplete.

## **Follow-up Radio Report**

This report may include any information gathered during the 360 assessment:

- Confirm 360 is completed and report findings
- Search and Rescue opportunities
- Confirm Strategy (Offensive vs Defensive)
- Credible information given by occupants or bystanders
- Report on exposures
- Update on fire/smoke location and conditions
- Flow Path (if determined)
- Utilities secured during the 360
- Confirm assignments of deployed resources
- Request additional resources as needed
- Any other pertinent information

## **COURSE OF ACTIONS FOR COMMAND**

**Investigation:** When conditions or the initial report suggests a minor incident, the first arriving unit will gather additional information and investigate to determine the size and nature of the problem.

**Command (Establish):** When an incident requires immediate formal command due to size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion. The Company Officer should establish command and assume an exterior, safe, and effective command position.

**Rescue:** When quick, immediate action can prevent life loss or injury. The Company Officer accompanies the crew to ensure the appropriate level of supervision. Command should be passed to the next arriving officer upon arrival on scene.

**Passing Command** - Command can be passed from the first arriving Company Officer to the next arriving Company Officer **ON SCENE**.

**Transfer of Command** -The following guidelines outline the transfer of command process:

- The first fire department member arriving on the scene will establish incident command
- A higher-ranking Officer will assume command after the transfer of command procedures have been completed

- The first arriving Chief Officer should assume command of the incident following the transfer of command procedures

Within the chain of command, the transfer of command should include the following:

- Situation status
- Incident objectives and priorities (Incident Action Plan)
- Resource assignments
- Resources enroute and/or ordered
- Communications plan
- Safety considerations

\* Whenever a transfer of command occurs, the Incident Commander must announce the change on all radio frequencies used on the incident.

**MAYDAY: Upon notification of a "Mayday" situation, the Incident Commander must remain in control of the incident. The rescue of the firefighter is now the priority of the incident. Assigned resources should maintain task discipline and continue suppression efforts, while rescue activities are initiated. The Incident Commander should delegate the Mayday operations to appropriate resources. Additional resources should be ordered, and the ICS should be expanded to support the needs of the incident.**

\* See [FIRESCOPE ICS 910 Firefighter Incident Safety and Accountability Guide](#)

**ACCOUNTABILITY: An accountability system shall be adopted and routinely used to track, collect, and maintain the status and location of the resources on the incident. The IC shall be responsible for overall accountability of the incident. The IC may delegate other command members to facilitate accountability.**

For further information on Accountability and Mayday, reference Chapter 22, Firefighter Incident Safety and Accountability Guidelines of the Field Operations Guide ICS-420-1 Section 21.