

## REGIONAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### **Incident Scene Accountability**

#: 101.03

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#### **SCOPE & PURPOSE**

Incident scene accountability is critical to firefighter safety and operational effectiveness. Each level of the incident organization has its own accountability responsibility. No organizational level can oversee the accountability responsibilities for another level.

#### **Company/Task level accountability responsibilities**

Companies working at the task level have the greatest stake in the accountability system because they operate inside the hazard zone. No Incident Management System can outperform unsafe behaviors at the task level.

Task level responsibilities include:

- Following all staging procedures
- Being properly assigned into the hazard zone
- Properly using the passport accountability system
- Staying together as a company
- Always maintaining an adequate air supply to safely exit the hazard zone,
- Maximum depth into a structure – 175 feet – based on air supply
- No freelancing

#### **The following rules will be adhered to at all times at the task level:**

The minimum number of personnel assigned to a crew or a team operating in a hazard zone shall be two firefighters with a least one portable radio.

Crews or teams always go in and come out together.

All personnel shall be in contact with their Company Officer by either:

- Voice (radio)
- Vision (TIC),
- Touch (hose line)

Company officers shall give an accountability report upon exiting the hazard zone to either the IC or their assigned Division or Group (D/G) Supervisor.

Any member whose job assignment is to operate outside of the hazard area is NOT to enter the hazard area without the express permission of his or her company officer.

NO member shall operate in the hazard zone alone.

### **Tactical level accountability responsibilities**

Whenever two (2) or more units are assigned to one geographical area (example: same floor of a multi-story building), or two or more units are assigned to the same tactical objective (example: fire attack), Command should consider assigning a tactical level supervisor (Division or Group).

The hazard zone tactical level of the incident organization is managed by D/G supervisors. When the IC assigns companies to an operational area, the officer in charge of that area is responsible for managing the companies assigned to the area.

In many cases, the initial tactical level responsibility may be assigned to the first company officer assigned to the area. As the span of control and or the risk increases, a command level officer should be used to replace the initial Company Officer D/G supervisor.

Here is the list of the responsibilities for a Chief Officer assigned as a D/G Supervisor:

- D/G Plan matches IC IAP
- Risk Management in the D/G
- Complete Tactical Priorities in the D/G
- Positions always match conditions in the D/G
- Implement and manage the D/G Plan
- Coordinate w/ other D/G's when needed
- Manage the Passport Accountability System
- Assist with D/G Air Management
- Manage Work-Rest Cycles
- Manage On-Deck crews
- Manage Recycle & Rehab

### **Strategic level accountability responsibilities**

The IC manages strategic level accountability by strict command & control; deploying resources to specific task locations and objectives; maintaining the whereabouts of all resources in the hazard zone; maintaining an accurate tactical worksheet, and ensuring that frequent CAN and situational awareness reports are delivered from the key tactical areas of the operation.

The key to strategic level accountability for escalated incident operations is to build an effective incident organization. It is the IC's responsibility to account for all resources until delegated to tactical level supervisors. The IC does this by assigning D/G responsibilities to company officers and/or command officers. These officers physically

position themselves in their assigned area and manage their piece of the incident operation. This places strong supervision, management and leadership in forward positions where the hazards are present. Organizing in this fashion greatly enhances firefighter safety and is the most significant tool at the IC's disposal to increase his/her strategic level capability, especially for escalating incident operations.

Unit accountability must be maintained throughout the incident. The IC must be able to ascertain the accountability status, the location, and the tasks being performed for each company operating in the hazard zone. This can be done by either direct contact with each individual company or by delegating these responsibilities as required to D/G supervisors assigned around the incident site.

**Tactical worksheets:** The best way to remember something is to write it down. This is particularly true when you're managing something as dynamic and dangerous as a fire. The strategically placed IC (working out of command post) has a continual deployment-management challenge to somehow keep track of what is happening. As more responders show up, go to work, and the incident starts to "move fast and spread out," these dynamic conditions can quickly exceed the IC's mental capability to maintain a current awareness of "who's where, doing what."

A major deployment-management function involves the IC performing the on-scene "bookkeeping" activities required to keep track of all the responders assigned to the incident and their ongoing operational status. The system also must account for the work in progress, the work still to be completed, and everyone's safety. A tactical work sheet is the best, basic form that the IC typically uses to record resource details and work activities.

### **PAR's and Roll-Calls**

**PAR:** A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) involves a roll call and confirmation that all personnel assigned to a crew, or multiple crews assigned to one (1) geographic area of the hazard zone working under the supervision of one (1) tactical supervisor, are accounted for and have an adequate air supply to safely exit the hazard zone.

Reports of PAR's should be conducted face-to-face within the D/G or company and transmitted as one entire report whenever possible.

**Roll-Calls:** A Roll Call is an accountability report from all company officers of an individual crew assigned to the hazard zone, or D/G supervisors reporting on all personnel working in a specific geographic area of the hazard zone at one specified area in the incident.

When the IC makes a general announcement to all units on the fireground to initiate a roll call, all individuals, units, and/or D/G's shall:

- Notify their company officer of their condition and location.
- Notify the supervisor of their assigned D/G of their condition and location.

- D/G supervisors shall be responsible for the count and location of all personnel assigned under their command who are located in the hazard zone.
- After all companies or D/G have been accounted for, the IC shall transmit a PAR to the dispatch center for the entire incident.

The IC must drive the roll call to avoid multiple units contacting him/her first. Unless a Unit DOES NOT have a PAR, they should maintain radio silence until contacted by the IC to report their PAR.

A formal roll call should be conducted for the following circumstance:

- Changing from an offensive to a defensive operation

Other situations that may require a roll call include:

- Missing or unaccounted for members.
- Sudden, unexpected events in the hazard zone.
- A mayday (depending on the circumstances).
- Anytime the IC feels it is necessary.

### **Passport Accountability System**

When properly used, the passport accountability system will increase firefighter safety and provide the Initial Accountability Officer and D/G Supervisors with a means to track the location and function of all firefighters working in a hazard zone.

The hazard zone will be defined as: any area that requires the use of an SCBA to operate in.

### **Accountability Hardware**

Accountability equipment for each piece of apparatus shall consist of:

- Passport (including members name tags)
- Helmet ID stickers
- All response chiefs carry a accountability management board in their vehicle

Passports are colored tags, which measure approximately 3 by 4 inches that are permanently marked with the company identification. Name tags of the crewmembers assigned to each apparatus are affixed to the passport, which is placed in the apparatus/vehicle, at the company officer position or passenger side.

A Velcro strip will allow the passport to be affixed to the dash and be easily removed.

Each individual in a riding position is issued individual nametags. One nametag for each member presently assigned to the company is required to be placed on the passport. Extra individual nametags should be kept on the underside of the member's helmet.

All helmets shall always reflect the ID of the company the member is presently assigned to. All personnel, including rovers, are required to keep their helmet IDs accurate. Extra helmet ID stickers should be kept at the stations.

### **Passport Application and Use**

Each Company officer will be responsible for ensuring that the passport reflects only the members presently assigned to the company.

Implementation of the passport system will occur at any incident that requires the use of an SCBA, or any other incident with an identified hazard zone. The use of the accountability system will commence as the first unit arrives on the scene. The first arriving company will give an initial radio report and assume command. In the follow up report, their accountability unit identification and geographic location will be announced, "Engine 193 will be the Alpha side accountability location".

As staged units are brought into to the scene and given assignments by Command, those assignments shall include their respective accountability unit identification and geographic location.

If the arriving unit will be operating from their own engine, initial accountability for that unit should be kept at that engine with the Engineer.

If a unit is assigned to deploy a handline from an engine already on scene (as is often the case with Medic Unit personnel), they will deliver their passport to the Engineer of the accountability engine where they deployed a handline from.

Ladder crews will leave their passport on the apparatus dash when going to the roof to perform ventilation. When going to the interior of the structure, each ladder crew will deliver their passport to the accountability location (engine) closest to their point of entry.

Upon exit, the Company Officer must retrieve their passport. Both the Company Officer, Engineer or D/G Officer will be responsible to see that passports are retrieved.

Crews exiting at a different location other than the original point of entry must immediately notify their original D/G and/or accountability officer of their changed status. Their passport must also be retrieved.

### **Tactical Level Passport Accountability**

When D/G supervision is transferred from a company officer to a command officer, it elevates D/G management to a dedicated tactical level supervisor vs. a working one.

This greatly facilitates the completion of the D/G objectives, it enhances the accountability process and it increases firefighter safety in the D/G.

Command officers assigned to manage a D/G will need to be fully turned-out.

A company being assigned to a location that already has a chief officer in place in the D/G, will report to the D/G officer face to face, give him/her the company passport, and await an assignment from the D/G officer while remaining intact as a crew.

The D/G officer will need to help manage the air supply of the Units assigned to his/her area. The general rule of thumb for managing the work/rest cycle of a hazard zone Unit is to contact that Unit about 2 minutes before they have reached their estimated air safety margin, and remind them they are getting close to their work cycle ending, and they will need to exit the hazard zone soon. D/G officers assisting assigned Unit's with their air management times in no way take away or diminish the Company officer's responsibility for managing his/her crews air supply.

Companies exiting the hazard zone will perform a face to face with the D/G officer. One item to cover in the face to face communication is the physical condition of the crew exiting the hazard zone. D/G and company officers are responsible to monitor the welfare of their personnel at all times and determine if D/G recycling or a formal rehab is appropriate.

If the company is able to recycle, they will retain their assignment to the D/G, and the D/G officer will retain the Unit's passport on their accountability board, noting the company is recycling.

If the company is sent to rehab, the D/G officer will return the passport to the Unit being sent to rehab and they will notify command of the status change of the company ("Division Charlie to Command, I'm sending Engine 362 to Rehab and I need another engine company to replace them").

### **Terminating the passport system**

Passport accountability will be maintained throughout the entire incident. Accountability will be terminated once the last passport is returned to the last company exiting the hazard zone.

Upon termination and release from the incident, Company Officers and crewmembers will ensure that the passport is accurate and returned to the dash of their apparatus.

### **General passport rules:**

- Passports will be delivered to the assigned accountability location prior to entering the hazard zone.
- Passports will reflect only those personnel presently assigned to the Unit who are ready to make entry into the hazard zone.

- Passports never enter the hazard zone.
- Passports will be retrieved by crews upon exiting the hazard zone.
- The proffered initial passport accountability location is the 1st engine to a geographic location where crews deployed hose lines.
- When D/G management is transferred to a command officer, all passports are managed by the D/G officers who are responsible for the Units in that work location.
- The IC should avoid designating the Command Post as a single accountability location. In utilizing this approach, passports often fail to make it to the Command Post, especially on incidents spanning a larger geographic area (i.e. strip malls, big box occupancies, etc.).