

**Title: Emergency Scene Command
Procedures / NIMS**

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Purpose: To establish an Incident Command Procedure for all operations of the Winter Park Fire Department incorporating those components of the National Incident Management System.

Scope: This procedure is to be used as a guideline by which personnel will be able to operate any emergency scene. It would be impossible to write a procedure by which every incident could be handled. The purpose of this procedure is to give all personnel insight into a uniform operation that can be used at all incidents. This guideline shall provide for the safe and efficient operation of all shifts of the Department. It is written to coincide with other Fire/Rescue agencies in our area.

General:

210.01.01. Operations / Establishing On-Scene Command:

Single Unit Responses:

On single-unit alarms, upon arrival the officer in charge of the dispatched unit will be in command of the operation, until relieved on the scene by another officer or individual of equal rank or expertise.

In the case of a single unit situation it will not be necessary for the first officer on the scene to advise "Winter Park" that they are establishing "Command." This does not preclude any single unit from initiating and establishing "Command", it is just deemed as unnecessary.

Multiple Unit Responses:

On multiple-unit assignments, the first arriving unit is **required to establish "Command"**, both physically and with "Winter Park". From this point forward, all communications for the incident should be relayed through "Command."

If the first in unit has to leave their apparatus to assume an offensive, combat position, they are required to transfer “Command” to another individual.

Any time that “Command” is transferred on the scene, "Winter Park" must be advised of the unit that is assuming “Command”. It is necessary that the individual who is in Command remain in radio contact.

Command must transmit periodic updates on emergency scene conditions to keep all responders informed.

Tactical Benchmarks should be noted on the **Command Board**, and verbally to “Winter Park”. Examples of such Benchmarks are contained in Section 210.01.02 of this guideline.

210.01.02. Basic Tactical Benchmarks:

- Establishing Command
- Decision to establish an OFFENSIVE or DEFENSIVE mode of operation
- Primary Search Completed
- Secondary Search Completed
- Rescue and Treatment of Victims
- Fire Control, Exposure Protection and Incident Stabilization
- Property Conservation
- Operations Completed

All of these operations are to be performed at the same time with proper command operations. Completion of these tasks are usually are only limited by manpower. In specific situations, containment of all hazards might have to be made in order to effectively rescue victims, without taking unnecessary dangers with personnel.

Personnel should attempt to work in teams to insure a safe operation. All personnel will stay with the company they are assigned to, unless directed to another company, at which time the officers of both units will be made aware of the transfer. This will insure that all personnel can be accounted for at any time. Command will keep track of all companies on a Tactical Worksheet at the Command Post.

Sector Commanders will keep account of their personnel in their sectors. No drivers of any units will be allowed to abandon their apparatus, unless directed by the Company Officer or the Incident Commander. If a unit is abandoned, Command shall be notified immediately.

210.01.03. Command Responsibilities:

The Incident Commander is responsible for the command function at all times. As the identity of the Incident Commander changes, through transfers of command, this responsibility shifts with the title. The term "Command" in this procedure refers jointly to both the person and the function.

Command Procedures Are Designed To Accomplish The Following:

- Fix the responsibility for Command on a certain individual through a standard identification system depending on arrival sequence of members, companies and officers.
- Insure that strong, direct and visible Command will be established as early as possible in the operation.
- Establish an effective framework outlining the activities and responsibilities assigned to Command.
- Provide a system for the orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers

The Major Responsibilities Assigned to All Incident Commanders are:

- Provide for the safety and survival of all personnel and civilians.
- Maintain the standards set forth in 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4), *2 in, 2 out regulation*.
- Provide for a Rapid Intervention Team during active firefighting operations.
- Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
- Control incident.
- Conserve property after fire/incident control is achieved.

210.01.04. Modes of Operation:

There are two modes of operation on any emergency scene, **offensive and defensive**. This terminology helps to identify the methodology of the Incident Commander in attempting to stabilize the incident.

Offensive Mode - Interior attack and related support directed toward the rapid control and extinguishment of fire. This may also be used to identify technician level work is being performed at a hazardous materials incident.

Defensive Mode - Exterior attack directed to reduce the amount of fire extension from an area or structure, and then bring the fire under control with ultimate extinguishment.

Command must define if the operation will be offensive or defensive in nature so that all Companies will be aware of the intent of the operation.

The change in mode can come quickly or an incident may start out in the defensive mode and switch to the offensive mode based upon fire ground conditions. Most of our fires will begin in the offensive mode. Interior attack efforts must be directed towards supporting primary search. First attack must go between victims and protect the avenues of escape.

210.01.05. Sector Operations:

On any operation involving more than one unit, it may be necessary to divide the units into **sectors**. This involves the dividing of the operation into job specific, or locations to maintain a safe span-of-control for the total operation.

The officer who is in Command should designate the sectors for the incident and then assign the individual who will be responsible for that sector.

It will be that person's responsibility to keep track of all personnel assigned to that sector, along with providing Command with updates of the sector's operations. Examples of commonly utilized Sectors are; Fire Attack, Rescue, Exterior, Decon, Leak Control, Haz-Mat, etc. A sector may be comprised of one or more individuals or companies.

When a sector commander communicates conditions in their sector, they will report as that sector, not as the Company they arrived with.

Staging:

Staging is defined as the locating of resources in an area away from the actual emergency until such time as they are needed to work at the scene. Staging may include the relocation of both personnel and apparatus. Any incident can use staging as part of its operation.

When identifying a staging sector, the IC should keep in mind the need to locate resources in an area where they are out of danger and have easy access routes into and out of the scene.

At large-scale incidents, a staging officer should be used. It will be the job of the staging officer to track the amount and type of equipment and

personnel located in the staging area. In addition, the staging officer should keep all other units not committed to the incident available to respond, if another incident is dispatched. It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to inform the staging officer as to what units are needed at the scene and what is needed in staging.

210.01.06. Command Options:

An initial arriving company officer must decide on an appropriate commitment for the company. This will usually fall into one of three general modes, listed below.

Nothing Showing Mode:

"Nothing Showing" Mode Incidents generally require investigation by the first arriving engine, truck, and rescue. Normally, the officer should go with the company to investigate while utilizing a portable radio to maintain Command.

Fast Attack Mode:

Fast Attack Mode Incidents are situations that require immediate action to stabilize. Situation such as interior fires in residences, apartments, or small commercial occupancies, require that the officer quickly decide how to commit the company. Where a fast interior attack is critical, an officer can take advantage of the portable radio to permit personal involvement in the attack without neglecting Command responsibilities.

The Fast Attack mode should not last more than a few moments and will end with one of the following:

- Situation is stabilized.
- Command is passed to next arriving company.
- A Command Officer arrives and Command is transferred.
- Situation is not stabilized and the officer must assume a normal Command position.

Command Mode:

Command Mode Incidents require immediate Command presence and rapid decision-making. Such situations, by virtue of the size of the fire, the complexity/potential of the occupancy or the possibility of extension, require strong, direct, and overall command from the outset. In such cases, the officer will initially assume a Command position and maintain that position until relieved by a ranking officer.

If the first arriving company officer elects not to join the remainder of the company in action, they may operate within the following options with regard to the assignment of the crew:

Command can "move up" from within the company and place them company into action. The individual and collective capability of the crew will regulate this action.

Command can assign company members to perform staff functions as well.

Command can assign the company members to another company to work under the supervision of its officer. In such cases, the officer must communicate with the receiving officer and indicate the assignment of his personnel.

While the arriving company officer has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in the attack, this officer continues to be fully responsible for the identified tasks assigned to the Command function. In all cases, the initiative and judgment of the officer are of great importance.

The modes identified are not strict rules, but general guidelines to assist the officer in planning his action.

The first officer to arrive on the scene will be in charge until relieved by a ranking officer.

Note: This does not preclude the option of the first arriving company officer having another company officer arriving with them, or close behind, take Command. This may be prearranged or maybe necessitated by circumstances; in either case, it shall be confirmed by both parties by radio.

210.01.07. Command Positioning:

The Command Post

The Standard Command Position for the Fireground Commander should be a stationary one inside of a Command vehicle or a piece of fire apparatus which is then called the "COMMAND POST."

It should be situated in a **conspicuous location**, which affords the Commander a good view of the fire-building and surrounding area. When possible, it should be in front of the fire building and should not interfere with apparatus movement. Ideally, it should also offer a view of two sides of the fire building. Once the stationary Command Post has been established, Command should use the headsets provided for communication and advise of the post location and identify that side of the building as Side A.

The first arriving Battalion Chief shall assume Command shortly after giving "On the Scene" and reviewing the current situation.

Assumption of Command is discretionary for the Fire Chief, and/or the Assistant Chief / Operations.

Within the chain-of-command indicated above, the actual transfer of Command will be regulated by the following procedures:

- Arriving Chief Officers assuming Command will communicate with the officer being relieved by radio or preferably face-to-face.
- The officer being relieved will brief the officer assuming Command indicating the following:
 - Fire location, conditions, and extension.
 - Strategic goals and tactical objectives.
 - Effectiveness of control efforts.
 - Deployment and assignments of operating companies.
 - Appraisal of needs for additional resources.

The officer being relieved should review the "Tactical Command Sheet" with the ranking officer in complex situations. This sheet provides the most effective framework for Command transfer as it outlines the location and status of resources in a standard form that should be well known to all members.

The arrival of another ranking officer on the fireground does not mean Command has been transferred.

The response and arrival of ranking officers on the fireground strengthens the overall command function. All officers will exercise their Command prerogatives in a supportive manner that will insure a smooth transition and the effective ongoing function of Command.

In situations where second alarm units are being committed and another Chief Officer is to assume Command, the Chief being relieved will normally be utilized in the following manner:

- Where **offensive attack** is being mounted in a single-story structure they may become "Interior" or "Attack Sector."
- In a **high-rise fire** they may become the "Attack" or "Fire Floor Sector."
- In a **defensive operation** the Chief being relieved will be used to the best advantage by Command.

In cases of non-multiple alarm incidents where Command is effectively handling a tactical situation and is completely aware of the location and function of operating companies and the general status of the situation, it may be desirable for that officer to continue in an active Command role. In these cases, the ranking officer may assume a supportive role in the overall Command function.

210.01.08. Support of Command Post Operations:

At large and/or complex situations, it is recommended that Command establish a "Support Sector." This individual should be a Chief or higher

rank. At three or greater alarm fires, Command SHALL establish this Sector using an Assistant Chief.

Guidelines For The Support Commander's Operation are as follows:

- Command should realize the need for "SUPPORT" based on the following:
- Command's effective span of control has diminished due to the number of non-Firefighting Sectors; i.e., Logistics (at Station #1), Medical, Rehab, Public Information, Staging, Police Liaison. Command forecasts the need for "SUPPORT" due to the potential magnitude of the situation.
- At situations where multiple alarm units are committed, the second arriving Chief Officer shall report to the Command Post and after reviewing the Tactical Command Sheet, advise Command as to the role he will assume in the operation based on the progress being made.

Another Chief Officer may elect to:

- Assume Command
- Assume "Support"
- Assign a Staff Officer to "Support" and remain outside Command Structure.
- Assign him/herself to a strategic position within the Command Structure that the Chief deems paramount to the success of the operation.

"Support" shall:

- Remain in face-to-face contact with Command.
- Operate on different TAC than Command.
- Advise Communications that they will be assuming "Support."

"Support" shall anticipate the need for and provide resources for scene operations.