

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURE**

**DATE:** DECEMBER 29, 2020

**NUMBER:** 8.02 – CRITICAL INCIDENTS

**SUBJECT:** INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

**RELATED POLICY:** 8.02

**ORIGINATING DIVISION:** OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**NEW PROCEDURE:**

**PROCEDURAL CHANGE:**  **NO CHANGES**

**SUPERSEDES:** DP 8.02 – 12/01/2016

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**I. PURPOSE**

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for the utilization of the Incident Command System (ICS).

**II. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

**III. BACKGROUND**

- A. The Incident Command System (ICS) provides a management structure and system for conducting on-site emergency operations. It is applicable to small-scale daily operational activities, as well as major mobilizations. Because of its standardized operational structure and common terminology, ICS provides a useful and flexible management system that is particularly adaptable to incidents involving multi-discipline or multi-jurisdictional responses.
- B. ICS provides the flexibility needed to rapidly activate and establish an organizational format around those functions that need to be performed.
- C. ICS shall be utilized on all critical incidents.

- D. The ICS system described in this procedure is based on the “Law Enforcement Incident Command System” as outlined in the California Emergency Management Agency “Law Enforcement Guide for Emergency Operations.”

#### IV. **DEFINITION**

The ICS is a nationally-used, standardized, on-scene, emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

#### V. **ICS CONCEPTS**

ICS is a management system encompassing the following concepts:

- A. Common terminology – it is essential for any management system that common terminology be established for the following components: organizational functions, resources, and facilities. ICS establishes terminology to be used statewide.
1. “Organizational functions” refer to a standard set of five major pre-designated functions:
    - a. Command;
    - b. Operations;
    - c. Planning and Intelligence;
    - d. Logistics; and,
    - e. Finance/Administration.
  2. “Resources” refer to the combination of personnel, materials, supplies, and equipment used in tactical operations.
  3. “Facilities” refer to common identifiers used for those facilities in and around the incident area which will be used during the course of the incident. These facilities include the Incident Command Post, Staging Area, etc.
- B. Modular Organization – ICS develops in a modular fashion based on the nature, size, and anticipated duration of an incident. It ensures that the organization that is

developed matches the requirements of the incident objectives and is arranged within the five organizational functions of ICS.

- C. Unified Command Structure – allows all agencies with geographical, legal or functional responsibility to establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan. The Incident Commander (as designated in the City's Basic Emergency Plan) still remains as the final decision maker at the Incident Command Post.
- D. Incident Action Planning – used by the Incident Commander to establish the goals, objectives, and strategies for the incident based upon the requirements of the jurisdiction. This plan may be in either written or oral format, depending upon the situation.
- E. Manageable Span of Control – ICS helps to ensure a safe, manageable span of control. Generally, the span of control should range from three to seven subordinates. However, in some specialized functions, the span may be slightly higher (e.g., Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Mobile Field Force (MFF)).
- F. Pre-Designated Incident Facilities – these facilities may include:
  - 1. Staging Areas;
  - 2. Incident Command Posts;
  - 3. Temporary Evacuation Points; and,
  - 4. Mass Care Centers.

The Incident Commander will cause the activation of these facilities, as needed, at the outbreak of the emergency event.

- G. Comprehensive Resource Management – resources may be organized as either single resources, strike teams (e.g., MFF Platoon), or as task forces. Strict accountability is absolutely essential and can be accomplished by:
  - 1. Establishing mandatory initial check-in procedures;
  - 2. Assigning a current status condition (“Assigned”, “Available”, or “Out-of-Service”); and,
  - 3. Ensuring all changes to resources, locations, and status conditions are promptly reported to the appropriate functional unit.
- H. Check-in Procedures – ICS provides for a simple and effective check-in process for personnel, supplies, and equipment.

- I. Integrated Communications – ICS ensures that communications is established between responding/participating agencies. During multi-discipline incidents, “clear text” (no codes) should be used when communicating with outside agencies.
- J. Area Command – provides a central field level location for coordination of multiple Incident Command Posts. In most cases, the Department Operations Center (DOC) serves as the Area Command Post.

## **VI. ICS ORGANIZATION**

- A. The ICS organization can be as small or as large as is required by the incident. The Incident Commander is responsible for determining the scope of the ICS organization that is required. The organization will often include members of other departments and organizations, depending upon the type of incident.
- B. The following sections provide a basic overview of the various ICS organization’s key positions. The Incident Commander should fill only those positions that are required to complete the objectives of the incident action plan. The duties of the positions not filled are the responsibility of the next higher level.
  - 1. Command Staff
    - a. Incident Commander – responsible for all incident activities.
    - b. ICS Specialist – the individual from the Department's Critical Incident Management Unit assigned to assist the Incident Commander as a technical resource.
    - c. Public Information Officer – the primary person responsible for the formulation and release of information to the media.
    - d. Incident Scribe – records information from all incident messages reference time, message, and action taken.
    - e. Safety Officer – monitors and assesses hazardous and unsafe situations and develops measures for ensuring the safety of personnel.
    - f. Liaison Officer – serves as the point of initial contact assisting agency representatives.
    - g. Agency Representative(s) – individual(s) with authority to make decisions affecting that agency’s participation in emergency

operations. During incidents in which the SDPD is not the Incident Commander, the senior SDPD official on scene serves as the Agency Representative.

2. General Staff

- a. Planning and Intelligence Section OIC – oversees the collection, evaluation, processing, and dissemination of information for use at an incident. This position also develops the Incident Action Plan for the Incident Commander’s approval.
  - (1) Resource Unit (RESTAT) – prepares, processes and reports resource status changes.
  - (2) Situation Unit (SITSTAT) – collects and organizes incident situation and status information.
  - (3) Documentation Unit – maintains accurate and complete incident files.
  - (4) Demobilization Unit (DEMOB) – plans and assists in an orderly, safe, and cost effective movement of personnel and equipment from the incident.
- b. Operations Section OIC – responsible for the implementation and management of all operational plans.
  - (1) Operations Dispatcher – manages and controls all tactical radio and data frequencies.
  - (2) Branch OICs – branches oversee specific functions such as evacuation, firefighting, traffic control, etc.
  - (3) Staging Officer – maintains a location where personnel and equipment can be staged to support an incident.
- c. Logistics Section OIC – responsible for providing facilities, services, staffing and material in support of the incident.
  - (1) Service Branch OIC – maintains communications equipment, provides medical support to incident personnel, and makes provisions for feeding personnel.
  - (2) Support Branch OIC – supervises the operations of facilities, maintenance, ground support, and supply functions.

- (3) Personnel Branch OIC – supervises the staffing for the operation. The Personnel Branch OIC oversees the functions of personnel, volunteers, and Mutual Aid resources.
- d. Finance / Administrative Section OIC – responsible for all financial and cost requirements of the incident. Generally, this position is only staffed on major, prolonged field incidents. When not staffed, the Logistics Section OIC carries out these responsibilities.

## **VII. ICS ORGANIZATION CHART**

The organization chart on Attachment A illustrates the ICS organization. Incident Commanders should only activate those positions that are necessary to carry out the objectives of the Incident Action Plan to ensure an appropriate span of control.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM ORGANIZATION CHART**

The ICS organizational chart shows all of the various positions. Incident Commanders should activate **ONLY** those positions that are needed to accomplish the incident objectives.

