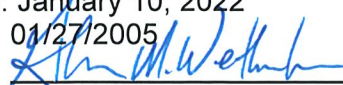


LORAIN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Standard Operating Guidelines

Command Structure — Divisions and Groups	SOG: 006 Effective Date: January 10, 2022 Supersedes: 01/27/2005 Approved:  President, Lorain County Fire Chiefs' Association Page 1 of 11
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1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an organizational structure for efficient and effective emergency incident management. The size and complexity of the organizational structure will be determined by the scope of the emergency.
- 1.2 The Lorain County Fire Chiefs' Association recognizes the need for a uniform, effective Command system. Such a system must be compatible with all nationally accepted Command systems. This organization adopts the National Fire Service Incident Management System as the standard. Further, the determination to use divisions and/or groups is also adopted.

2.0 DIVISIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 All Fire Department personnel.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 All Officers are responsible to comply with and ensure that personnel under their command are adequately trained, fully understand, and comply with this guideline.
- 3.2 All members have the responsibility to learn and follow this guideline.
- 3.3 The Incident Commander is responsible for developing an adequate command structure to effectively mitigate the emergency at hand.

4.0 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS) OPERATIONS

- 4.1 The IMS should be considered the basic incident management system to be used on any size or kind of incident. The only change in using the IMS on a very large incident rather than a small incident is the method of growth of the basic



emergency management organization to meet the increased needs. Thus, the full establishment of the IMS should be viewed as an extension of the existing incident organization. The decision to expand the organization will be that of Command.

- 4.2 The IMS should be initiated as soon as possible after arrival on the emergency incident scene and implementation of initial tactical control measures.

- 4.3 Initial Response

- A. The first arriving unit or officer will assume command until arrival of a higher ranking Officer.
 - B. Upon arrival of a higher ranking officer, they will be briefed by the on-scene incident Commander. The higher ranking officer will follow local procedures with respect to assumption of command. This transfer of command is to be announced. The officer being relieved of command responsibilities will be reassigned by the new Incident Commander.
 - C. Initiation and transfer of command will be conducted in accordance with local procedures.

- 4.4 A reinforced response will be initiated when the on-scene Incident Commander determines that the initial response resources will be insufficient to deal with the size or complexity of the incident. Reinforced response may consist of additional department response, off-duty personnel call-back, and mutual aid assistance.

5.0 COMMAND ORGANIZATION

- 5.1 The Command organization must develop at a pace which stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. In order for the Incident Commander to manage the incident, he/she must first be able to direct, control, and track the position and function of all operating companies. Building a Command organization is the best support mechanism the Incident Commander can use to achieve the harmonious balance between managing personnel and incident needs.

- A. Large scale complex incidents — Large Command organization.
 - B. Small scale and "simple" incidents — Small Command organization.

- 5.2 The basic configuration of Command includes three levels:

- A. Strategic level — Overall direction of the incident.
 - B. Tactical level — Assigns operational objectives.
 - C. Task level — Specific tasks assigned to Companies.

- 5.3 The **Strategic** level involves the overall command of the incident. The Incident Commander is responsible for the strategic level of the Command structure. The action plan should cover all strategic responsibilities, all tactical objectives, and all support activities needed during the entire operational period. The Action Plan defines where and when resources will be assigned to the incident to control the situation. This plan is the basis for developing a Command organization, assigning all resources, and establishing tactical objectives. Strategic level responsibilities include:

OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE

- ☐ Determining the appropriate strategy.
- ☐ Establishing overall incident objectives.
- ☐ Setting priorities.
- ☐ Developing an incident action plan.
- ☐ Obtaining and assigning resources.
- ☐ Predicting outcomes and planning.
- ☐ Assigning specific objectives to tactical level units.

- 5.4 The **Tactical** level directs operational activities toward specific objectives. Tactical level Officers include, Branch Directors and Division and Group Supervisors, who are in charge of grouped resources. Tactical level officers are responsible for specific geographic areas or functions, and supervising assigned personnel. A tactical level assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments, within the boundaries of the overall plan and safety conditions. The accumulated achievements of tactical objectives should accomplish the strategy as outlined in the Incident Action Plan.

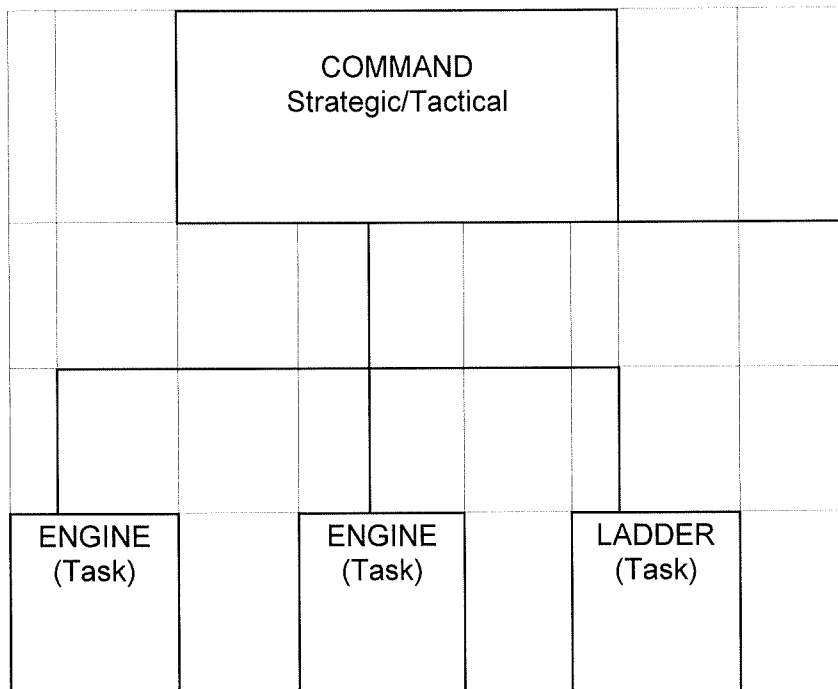
- 5.5 The **Task** level refers to those activities normally accomplished by individual companies or specific personnel. The task level is where the work is actually done. Task level activities are routinely supervised by Company Officers. The accumulated achievements of task level activities should accomplish tactical objectives.

6.0 COMMAND STRUCTURE – BASIC ORGANIZATION

6.1 EXAMPLES

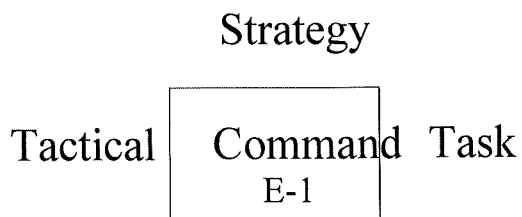
The most basic Command structure combines all three levels of the Command structure. The company officer on a single engine response to a dumpster fire determines the strategy and tactics, and supervises the crew doing the task.

- B. The basic structure of a "routine" incident, involving a small number of companies, requires only two levels of the Command structure. The role of Command combines the strategic and tactical levels. Companies report directly to Command and operate at the task level.



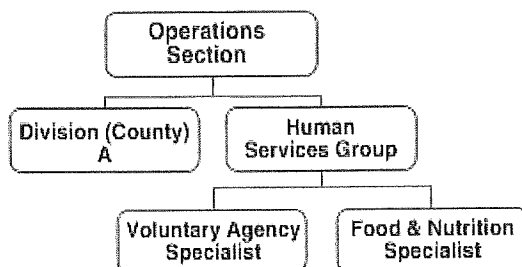
6.2 Divisions and Groups

Divisions and Groups are the tactical level management units, comprised of companies. Divisions are used to divide an incident geographically. The person in charge of each Division is called a Supervisor. The following examples illustrate the use of these terms.



A. DIVISIONS

DIVISIONS are that organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. The Division level is organizational between Single Resources, Task Force, or Strike

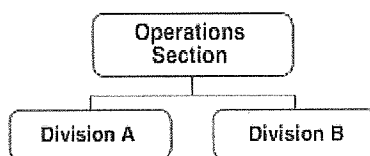


Team and the Branch.

B. GROUPS

GROUPS are used to describe functional areas of operations. The person in charge of a Group is also called a Supervisor.

Divisions and Groups can be used together on an incident. Divisions and Groups are considered to be an incident organization. One does not supervise the other. When a Group is working within an assignment, Division and Group Supervisors must closely coordinate their activities.

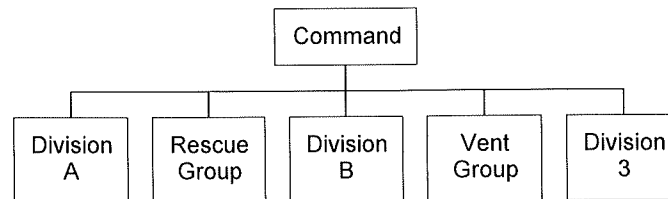


Examples of Division and Groups:

- a. Tactical Assignments for a Multi-Story Incident. In multi-story occupancies, Divisions will usually be indicated by floor number (4 indicates 4th floor). When operating in levels below grade such as basements, the use of subdivisions is appropriate. The primary street level floor shall be designated Division 1.

Division 5						
Division 4						

Division 3



Division 2					
Division 1					

- b. Exterior designations are identified by alpha letter identifiers. Starting at the front of a building and progressing clockwise around the building as illustrated.

			C			
B						D
			Front A			

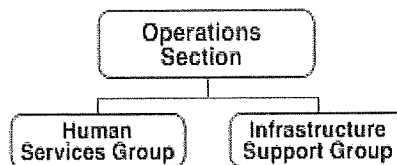
- 6.3 c. Rescue operation coordinated with ventilation.

- A. The use of Divisions/Groups in the Command organization provides a standard system to divide the incident scene into smaller subordinate management units or areas.

- B. Complex emergency situations often exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. The use of Divisions/Groups:

- ☐ Reduces the span-of-control to more manageable smaller-sized units
- ☐ Allows the Incident Commander to communicate principally with these organizational levels, rather than multiple, individual company officers providing an effective Command structure and incident scene organization.

Generally, Division/Group responsibilities should be assigned early in the incident, typically to the first company assigned to a geographic area or function. This early establishment provides an effective incident command organization framework on which the operation can be built and expanded.



- C. The number of Divisions/Groups that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander varies. In fast moving, complex operations, a span-of-control of no more than 5 Division/Groups may be indicated. In slower moving less complex operations, the normal span-of-control is 3 to 7.
- D. Where the number of Divisions/Groups exceeds the span-of-control that the Incident Commander can effectively manage, the incident organization should be expanded to meet incident needs, by assigning an Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section is responsible for the Branches, Divisions, or Groups. Each Branch is responsible for several Divisions/Groups and should be assigned a separate radio channel.
- E. Division/Group procedures provide an array of major functions which may be selectively implemented according to the needs of a particular situation. This places responsibility for the details and execution of each particular function on a Division/Group.
- F. When effective Divisions/Groups have been established, the Incident Commander can concentrate on overall strategy and resource assignment, allowing each to manage their assigned units.

- ☒ The Incident Commander determines strategy and assigns tactical objectives and resources to the Divisions/Groups.
- ☒ Each Division/Group Supervisor is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at their disposal, in order to complete the tactical objectives assigned by the Incident Commander.
- ☒ Divisions/Groups are also responsible for communicating needs and progress to Command.

G. Divisions/Groups reduce the amount of radio communications. Routine communications within a Division/Group should be conducted face-to-face between company officers and their Division or Group Supervisor. This reduces unnecessary radio traffic and increases the ability to transmit critical radio communications.

H. The safety of firefighting personnel represents the major reason for establishing Division/Groups. Each Division/Group must maintain communication with assigned companies to control both their position and function. The Division/Group Supervisor must constantly monitor all hazardous situations and risks to personnel, and must take appropriate action to ensure that companies are operating in a safe and effective manner.

I. The Incident Commander should assign Divisions/Groups based on the following factors:

- ☒ Situations which will eventually involve a number of companies or functions, beyond the capability of Command to directly control. Command should initially assign Division/Group responsibilities to the first companies assigned to a geographic area or function until Chief Officers are available.
- ☒ When Command can no longer effectively cope with (or manage) the number of companies currently involved in the operation.
- ☒ When companies are involved in complex operations. (Large interior or geographic area, hazardous materials, technical rescues, etc.)
- ☒ When companies are operating from tactical positions which Command has little or no direct control (i.e., out of sight).
- ☒ When the situation presents special hazards and close control is required over operating companies (i.e., unstable structural

conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load, marginal offensive situations, etc.).

J. When establishing a Division/Group, the Incident Commander will assign each Division/Group:

- ☐ Tactical objectives.
- ☐ A radio designation (Roof Group, Division A).
- ☐ The identity of resources assigned to the Division/Group.

7.0 DIVISION/GROUP OPERATING GUIDELINES

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of Command to assign Divisions/Groups as required for effective emergency operations, based on both geographic and functional needs.
- 7.2 Command shall advise each Division/Group of specific tactical objectives. The overall strategy and plan will and should be provided, (time permitting) so the Division/Group has some idea of what's going on and how their assignment fits into the overall plan.
- 7.3 The number of companies or personnel assigned to a Division/Group will depend upon conditions within that area. Command will maintain an awareness of the number of companies operating within a Division/Group and their capability to effectively direct operations. If a Supervisor cannot control the resources within the Division/Group, they should notify the Incident Commander so that Division/Group responsibilities can be split or other corrective action taken.
- 7.4 The incident scene should be subdivided in a manner that makes sense. This should be accomplished by assigning Divisions/Groups either to geographic locations (i.e., Roof Division, Division A, etc.) or assigning functional responsibilities to Divisions/Groups (i.e., Ventilation Group, Salvage Group, etc.).
- 7.5 Division/Group Supervisors will use the Division/Group designation in radio communications (i.e., "Command, this is Roof Division").
- 7.6 Divisions/Groups will be commanded by Chief Officers, Company Officers, or any other Fire Department member designated by Command.
- 7.7 The guideline for span-of-control with Divisions/Groups is five (5). This applies to Operational Divisions/Groups. Many of the functional responsibilities (P.I.O., Safety, etc.) are driven by standard operating procedures. These types of functional responsibilities should operate automatically and as such should not be included in the Incident Commander's span-of-control.

- 7.8 Regular Transfer of Command procedures will be followed in transferring Division/Group responsibility between Supervisors.
- 7.9 In some cases, a Division/Group Supervisor may be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions and advise Command of needed tasks and resources. The assigned Supervisor will proceed to the Division/Group, evaluate and report conditions to the Incident Commander, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.
- 7.10 The Division/Group Supervisor must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the Supervisor to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for their area of responsibility. Supervisors assigned to operate within the hazard zone must be accompanied by a partner.
- 7.11 Division/Group Supervisors will be responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their Division/Group. This requires each Supervisor to:
- 3 Complete objectives assigned by Command.
 - 3 Account for all assigned personnel.
 - 3 Ensure that operations are conducted safely.
 - 3 Monitor work progress.
 - 3 Redirect activities as necessary.
 - 3 Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent Divisions/Groups.
 - 3 Monitor welfare of assigned personnel.
 - 3 Request additional resources as needed.
 - 3 Provide Command with essential and frequent progress reports.
 - 3 Re-allocate resources within the Division/Group.
- 7.12 The Division/Group Supervisor should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible (vest required).
- 7.13 The primary function of company officers working within a Division/Group is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned tasks. Company officers will advise their Division/Group Supervisor of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a Division/Group must be directed to the Division/Group Supervisor. Only Supervisors will communicate with "Command".
- 7.14 Each Division/Group Supervisor will keep Command informed of conditions and progress in their area through regular progress reports. The Supervisor must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.

- 7.15 Command must be advised immediately of significant changes, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous conditions, accidents, structural collapse, etc.
- 7.16 When a company is assigned from Staging to an operating Division/Group, the company will be told to what Division/Group, and the name of the Supervisor they will be reporting to. The Supervisor will be informed of which particular companies or units have been assigned by the Incident Commander. It is then the responsibility of the Supervisor to contact the assigned company to transmit any instructions relative to the specific action requested.
- 7.17 Division/Group Supervisors will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their area. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward the Division/Group objectives.
- 7.18 Division/Group Supervisors will ensure an orderly and thorough reassignment of crews to rehab. Crews must report to rehab intact to facilitate accountability.

Standard Operating Guidelines: 006
Command Structure — Divisions and Groups

Division/Group

- ___ Obtain identification vest, clipboard and any orders from Incident Command.
- < Division/Group(s) report to: **COMMAND** (or **OPERATIONS** if established).
- < Radio designation: _____ "Division/Group"

- ___ Establish and maintain radio contact with:

___	Command	_____	frequency/channel
___	Operations	_____	frequency/channel

- ___ The Division/Group Supervisor must:

- ___ Be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations.
- ___ Complete objectives assigned by Command.
- ___ Account for all assigned personnel.
- ___ Ensure that operations are conducted safely.
- ___ Monitor work progress.
- ___ Redirect activities as necessary.
- ___ Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent Divisions/Groups.
- ___ Monitor welfare of assigned personnel.
- ___ Request additional resources as needed.
- ___ Provide Command with essential and frequent progress reports.
- ___ Re-allocate resources within the Division/Group.

- ___ The Division/Group Supervisor should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.

The primary function of company officers working within a Division/Group is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned tasks. Company officers will advise their Division/Group Supervisor of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a Division/Group must be directed to the Supervisor. Supervisors will communicate with "Command".

NOTE: Each Supervisor will keep Command informed of conditions and progress in the Division/Group through regular progress reports. The Supervisor must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.

COMMAND MUST BE ADVISED IMMEDIATELY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES, PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING THE ABILITY OR INABILITY TO COMPLETE AN OBJECTIVE, HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, ACCIDENTS, STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE, ETC.