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Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
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National Incident Command System

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Main Updates to Guidance

National Incident Command System – 1st Edition	**2006**
National Incident Command System – 2nd Edition	**2026**
Section 2 - Principles Of Incident Management	
Clarifications on the “Transfer of Command”	Section 2.5
Updated Command Level thresholds	Section 2.6
Addition of Command Level 4	Section 2.6
Section 4 – Decision Making	
Inclusion of “Situational Awareness”	Section 4.1
Inclusion of “Effective Decision Making”	Section 4.2
Inclusion of “Operational Discretion”	Section 4.3
Section 5 – Incident Risk Management	
Updated Risk Philosophy	Section 5.2
Expanded duties and responsibility for the role of Safety Officer	Section 5.3.5
Updated Dynamic Risk Assessment Summary	Section 5.4.1
Removal of “Transitional Mode”	Section 5.5
Clarifications to declaring “Offensive Mode”	Section 5.5.1
Clarifications to “Changing Tactical Modes”	Section 5.5.4
Section 6 - Interagency Coordination	
Inclusion of “Interagency Coordination” *(Detailed to align with the new “Framework for Emergency Management”)*	Section 6
Inclusion of “3Cs Interagency Approach”	Section 6.3
Introduction to the Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG)	Section 6.3
Inclusion of “Shared Situational Awareness”	Section 6.3.1
Inclusion of “Interagency Coordination Structures”	Section 6.3.3
Clarification on “Other Organisation/Agencies”	Section 6.4
Appendices	
Inclusion of an “Incident Commander Prompt Card”	Appendix 3.1
Inclusion of a “RSFO Prompt Card”	Appendix 3.2
Updated “Aide Memoires for Operational Roles”	Appendix 4
Updated “Aide Memoires for Functional Roles”	Appendix 5
Addition of a “BA Coordination Officer” Aide Memoire	Appendix 5.2
Updated “Command Support Packs”	Appendix 6
Inclusion of the “National Incident Debrief Tool”	Appendix 7
Incident Debrief Report Template	Appendix 7.2

Section 1. Introduction

1.1 PREFACE

1. Each year in Ireland fire services respond to numerous and various fire and other emergency situations. The National Incident Command System (NICS) was developed to enable good practices to be embedded and deployed consistently in managing fire service operations across Ireland.

2. While it is not intended to be overly prescriptive, the NICS provides a solid basis so that the approach in each fire authority is consistent with the rest of the fire service, to such a degree as to facilitate effective inter authority operations. This will also enable maximum benefit to be gained from combined local, regional and national command training programmes.

3. The systems, procedures and practices described in the following pages were developed under the "Safe Person Concept". It sets out good practice and offers supporting advice and guidance in those areas of operational activity considered to be critical to the health and safety of fire service personnel, of which the safe and competent command of operational incidents is key.

4. This second edition of the National Incident Command System has been updated to reflect the needs of a Fire Service in the years ahead. It supersedes that previously issued and is effective from the 1st September 2026, after which time, all training at local, regional and national levels should reflect the changes contained herein.

5. The updated guidance places a strong emphasis on the **3Cs Interagency Approach** - **C**ome Together, **C**ommunicate, **C**oordinate - as a core principle of incident management. This structured method ensures that Ireland's Principal Emergency Services (PES) work in a coordinated and collaborative manner during emergency incidents.



The 3Cs Interagency Approach places an obligation on agency leads to identify themselves and form an Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG). This group establishes shared situational awareness, agrees on communication protocols, and determines the appropriate level of coordination. By fostering open communication and mutual support, the 3Cs approach enhances safety, reduces duplication of effort, and ensures a unified, efficient response to complex emergencies. Further information

on the 3Cs Interagency Approach can be found in Section 6.3.

Features of the Incident Command System

6. The Incident Command System provides for the safe, effective and efficient management and deployment of resources, both fire service personnel and equipment at all types of emergency incidents. Key elements of the system are:

   (a) A standard framework for organising resources, which assists decision-making and encourages effective communications and delegation.
   (b) A risk assessment process that ensures safety is at the forefront of command decisions and is clearly understood and demonstrated.
   (c) A structured support system to assist the Incident Commander.
   (d) A national framework, describing tasks and performance standards expected of Incident Commanders.
   (e) Consistent methodology and terminology, for exercising operational command, which will contribute to safer systems of work, both in training and at operational incidents.
   (f) Recognition of the role of performance management and review, which in the operational context, centres particularly on post incident debrief procedures.
   (g) Changes to a learning organisation that reviews its performance and strives for continuous improvement through risk informed methods.

7. The safety of fire fighters at operational incidents, and during realistic training, is a critical area of responsibility for fire service commanders and managers. Similarly, all firefighters have a responsibility to work in accordance with the NICS to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues and the public.

8. Across the very wide range of emergency incidents attended by brigades, there are essential principles of organisation and command, which can be applied to ensure successful incident management up to closure. The use of common language and components of the Incident Command system ensures interoperability between brigades.

9. The requirement for fire service personnel from one brigade to work with those of another; the need for interagency coordination between the Principal Emergency Services, and the need for fire fighters and commanders at all levels to receive training, all highlight the importance of systems of work which operate against national standards. The contents of this updated document will assist fire authorities to meet these requirements.

10. Whilst acknowledging that a number of full-time fire services have adopted Command Levels deemed suitable to accommodate variations in rank structures and available resources within their service, it remains imperative that all fire authorities consistently apply the core principles set out in this document. The consistent application of these principles ensures a uniform and effective approach to incident command, irrespective of organisational structures or functional areas.

11. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage wishes to gratefully acknowledge the permission granted by the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office to use extracts from "Fire Service Manual Volume 2 Fire Service Operations Incident Command" in the preparation of this manual. Crown copyright is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

12. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage wishes to also acknowledge the permission granted by the National Fire Chiefs Council for to use extracts from the National Operational Guidance "Incident Command: Knowledge, Skills and Competence"

1.2 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions apply to this document:

3Cs Interagency Approach:	The 3Cs Interagency Approach places an obligation on each responding agency to come together to communicate its needs and to indicate how it can support the efforts of the other PRA/PES to achieve a common goal.
Anchoring Bias:	Is the cognitive bias where individuals rely too heavily on the first piece of information they receive (the "anchor") when making decisions, even if more accurate or relevant information becomes available at a later stage.
Chain of Command:	The chain of command, or the command line, at an incident. The NICS relies upon a single unified command line. With the exception of urgent safety related issues, officers should not take control of operations outside their assigned responsibility and should ensure all information and instruction is passed via the relevant chain of command.
Class B	Refers to a standard fire appliance designed to accommodate six firefighters equipped with a main pump and water carrying capability. For the purpose of this document, it refers to Class Bs in operational use.
Command Point:	Point from which the Incident Commander operates, this may be a car, appliance, specialist unit or part of a building.
Command Support:	The role typically provides recording, liaison, detailed resource management and information gathering for the Incident Commander. Command Support is a role undertaken by one or more staff at an incident. At large incidents Command Support may comprise of a dedicated team working from a mobile command unit and may include individuals tasked with supporting Sector Commanders.

Command Team:	The NICS relies on delegated and shared responsibility and authority. While the Incident Commander retains overall responsibility for the incident, and dictates the overall Incident Management Plan, the decision-making for, and control of, local operations is kept as close as possible to those operations. This is achieved by the creation of a chain of command from the crew commander to the Incident Commander. This chain of command, together with staff tasked with supporting commanders, is the Command Team. For NICS purposes the Command Team is usually taken to be the Incident Commander, the Operations Commander(s), Sector Commanders, Crew Commanders, together with the Command Support staff.
Command:	The authority and responsibility of an officer to direct the actions of the authority's resources (both personnel and equipment).
Confirmation Bias	The tendency to seek out, interpret, or prioritise information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or decisions, while disregarding or undervaluing information that contradicts them.
Control:	The process of influencing the activity of a service or group of services, by setting tasks, objectives or targets, without necessarily having the authority to give direct orders.
Controller of Operations:	The person given authority by a Principal Response Agency (PRA) to control all elements of its activities at and about the site.
Cordon:	Cordons are used to delineate the various operational zones identified at the site.
Crew Commander:	An officer tasked with supervising specific tasks or meeting specific objectives utilising one or more firefighters.
Decision Control Process (DCP):	The decision control process supports decision making at an incident. This aims to take account of the natural decision processes a person might employ in an operational context. It seeks to support decision makers in a practical way to avoid unintended consequences arising from decision traps.
Decision Inertia:	Decision inertia refers to the reluctance or inability to make crucial decisions, leading to suboptimal outcomes. These decisions are

	typically high-stakes, irreversible, and have long-lasting impacts that extend beyond the immediate situation.
Dynamic Risk Assessment:	The continuous assessment of risk in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident, in order to implement the control measures necessary to ensure an acceptable level of safety.
Forward Command Post:	Point, near the scene of operations, where the officer delegated responsibility for command in that area is sited.
Framework for Emergency Management:	The *Framework for Emergency Management* sets out how the Principal Response Agencies will coordinate the interagency approach to planning, preparedness, response and recovery to emergencies in Ireland. It details the roles and responsibilities of PRAs and outlines how other agencies can be integrated into the coordinated emergency management structures.
Hazard Zone/Area:	The hazard zone is an area in which significant hazards have been identified by the relevant commanders. The hazard zone may extend beyond the immediate scene of operations and in some cases can move or change during the incident.
Incident Command Point	The location at the incident where the command support function will operate from. At the initial stages of the incident, this will be the first attending appliance.
Incident Commander:	The officer having overall responsibility for managing the incident and dictating tactics and resource management. Overall responsibility for incident management remains with the most senior fire brigade officer present, as provided for under the Fire Services Act, but subject to this a more junior officer may retain the role of Incident Commander. The role may also be filled by suitably qualified personnel acting into role of Junior Officer i.e. Driver Mechanic, Leading Firefighter, acting Sub-Officer etc.
Incident Management Plan:	A strategic plan prepared by the Incident Commander that identifies the broad objectives of the emergency incident activities, and the basic manner in which operations should be conducted. At minor incidents this may be verbally conveyed to officers on scene following a meeting of the Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG); however, at larger incidents the plan may be

	documented in written format, especially when the Tactical Coordination Group and Strategic Coordination Group are established. The Incident Management Plan may take the form of actions to be undertaken to resolve the incident.
Inner Zone:	The Inner Zone is the working area immediately outside the hazard zone at an emergency incident. It typically serves as the staging point for fire service operations. Personnel working within this area should have appropriate personal protective equipment
Marshalling Area:	Area to which resources not immediately required at the scene or being held for future use can be directed to standby. The area should be under the control of a Marshalling Sector Commander, reporting to Incident Commander via Command Support.
Mental Model:	A mental model refers to the cognitive processes which help an Incident Commander perceive and interpret information from the observations of the environment around them. It consists of using past experiences, learned patterns, and expectations that shape what a person notices and prioritises.
Operational Command:	Level of command which executes the tactical plans detailed by Tactical Command through the direct supervision of crew and equipment at an incident scene.
Operations Commander:	An officer tasked with co-ordinating the operations of several sectors. Responsible directly to the Incident Commander. When an Operations Commander is assigned, operational Sector Commanders will report to the Operations Commander rather than the Incident Commander.
Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG):	Group involving two or more of Principal Emergency Services (PES) designed to facilitate communication and coordination of their respective activities.
Outer Zone:	The Outer Zone is the area surrounding the Inner Zone at an emergency incident. It serves as a buffer to keep the public at a safe distance and to provide space for support operations by emergency services

Principal Emergency Services (PES):	Blue light services that respond to emergencies, namely An Garda Síochána, the Ambulance Service, the Fire Service and the Irish Coast Guard.
Principal Response Agencies (PRA):	Agencies designated by the government to primarily provide and lead in the planning for, response and recovery from emergencies, that is, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities.
Rendezvous Point:	Point to which all resources at the scene are initially directed for logging, briefing and deployment. (See also Marshalling Area).
Risk Assessment:	A risk assessment involves an identification of risks, and an estimation of likelihood and impact, taking into account the existing precautions available and used, and a consideration of what else needs to be done.
Risk Management:	A comprehensive approach to identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and communicating risks across all relevant stakeholders
Risk:	Any phenomenon with the potential to cause direct harm to members of the community, the environment or to the physical infrastructure, or being potentially damaging to the economic and social infrastructure.
Safe Systems of Work:	A formal procedure which results from systematic examination of a task in order to identify the major hazards and risks posed. It defines safe methods to ensure hazards are eliminated or risks controlled as far as possible in the prevailing circumstances.
Safety Officer:	An officer delegated with specific responsibility of monitoring operations and ensuring the safety of both fire service personnel and individuals working under the fire service's control at the incident ground or a designated section of it, where circumstances dictate and permit
Safety:	A state where exposure to hazards has been controlled to an acceptable level.
Sector Commander:	An officer tasked with responsibility for tactical and safety management of a clearly defined part of an incident. Subject to

	objectives set by the Incident Commander the Sector Commander has control of all operations within the sector and must remain within it.
Sector:	A sector is the area of responsibility of a Sector Commander (i.e. a sector should not be created unless someone is given the responsibility for running it). Sectors should be created to allow effective delegation of command responsibility and authority when an incident is too complex, or too widespread, to be managed by a single individual.
Shared Situation Awareness:	The sharing of situational awareness between the PRA/PES at the scene of an incident to ensure a joint understanding of events, risks and activities. Shared situational awareness assists in coordinating the activities of the PRA/PES to achieve common objectives, efficiently and safely.
Situation Appraisal:	On initial arrival at the scene of the emergency the Incident Commander will carry out a situation appraisal, gathering available information which enables him/her to identify the priority tasks and assign available resources to these tasks. The situation appraisal may be repeated, and the incident management plan adjusted in light of the circumstances. The situation appraisal will incorporate a 360 recce of the incident scene.
Situational Awareness:	A person's perception and understanding of the situation they face. It includes their anticipation of what the situation might become, including the impact of their actions. For an Incident Commander it is their perspective of a scene of operations.
Span of Control:	The number of people who have an officer's attention for briefing, reporting, passing instruction or other incident management concerns, in order to carry out their role at the incident. As a guide five such reporting lines are considered the usual maximum for an Incident Commander to maintain during an incident.
Status Quo Bias:	Is the tendency to prefer the current situation or familiar choices over change, even when better alternatives exist. In incident command, this can lead to sticking with outdated strategies or plans simply because they are known, rather than adapting to new information or evolving conditions.

Strategic Command:	The highest level of command which is responsible for setting long-term objectives during an incident. It achieves these goals by planning, coordinating, and directing the use of organisations resources and provides direction for tactical and operational levels of command.
Strategic Coordination Group (SCG):	On activation of the *Framework for Emergency Management,* an off-site coordination group comprising of senior managers from each PRA may be established to provide strategic inter-agency decision-making and oversight. The SCG will be responsible for the development of a Strategic Plan to manage both the incident and the aftermath of the incident where they are mobilised. *(This group was previously called the Local Coordination Group)*
Strategic Plan:	Plan formulated by Incident Commander to deal with large-scale or complex incidents which takes account of key longer-term strategic objectives and immediate tactical priorities. Depending on the incident scale and complexity, the Strategic Coordination Group may be established under the *Framework for Emergency Management* to manage the wider strategic functions.
Tactical Command:	Level of command which develops and implements a tactical plan based on strategic objectives detailed by Strategic Command.
Tactical Coordination Centre:	The Tactical Coordination Centre (TCC) is a designated facility/area where the Controller of Operations (CoO) from each Principal Response Agency (PRA) is located, forming the Tactical Coordination Group (TCG). The TCC may be established on-site or, if necessary, off-site at a Primary Emergency Services (PES) control centre or other suitable premises. *(previously called the On-Site Coordination Centre)*
Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG)	On activation of the *Framework for Emergency Management* an on-site coordination group comprises of the Controller of Operations from each of the Principal Response Agencies. The TCG will be responsible for providing the tactical response to managing the incident in a coordinated manner and provide updates to the SCG. *(This group was previously called the On-Site Coordination Group)*

Tactical Mode: The Tactical Mode procedure assists the Incident Commander to manage an incident effectively without compromising the health and safety of personnel.

Tactical Plan: Plan formulated for the deployment of personnel and equipment on the fireground to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan.

1.3 ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations apply to this document:

AGS	An Garda Síochána
BACO	Breathing Apparatus Coordination Officer
BAECO	Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management
CMT	Crisis Management Team
CoO	Controller of Operations
CSU	Command Support Unit
DCP	Decision Control Process
DRA	Dynamic Risk Assessment
HSA	Health and Safety Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
IRCG	Irish Coast Guard
LA	Local Authority
NAS	National Ambulance Service
NDFEM	National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management
NICS	National Incident Command System
OpsCG	Operations Coordination Group
PES	Principal Emergency Services
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRA	Principal Response Agencies
RCC	Regional Communications Centre
RSFO	Rostered Senior Fire Officer
RTC	Road Traffic Collision
SCG	Strategic Coordination Group
SOG	Standard Operational Guidance
TCC	Tactical Coordination Centre
TCG	Tactical Coordination Group
UHF	Ultra High Frequency

1.4 INTRODUCTION

1. The National Incident Command System (NICS) clearly designates the responsibilities for various personnel while involved at an emergency incident. The Incident Commander is responsible for the overall strategic plan that is employed at an incident to bring the situation under control. Based on that strategic plan, the Incident Commander will assign Officers with the responsibility for various tactical priorities, which need to be successfully achieved, in order to mitigate the cause and consequences of the emergency incident. These tactical priorities are achieved through the actions of those personnel assigned the operational / task level activities.

2. Regardless of the level at which individuals' function at an emergency incident, communications is the key component that ties them all together. It is essential to maintain a constant two-way flow of information between each team of firefighters, each Sector Commander and the Incident Commander regarding activities, progress or lack thereof, resource requirements and changes or developments in the situation, if the incident is to be brought to a successful conclusion.

3. A National Incident Command System does not exist in isolation. There are a number of other critical factors that support the incident command function and which a fire authority will need to consider in integrating the function within its management system. The Incident Command System should be viewed as part of a services overall organisational system for managing operations and risk.

(a) Policy

Every fire authority should have a clear and coherent policy that sets out the approach to delivering a safe, efficient and effective incident command at emergency incidents. The incident command system outlined in this document provides a consistent approach that can ensure interoperability throughout the country and is critical for routine and large-scale incidents alike.

The policy should take the form of a Brigade Order to state that the second addition of the **"National Incident Command System"** will be used to manage all incidents. This statement may also be included in the Authority's *Emergency Operations (Section 26) Plan* and the *Safety Management System.*

(b) Organising

The arrangements by which the NICS is delivered and supported should be defined clearly. This will allow all involved to understand the brigades approach and objectives in relation to the command function. Examples of issues to be

addressed would include the provision of vehicles / equipment availability, mobilising arrangements and training facilities, resources and programmes.

(c) Training

In order to ensure that the Incident Command System is deployed effectively on the operational incident ground, it is imperative that all personnel are competent in it use with the level of training dependent upon their role and rank within the organisation. The National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management have developed a suite of training modules to ensure consistency across all fire authorities. These *"Managing Fire Service Incidents"* modules are delivered nationally as part of the NDFEM Central Training Programme and can be delivered locally and regionally through accreditation from the NDFEM.

(d) Planning

There should be a planned approach to the development and implementation of the incident command function, the aim of which should be to optimise the use of available resources for controlling the situation and to minimise and mitigate risks. Risk assessments should be used by the NICS to identify priorities for the development of the Incident Command System and to set objectives for risk management.

(e) Performance Review

The brigade should undertake a review of Incident Command performance to ensure that relevant experiences can be captured and learning opportunities explored. This may be addressed by undertaking hot debriefs or utilising the National Incident Debrief Tool post incident. There should be a strong commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of the Incident Command System, involving the constant development of policies, systems and procedures for delivering an effective, efficient and safe response to all incidents.

Regular and random assessments of incidents should be carried out as part of the fire authorities Safety Management System and be peer reviewed to validate effective use of the NICS. Non-conformance must be assessed, corrective actions undertaken and any lessons learned communicated to all personnel. Such assessments demonstrate compliance with statutory responsibilities and assist in the development of a learning environment.

(f) Interagency Operations

The National Incident Command System is fully compatible with the *"Framework*

for Emergency Management" and can facilitate the transition from the role of Incident Commander to Controller of Operations as required by individual fire authorities.

Section 2. Principles of Incident Management

2.1 Strategic, Tactical and Operational Command:

1. The terms Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Command define the three standard levels of management applied during emergency incidents. These levels must be clearly understood within the context of the National Incident Command System (NICS), which provides a scalable and structured approach to managing incidents of any size or complexity.

2. At smaller incidents, all three command functions - Strategic, Tactical, and Operational - may be performed by a single individual, typically the first attending officer. This officer assumes the role of Incident Commander and is responsible for initial tactical decisions and operational tasking.

3. As an incident escalates and additional resources arrive, command functions and responsibilities are progressively delegated to officers to form a Command Team. This allows for the effective discharge of tactical functions and operational tasks while the Incident Commander retains overall command and control of the incident.

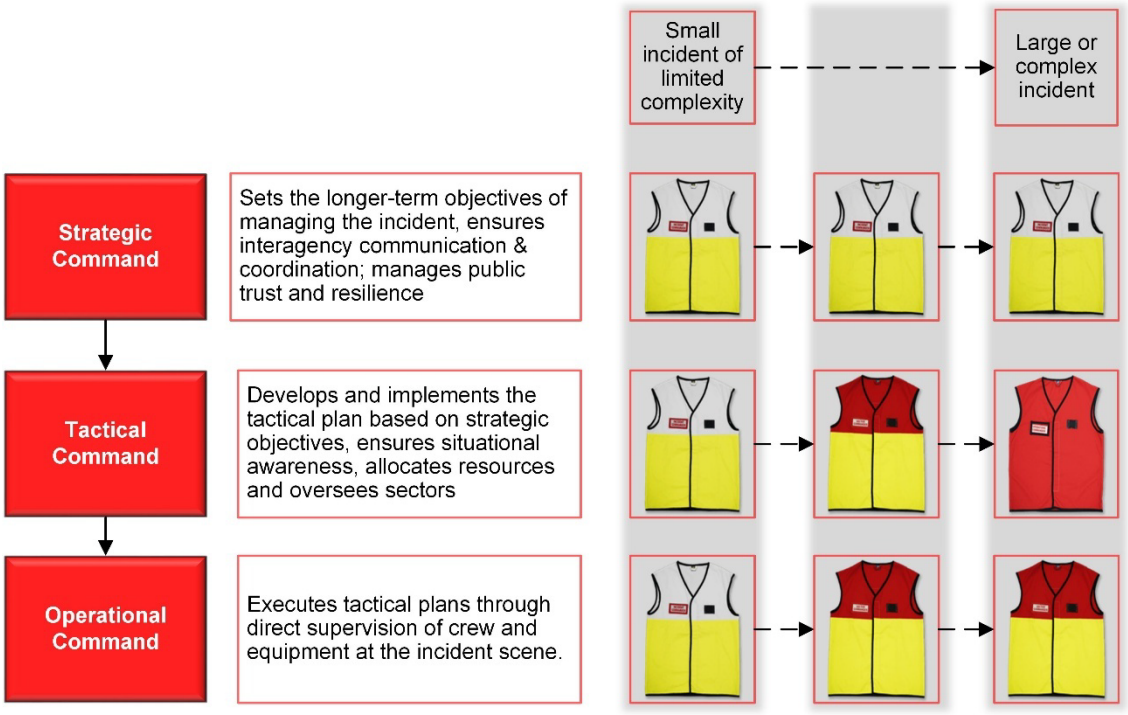


Diagram 1. Command Functions which may be assigned to Commanders based on Incident Scale or Complexity

4. At large-scale or complex incidents requiring the activation of the national *Framework for Emergency Management,* specific command responsibilities may transition from the Incident Commander to the Local Authority Controller of Operations in a Tactical Coordinating Group or Senior Local Authority Management representatives in a

Strategic Coordinating Group (see Section *6 – Interagency Coordination).* These groups assume command functions appropriate to the scale and nature of the incident, ensuring interagency coordination and strategic oversight.

2.1.1 Strategic Command

5. Strategic Command is responsible for setting the overall direction and longer-term objectives during an incident. It involves the planning, coordination, and direction of an organisation's resources to achieve its overarching goals. This level of command focuses on interagency communication and coordination, public communication, resource prioritisation, and recovery planning.

6. At the strategic level, the Incident Commander is accountable for the overall command of the incident, including the appraisal of the situation and the development of a comprehensive Incident Management Plan. This plan defines strategic objectives and outlines how, where, and when resources will be deployed. It also incorporates systems and procedures to manage the specific risks associated with the incident type, ensuring safe, effective, and coordinated operations. Decisions made at the strategic level shape the broader fire service and Local Authority response.

7. The Incident Commander's ability to operate at a strategic level is informed by a combination of training, operational experience, and critically, the timely and accurate information updates from personnel on the ground. Where appointed, Operations Commanders and Sector Commanders must provide regular updates to the Incident Commander to assist in the decision-making process, particularly in the following circumstances:

   - After implementing a direction from the Incident Commander.
   - When it becomes evident that the assigned objective(s) cannot be achieved.
   - When there is a significant change in the situation or risk profile.

8. Large scale or complex incidents can have significant impacts on the community, the environment and the availability of fire service resources and those of the other responding agencies. In such cases, strategic leadership may require the establishment of a Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) under the *Framework for Emergency Management*, which assumes responsibility for an interagency coordination, public communication and long-term recovery planning.

Core Strategic Command Responsibilities

9. Strategic Command responsibilities will vary greatly based on the incident type, the

scale, and its complexity. Many strategic responsibilities listed will be outside the remit or the ability of the first attending officer(s) who will be focused on establishing situational awareness and developing the immediate Incident Management Plan. However, Incident Commanders should consider the longer-term objectives of managing the incident and not just focus on what is presented on attendance.

Strategic Command Responsibilities	Description
Set Strategic Objectives	• Define the overall aims and long-term objectives of the incident response giving consideration to the needs of the other PES. Such objectives may include: ○ Preserve life and protect responders ○ Safeguard infrastructure and property ○ Minimise environmental impact ○ Maintain public trust ○ Ensure interagency coordination ○ Support affected communities ○ Use resources efficiently ○ Plan for recovery and resilience ○ Maintain statutory obligations ○ Promote learning opportunities post-incident
Developing the Incident Management Plan	• Oversee development of a plan aligning resources, objectives, and risk mitigation. • Provide guidance and support to Tactical Command.
Resource Prioritisation	• Assess, secure, allocate, and manage resources to meet objectives. • Prioritise resources for concurrent incidents.
Interagency Coordination	• Apply the 3Cs Interagency Approach to ensure a coordinated response. • Participate in the Tactical Coordination Group if required.
Communication & Media	• Provide updates to the Strategic Coordination Group (if established) • Ensure accurate public/media messaging (if authorised)
Recovery & Continuity Planning	• Plan for long-term recovery • Ensure continuity of fire and rescue operations
Maintain Command Oversight	• Retain overall accountability while delegating tactical and operational functions.
Incident Review	• Continuously assess strategic decisions and adapt as needed. • Support debriefs and shared learning opportunities

Table 1. Strategic Command Responsibilities

Incident Management Plan



10. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to develop and maintain a strategic plan that effectively manages the incident from initiation through to resolution. This includes the ability to direct, control, and track the function and location of all personnel and resources committed

to the incident. A well-structured Incident Management Plan is essential to ensure that operational needs are matched with appropriate resources at the right time and place.

11. Key components of establishing an Incident Management Plan include:

Component	Description
Incident Overview	• Scene Assessment: Nature, location, scale and complexity of the incident. • Initial assessment and establishment of situational awareness.
Strategic Objectives	• High-level goals based on the nature of the incident such as preserving life; protecting property; maintaining public confidence; minimise environment impact etc
Tactical Priorities	• Specific actions to achieve strategic objectives • e.g., evacuation, sectorisation, prevent fire spread, water supplies, BA search and rescue etc. **Note:** priorities may change as the incident develops
Resources	• Request and allocate resources. Consider personnel and officer delegation, special appliances, specialist teams, RSFO etc • Assistance of other PESs, utilities services, Local Authority resources etc
Risk Management	• Dynamic Risk Assessments; Safe Systems of Work; Control Measures; Tactical Modes; Hazard/Inner/Outer Zones; Safety Officer
Command Structure	• Roles and responsibilities (Incident Commander, Operations Commander, Sector Commanders)
Communication Plan	• Fireground Communications; 3Cs Interagency Approach; Public Information; Media; Offsite Coordination Groups
Review & Adapt	• Continuously monitor the situation and adjust the plan as needed. • Plans for escalation, deterioration, or unexpected developments
Recovery and Debrief	• Transition to recovery phase & post-incident review

Table 2. Components of an Incident Management Plan

12. The Incident Management Plan outlines the objectives, priorities, resource deployment, risk controls, and communication strategies necessary to manage the incident safely and effectively. It serves as the foundation for decision-making at all command levels - **Strategic, Tactical, and Operational** - and ensures that all personnel are aligned in their actions and goals.

13. At the strategic level, the Incident Commander should take command and make decisions based, not only on current conditions, but also on forecasting what might

happen next. The Incident Commander should be able to improve, improvise or change strategy as the incident dictates, based on the incident information that they receive and how the incident develops.

14. While specific incident types may be guided by SOGs and established procedures, the Incident Commander must apply their training, knowledge, and experience to assess the unique circumstances of the situation. They should adapt the Incident Management Plan accordingly, taking into account the specific risks presented and the resources available at that time to manage those risks effectively.

2.1.2 Tactical Command

15. Tactical Command is the intermediate level of command within the incident command structure. It serves as the critical link between Strategic Command, which sets the overall objectives, and Operational Command, which carries out tasks on the ground. Tactical Command is typically exercised by the Incident Commander at smaller incidents but may be delegated to Sector Commander(s) or an Operations Commander as the incident develops in size and complexity.

16. The Tactical Command level involves the deployment and control of resources and personnel to meet the objectives identified in the Incident Management Plan. The core principle of all tactical considerations is to achieve the maximum possible success with the most efficient and effective use of the resources available.

17. While the Incident Commander decides the overall Incident Management Plan, the application of tactics may become the responsibility of the Sector Commander(s), or the Operations Officer where deployed. These Commanders usually have freedom within the overall approach to determine the tactics to be employed; almost invariably they will be based on established procedures. Tactical Command will be allocated defined tactical priorities and operational goals by the Incident commander and will determine how these goals are to be achieved through the allocation of tasks to crews.

Core Tactical Command Responsibilities

Tactical Command Responsibilities	Description
Implementation of Strategy	• Translate strategic objectives into a clear, actionable tactical plan.
Resource Deployment	• Allocate personnel, equipment, and support resources to operational sectors.
Sectorisation	• Establish sectors and appoint Sector Commanders to manage specific areas of activity.
Situational Awareness	• Maintain a dynamic understanding of the incident through regular updates and briefings.
Interagency Coordination	• Liaise with other PESs utilising the 3Cs Interagency Approach. • Participate in the Operational/Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) level as required
Command Support Oversight	• Ensure effective use of Command Support, Command Support Unit, ICS boards and communications tools.
Risk Mitigation	• Undertake a Dynamic Risk Assessment and review at 20 min intervals • Confirm and adjust tactical modes as the DRA dictates.
Operational Support	• Provide direction and support to Operational Command
Plan Review and Adaptation	• Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the tactical plan and adjust as conditions change.

Table 3. Tactical Command Responsibilities

2.1.3 Operational Command

18. Operational Command involves the direct supervision and deployment of personnel and resources who are actively engaged in incident response. It operates under the direction of Tactical Command and focuses on implementing tactical decision through practical actions. It is therefore responsible for ensuring that tactical plans and priorities are implemented effectively and safely to bring the incident to a successful resolution.

19. Responsibility for specific tasks is typically delegated to Sector Commanders (or Crew Commanders where appropriate) who manage the operational activities required to achieve the overall tactical objectives.

Core Operational Command Responsibilities

Operational Command Responsibilities	Description
Task Duties	• Implement the tactical plan as detailed. • Supervise crews/ use of equipment/ PPE • Ensure safe systems of work. • Make professional judgments based on available resources and risks.
Safety Duties	• Ensure Situational Awareness • Conduct DRA • Ensure team members are aware of hazards. • Implement Control Measures • Monitor team welfare. • Withdraw crews if risks escalate. • Escalate Safety Concerns
Communication	• Maintain clear communications • Use designated radio channels or direct verbal communication. • Report progress, hazards, and resource needs
Team Management	• Supervise the use of equipment and adhere to SOGs and established procedures. • Ensure team members understand their roles. • Monitor physical condition and welfare of the crew.
Decision Making	• Make real-time decisions within the scope of the task. • Escalate issues beyond authority
Post-Task Duties	• Participate in incident debriefs/highlight learning opportunities • Report any injuries, near misses, or equipment issues. • Ensure team welfare post incident

Table 4. Operational Command Responsibilities

2.2 RESOURCES AND CONTROL

1. After the initial predetermined response of resources, the Incident Commander is responsible for determining further resource requirements and controlling resources on the incident ground. The Incident Commander should ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are mobilised in a timely fashion. The assessment of resources should include the need for additional:

   (a) Appliances.
   (b) Personnel.
   (c) Equipment.
   (d) Firefighting media.
   (e) Consumables (e.g. fuel, B.A. cylinders, etc.)
   (f) Resources from the wider Local Authority, other principal response agency or utilities.

2. The degree of control an Incident Commander will need to maintain will depend, in part, on the size and demands of the incident. At larger incidents specific areas of resource control may be delegated to appointed officers, including the Operations Commander who will look after control of resources deployed at the incident, while a Command Support officer may be delegated the task of managing the acquisition of additional resources.

2.3 INCIDENT SITE MANAGEMENT

1. Incident sites are often complex, with issues of difficult terrain, poor access, congested traffic, multiple potential risks and potentially large numbers of responders. The successful management of such emergencies requires simple, clear and unambiguous site arrangements, which are understood and accepted by all.

2. While it may not be a consideration in the early stages of an incident, as the incident evolves and hazards are identified and evaluated, incident site management and controlled access may become an important element in the mitigation of risk to personnel and other PESs. It is important that the incident site management plan is discussed by the Operational Command Group as early as possible as part of the 3Cs Interagency Approach when reviewing coordination of activities and establishing shared situational awareness.

3. When considering control of the incident ground, the Incident Commander will, in particular, consider the need to maintain the safety of the public, as well as firefighters, and other emergency responders or staff from utility services attending.

4. Zoning may be introduced as an effective method of controlling resources and maintaining safety:

(a) Hazard Zone

(i) The hazard zone is an area in which significant hazards have been identified by the Incident Commander. The hazard zone may extend beyond the immediate scene of operations and in some cases can move or change as the incident evolves.

(ii) Activities in the hazard zone are unlikely to take place until a DRA is undertaken, and control measures are in place to mitigate the risk to personnel.

(iii) Access to the hazard zone should be restricted to the minimum numbers required for the work to be undertaken safely and effectively.

(iv) Personnel operating within this zone should have appropriate personal protective equipment.

(v) Personnel should only enter the hazard zone when they have received a full briefing and been allocated specific tasks to undertake.

(vi) The fire service should provide advice, information and guidance on safety issues, in accordance with their knowledge of the situation, to personnel from other services who may be working within the hazard zone as part of the 3Cs Interagency Approach. This includes the associated risks of working within the hazard zone.

(vii) Special provision should be considered for non-fire service personnel working within the hazard zone who are under the control and supervision of the Fire |Service. This may include the provision of safety briefings, a record of their presence with Command Support and agreed evacuation protocols.

(viii) Where there is an escalation of risk within the hazard zone and the Incident Commander switches tactical mode to Defensive, all agencies working within the hazard zone are to be informed that an immediate withdrawal of fire service personnel has commenced.

(b) Inner Zones:

(i) The Inner Zone is the working area immediately outside the hazard zone, or, where no immediate hazard zone is identified, it is the main area of operational activity. Depending on the nature of the emergency there may be a heightened level of risk in this zone.

(ii) The inner zone may operate as a staging point for fire service activities and those of other PESs, particularly in the management of casualties, pumping operations and formation of equipment pools.

(iii) Access to the Inner Zone is restricted to fire service personnel and essential personnel from the relevant PESs. Persons working inside this area should have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as they may be deployed into the hazard zone.

(c) Outer Zone:

(i) The Outer Zone creates a buffer zone around the Inner Zone and is established to designate an area from which the public need to be evacuated for their safety or to prevent access by the public to an area used by the fire service, and other responding principal emergency services.

(ii) This area is a restricted zone, typically managed by An Garda Síochána, to ensure that only emergency responders have access. This control allows all emergency services to operate efficiently and without obstruction.

(iii) The establishment of an outer zone provides space for many key elements of

the Tactical Coordination Group to be established should the incident escalate *(see Section 6 – Interagency Coordination)*

(d) Access Points/Cordons

(i) Movement between the zones should, wherever possible, be controlled to manage the flow of people into and out of each zone. Responders entering any zone should present at the identified access point/cordon to gain access.

(e) Traffic Cordon

(i) A traffic cordon may further supplement incident management and An Garda Síochána, following consultation with the Fire and Ambulance Services, will identify safe routes into and out of the outer cordon for further emergency vehicles and other attending agencies. Marshalling areas will usually be located within the outer cordon, where this is practicable.

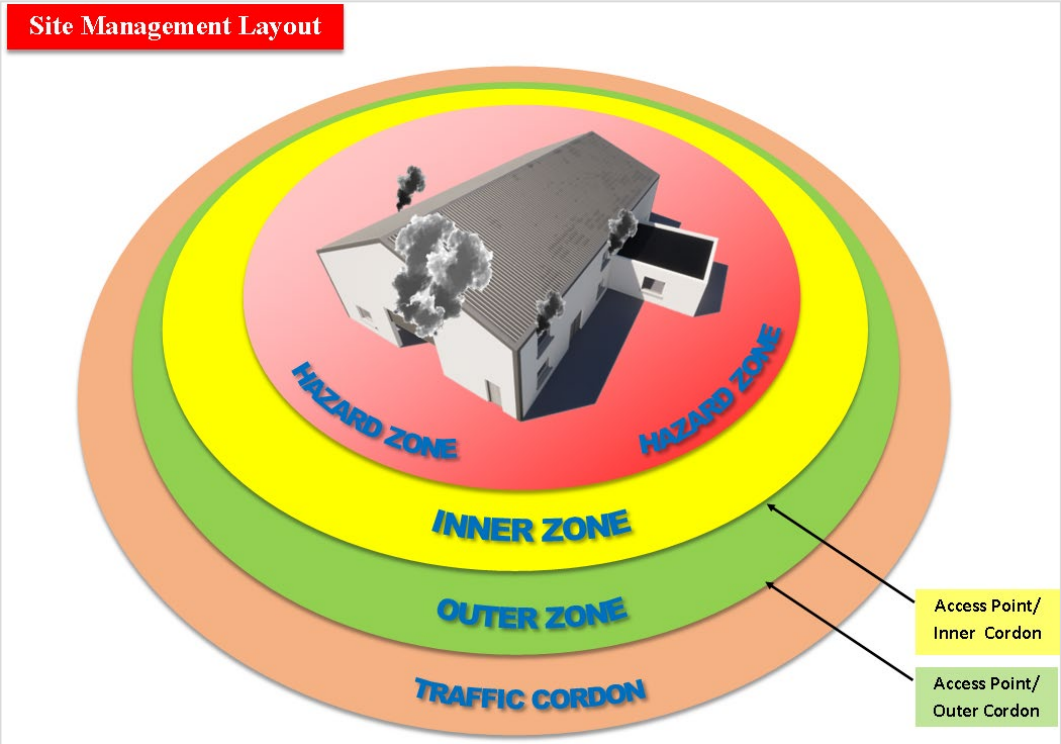


Diagram 2. Site Management Layout

2.4 BRIEFING AND INFORMATION

1. Effective communication is of critical importance at all incidents. It is essential that information be relayed accurately, from the Incident Commander to the crews carrying out the work, and vice-versa. Communications ensure crews are fully aware of the Tactical Mode and actions required of them, and that the Incident Commander is aware of what is happening on the incident ground.

2. The Incident Commander is also responsible for ensuring that information and messages are formulated and relayed to the relevant Regional Communications

Centre in order to give senior officers an accurate picture of the nature and demands of the incident.

3. Effective briefing of crews is critically important, if they are to fully appreciate the hazards and risks associated with any tasks being undertaken. The briefing may commence en route to the incident and be supplemented by the Dynamic Risk Assessment initiated by the Incident Commander upon arrival. The extent of the briefing will depend on the nature and complexity of the incident; pre-briefing for small fires will be relatively straightforward. When attending an unfamiliar incident, or where the risk factor is high, the briefing will need to be more comprehensive and may require further updating to all personnel as the situation develops or as more information becomes available.

4. The need to brief crews that have withdrawn from the working area of the incident should be regarded as an opportunity to obtain valuable safety critical information.

2.5 TRANSFER OF COMMAND

1. Arrangements for the transfer of command on the incident ground are, subject to the legislative provisions, the prerogative of each Chief Fire Officer, and should be in the form of a brigade order or other equivalent written documentation outlining the brigade operational procedure for the command and control of incidents.

2. On the attendance of a more senior officer at an incident, that officer will:

   (a) Log In-Attendance with RCC.
   (b) Present his/her Nominal Roll Board to Command Support or log attendance via the use of incident management software
   (c) Review the Incident Command Board (or digital equivalent)
   (d) Receive a brief from the Command Support Officer.
   (e) Identify the Incident Commander.

3. On meeting with the Incident Commander, the more senior officer will conduct a situation appraisal which will include:

   (a) The nature and scale of the incident.
   (b) The hazards identified, the associated risks and controls measures in place.
   (c) An overview of the Incident Management Plan and the actions taken thus far.
   (d) The resources currently deployed in each sector and their corresponding tactical modes.

4. A determination by the more senior officer on whether or not they will take charge

should not take place until such time they have established situational awareness of the incident. This will require the officer to undertake a situation appraisal of the incident site, regardless of if this has previously been carried out by the current Incident Commander. A thorough situation appraisal will allow an informed judgment to be made as to whether they (the more Senior Officer):

(a) Are satisfied the situation is under control and decide to leave the scene, informing the Incident Commander and RCC of their departure.

(b) Decide to stay in attendance at the scene, but without taking charge (i.e. stay in an advisory or monitoring capacity but remain responsible), and indicate this to the Incident Commander with the phrase:

"Carry on in command, as you are".



When a Senior Fire Officer does not assume command but remains on scene in an advisory or monitoring capacity, they must be clearly identifiable at the incident ground. In this instance, the Senior Fire Officer should wear the designated tabard, which should be reversible for use as an Incident Commander tabard should incident escalation necessitate taking command.

(c) They formally "take charge" of the incident by stating to the current Incident Commander:

"I am now assuming command of this incident"

The transfer of command must be clearly communicated to all members of the Command Team and relevant officers, recorded on the Incident Command Board, and RCC updated via the tetra main radio.

(d) The following should be considered when taking over command:

(i) The rationale for taking over command.

(ii) Whether the new Incident Commander has sufficient situational awareness or requires additional information. Failure to undertake a full assessment of the situation before taking command can often lead to confusion within the Command Team.

(iii) Whether to confirm or amend the Incident Management Plan. Care should be taken not to anchor to the objectives and subsequent decisions of the previous Incident Commander. The plan must be reviewed and adjusted based on the current situational awareness of the new Incident Commander.

(iv) Ensuring safe systems of work are in place.

(v) Checking resources are adequate and deployed to match the strategic priorities of the plan,

(vi) Whether the command structure is appropriate to the incident scale and complexity.

(vii) Establishing communications with other Principal Emergency Services attending the incident to coordinate activities.

5. The new Incident Commander will don the “Incident Commander” tabard when the decision is made to take command ensuring no other Incident Commander tabard is utilised on the incident ground.

6. The new Incident Commander is responsible for carrying out a Dynamic Risk Assessment upon the transfer of command and continuing the ongoing Dynamic Risk Assessment process. The transfer of command marks a critical point in management of the incident where the new commander must establish a clear understanding of the evolving risks and hazards associated with the incident. Conducting a DRA ensures the incoming IC independently verifies the safety of ongoing operations, identifies any new or overlooked hazards, and assesses the effectiveness of existing control measures. As incidents are dynamic and conditions can change rapidly, the DRA provides the IC with the situational awareness needed to assume command.

7. Having taken command, the new Incident Commander may decide to keep the previous Incident Commander in the command structure –as Operations Commander - depending on the needs of the situation. It is the duty of the officer being relieved to give the officer assuming command all relevant information concerning the incident.

8. Hand-over of command to a more junior officer to take over the remaining tasks as the incident is scaled down should be equally formal. Any change in the command structure should be communicated to all officers on the incident ground, recorded by Command Support, and relayed to the brigades Regional Communications Centre for entry into the incident log.

2.6 COMMAND LEVELS

1. Generally, the requirement for the implementation of a particular level of command is related to the needs of the incident, the resources deployed and the experience of the Incident Commander. The purpose of specifying a command level is to enable all concerned to be aware of the specific command arrangements which are being applied by the Incident Commander.

2. Given the structures that currently exist within fire services in Ireland, and the

availability of officers to fulfil the command roles, four Command Levels have been incorporated into the Incident Command System. The fourth level is not provided for within the retained fire service, but is available to a number of full-time fire services, where their organisational structure and resources require an additional tier in the incident response *(See Tables 6 and 7 below)*

3. Upon arrival at an incident, the officer in charge of an appliance should report to the Incident Command Point. They should hand in their Personal Tally / Appliance Nominal Roll Board to Command Support (which they will retrieve prior to leaving the incident ground), or log attendance via the use of incident management software utilised at the incident.



Diagram 3. Nominal Role Boards

4. Where a fire service utilises incident management software in lieu of the Incident Command Board, it is essential to ensure that a robust system is established to accurately record the resources and personnel from other fire services that may be in attendance. This is particularly important in situations where adjoining fire authorities do not utilise incident management software but may be mobilised to assist at cross-border incidents where such a system is in use.

5. The incident command structure, including Command Support and any additional functions required to support operations at the scene, must be introduced at the earliest.

Command Level 1

(i) It is considered that Command Level 1 would be applicable to incidents of limited complexity and with typically no more than one Class B in operational use.

(ii) The Incident Commander at this level may be a Driver Mechanic/Sub Officer or those of a lower rank who have received training to the appropriate level.

(iii) Command Support may be utilised to assist with the management of the incident as soon as resources become available.

(iv) A Safety Officer may be nominated by the Incident Commander based on the hazards identified and the associated risks during the DRA

***Note**: variations exist for full-time brigades in Dublin and Cork City. Refer to Tables 6 and 7*

Command Level 2

(i) The resources assigned to the incident will have exceeded those indicated at Command Level 1 but with typically no more than three Class Bs in operational use.

(ii) The Incident Commander at Level 2 should be at the rank of Sub Officer/Station Officer or those of a lower rank who have received training to the appropriate level.

(iii) An Incident Command Board (or an equivalent digital solution), which may be expanded depending on the incident size or complexity, should be provided to assist the Incident Commander in managing the incident and maintaining a record of the resources and their deployment at the incident.

(iv) A Safety Officer may be nominated by the Incident Commander based on the hazards identified and the associated risks during the DRA

***Note**: variations exist for full-time brigades in Dublin and Cork City. Refer to Tables 6 and 7*

Command Level 3

(i) Any complex incident involving large scale deployment of personnel and resources, should be managed by the implementation of Command Level 3.

(ii) Incidents requiring the deployment of typically four or more Class Bs in operational use, should be managed at Command Level 3.

(iii) The Incident Commander for an incident of this magnitude should generally be the Rostered Senior Fire Officer on call.

(iv) At this level of command, a Command Support Unit should be requested by the Incident Commander to assist him/her to effectively co-ordinate and manage the incident.

(v) A Level 3 Incident Command Board (or an equivalent digital solution) will be utilised to assist in the management of the incident and maintaining a record of the resources and their deployment at the incident.

(vi) A Safety Officer will be nominated by the Incident Commander and be

assigned responsibility of either a sector or the overall incident.

***Note**: variations exist for full-time brigades in Dublin and Cork City. Refer to Tables 6 and 7*

Command Level 4

(i) If adopted by the Fire Authority, Command Level 4 is reserved for incidents within the functional area of a full-time fire service *(note: retained fire services may be requested to provide assistance at Command Level 4 incidents)*

(ii) If adopted, Command Level 4 resource thresholds may vary between full-time brigades as indicated in Tables 6 & 7 below.

(iii) The Incident Commander for an incident of this magnitude should generally be the Chief Fire Officer or the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. The Third Officer (officer relieved) will adopt the role of Operations Commander.

(iv) The Safety Officer(s) appointed at Command Level 3 will remain in place with additional Safety Officers appointed as deemed appropriate by the Incident/Operations Commander.

6. It should be noted that the role of Incident Commander can be performed by officers of a lesser rank where appropriate training relevant to the role has been undertaken. Likewise, the complexity of the incident, while not meeting the threshold criteria of attending Class B fire appliances, may require an officer of high rank or experience to take command.

7. While the level of command will typically be determined by the complexity of the incident and the number of Class Bs in operational use at the incident, the IC, based on their professional judgement, has the authority to scale up or down the Command Level. Consideration should be given to the automatic deployment of Command Support Units should the Command Level be elevated.

8. Command Levels can be summarised as below:

Command Level	Retained Fire Service & Full-time Fire Services (Waterford, Louth, Limerick, Galway)		Command Support (CS)	Safety Officer
	Class B(s) [1]	Incident Commander (IC) Rank [2]		
1	1	Driver Mechanic/ Sub Officer	CS nominated by IC *(as soon as resources allow)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
2	2 - 3	Sub Officer/ Station Officer	CS nominated by IC *(supported where necessary)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
3	4 or more	Rostered Senior Fire Officer [4]	Command Support Team Command Support Unit	Mandatory Safety Officer
4 [3]	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*

Note 1: Refers to a standard fire appliance designed to accommodate a crew of 6, equipped with a main pump and water carrying capability in operational use.
Note 2: The role of Incident Commander may be undertaken by a lower ranked officer who has received training to the appropriate level.
Note 3: Command Level 4 is not applicable within the functional area of the retained or the above-named full-time fire services. They may however be mobilised to attend Level 4 incidents in the functional area of Dublin or Cork City Fire Brigades.
Note 4: At Command Level 3 the RSFO will attend and determine the need to take command based on the complexity of the incident and the organisational needs. Where command is not taken, the responsibility of incident management must be assigned to a Station Officer. The highest-ranking officer in attendance retains overall responsibility for the incident.

Table 5. Command Levels – Retained and Full-time Fire Service (Waterford, Louth, Limerick, Galway)

Command Level	Cork City Fire Brigade		Command Support	Safety Officer
	Class B(s) [1]	Incident Commander (IC) Rank [2]		
1	1	Sub Officer	CS nominated by IC *(as soon as resources allow)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
2	2	Station Officer	CS nominated by IC *(supported where necessary)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
3	3 - 4	Third Officer [3]	Command Support Team Command Support Unit	Mandatory Safety Officer
4	5 or more	RSFO [4]	Command Support Team Command Support Unit	Mandatory Safety Officer

Note 1: Refers to a standard fire appliance designed to accommodate a crew of 6, equipped with a main pump and water carrying capability in operational use.

Note 2: The role of Incident Commander may be undertaken by a lower ranked officer who has received training to the appropriate level.

Note 3: At Command Level 3 the Third Officer will attend and determine the need to take command based on the complexity of the incident and the organisational needs. Where command is not taken, the highest-ranking officer in attendance retains overall responsibility for the incident.

Note 4: At Command Level 4 the RSFO will attend and determine the need to take command based on the complexity of the incident and the organisational needs. Where command is not taken, the highest-ranking officer in attendance retains overall responsibility for the incident.

Table 6. Command Levels – Cork City Fire Brigade

Command Level	Dublin Fire Brigade		Command Support	Safety Officer
	Class B(s) [1]	Incident Commander (IC) Rank [2]		
1	1	Sub Officer	CS nominated by IC *(as soon as resources allow)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
1	2	Station Officer	CS nominated by IC *(as soon as resources allow)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
2	2 - 5	District Officer	CS nominated by IC *(supported where necessary)*	Nominated by IC *(based on the hazards identified)*
3	6 - 8	Third Officer [3]	Command Support Team Command Support Unit	Mandatory Safety Officer
4	9 or more	CFO/ACFO [4]	Command Support Team Command Support Unit	Mandatory Safety Officer

Note 1: Refers to a standard fire appliance designed to accommodate a crew of 6, equipped with a main pump and water carrying capability.

Note 2: The role of Incident Commander may be undertaken by a lower ranked officer who has received training to the appropriate level.

Note 3: At Command Level 3 the Third Officer will attend and take command of the incident. Where the Third Officer hands over command, it will be to the highest-ranking officer in attendance at the incident.

Note 4: At Command Level 4 the CFO/ACFO will attend and take command of the incident. In circumstances where the CFO/ACFO hands over command, it will be to the highest-ranking officer in attendance at the incident

Table 7. Command Levels – Dublin Fire Brigade

2.7 COMMUNICATIONS

1. The Incident Commander should establish and maintain effective communications within the command structure. Information is one of the most important assets on the incident ground; information should be gathered, analysed, displayed and decisions made, and orders issued on the basis of situation reports received. Situational updates should be communicated on a regular basis and always before the declaration of the tactical mode to the Incident Commander from all sectors via the established communications links.

2. The Incident Commander should assess and direct Command Support to provide for the following needs:-

   (a) Setting up a tetra communication channel with the RCC.
   (b) Allocation of radios, assignment of channels and call signs which must be adhered to in accordance with the requirements of the Incident Command System.
   (c) Establishing communications with other agencies. This may employ radio equipment on agreed channels or direct verbal communications.
   (d) Establishing communications links with the Sector Commanders for regular reporting between the sectors and the Incident Commander
   (e) Utilisation of local systems. Some complex buildings may have communications installed for emergency use.

3. The initial Incident Command Point will be the first attending appliance. Command Support will operate at this point and its location communicated to all responding brigades.

4. When the Command Support Unit is in attendance at Level 3/4 incidents (or where requested to attend) it will be sited so that it is readily visible and its location communicated to all responding brigades.

2.8 LIAISON WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1. The Incident Commander should establish and maintain effective liaison with all responding agencies involved in resolving the incident. Initiating the '3Cs Interagency Approach' is the appropriate method for establishing the interagency connection. This includes coordinating with other emergency services to ensure operational activities are aligned and to engage with technical specialists whose expertise may be critical in managing specific risks. *See Section 6 – Interagency Coordination*

2. The use of Tetra radios within the service also provides an opportunity to establish interagency communications links. Fire Authorities should ensure that key personnel

are trained in the use of Tetra radios and the procedures in establishing interagency talk groups for use at complex or large-scale incidents.

2.9 Interacting with Media

1. The Incident Commander should deal with the media interest in line with the fire authority's Media Policy. Fire service personnel should not speak with the media or engage in the use of social media about emergency operations other than as authorised and in accordance with this policy. When authorised, comment to the media generally should relate only to the information on the incident and the fire services response and activity.

2. The use of traditional media outlets and social media to assist in the management of the incident and to provide public safety messages should be considered by the Incident Commander, especially where early interactions can assist the operational response and ensure public safety, for example, requesting the public not to travel to the area of operation to minimise congestion and allow free access to water ferrying operations or requesting the public to remain indoors to minimise the possibility of respiratory distress due to smoke inhalation.

2.10 Welfare of Personnel

1. The welfare of personnel in relation to the provision of rest, food and drink is an important consideration for the Incident Commander. This should be given particular attention by the command team, especially at arduous incidents, or incidents that require a rapid turnover of personnel.

2. During protracted incidents, the Incident Commander should give consideration to requesting relief crews. Commanders and Safety Officer (where appointed) should continuously monitor the impact of activities on the physical condition of crews.

3. The supervision and welfare of relief crews is equally important to those mobilised earlier in the incident. In this respect, the length of time that relief crews are engaged should be carefully considered, taking into account those crews' commitments to standby or other incidents prior to mobilisation.

4. Where appointed, the Safety Officer(s) is delegated responsibility for monitoring the welfare of personnel on the incident ground or within the sector assigned and advising the Incident/Sector Commander. This may extend to ensuring provisions are in place for the decontamination of PPE and equipment.

2.11 POST-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

1. The Incident Commander should undertake and/ or supervise the completion of any necessary reports and documentation for the incident, to ensure that a contemporary, complete, accurate report is made available promptly as required.

2. Fire service activities and interests, in general, centre around the emergency phase of an incident. However, there are issues, which involve the fire service well beyond the emergency phase. In many situations, An Garda Síochána will carry out inquiries and investigations into emergency incidents, where the assistance of fire service personnel may be required. Examples of this include the following:

   (a) Post- mortem enquiries and Coroner's hearings.
   (b) Fire Investigation.
   (c) Accident Investigation.
   (d) Public or judicial enquiries.
   (e) Criminal Investigation.

3. Where a serious incident has occurred, the Local Authority and/or Irish Public Bodies (IPB) may decide to initiate an investigation in preparation for criminal prosecution (An Garda Síochána/Health & Safety Authority) or a civil liability claim. A Serious Incident includes:

   (a) Death/serious injury of an employee in the course of work, or
   (b) Death/serious injury of 3rd party(ies) as a result of an organisation's activity, or
   (c) An accident involving injury to multiple parties (employees and/or 3rd parties) as a result of an organisation's activities

   Local Authorities have agreed procedures in place for managing such serious incidents. Incident Commanders should make themselves aware of the steps to be followed within their organisation in the event of a serious incident.

4. In addition to those conducted by An Garda Síochána, the HSA, Irish Public Bodies or the Local Authority, internal reviews should also take place, including:

   (a) Incident debriefing and evaluation.
   (b) Consideration of fire safety issues, and safety lessons to be learned.
   (c) Financial costs to the brigade (e.g. damaged equipment).
   (d) Implementation of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) system together with the ongoing emotional and welfare support.

5. The Incident Commander should, at the earliest opportunity, attempt to assess what

the post–incident considerations might be. On the basis of this assessment, the following tasks may need to be undertaken:

(a) Scene Preservation

Until it is clear that detailed examination of the scene is not required, the scene should be preserved from any disturbance.

(b) Recording and Logging

This could include a written log (taken in the Incident Command Unit during the incident) and voice recordings of critical messages. The availability of photographic and or video evidence can be very beneficial in this particular area, and should be sought and secured at an early opportunity.

(c) Impounding Equipment

Where accidents or faults / failures have occurred in equipment, any associated equipment should be preserved for later investigation, and hand-over under brigade health and safety policies or procedures.

(d) Identification of Key Personnel

The names and location of individuals who witnessed important events should be obtained and recorded for later interviews. It may be necessary or appropriate to commence interviewing during the incident.

2.12 INCIDENT DEBRIEFING

1. Incident debriefing plays a pivotal role in enhancing both personal and organisational performance, offering a structured opportunity to reflect on the incident and identify key learnings. The process helps in identifying operational successes and areas for improvement. It also promotes a culture of openness, where team members can openly discuss their perspectives, building trust and improving teamwork. Furthermore, it contributes to continuous improvement by ensuring that lessons learned from incidents are integrated into future training, procedures, and policies.

2. Incident debriefing is generally performed through a number of mechanisms which are based on the complexity of the incident and the identified need to mitigate risk at future incidents. Such mechanisms include:

(a) Hot Debrief:

Conducted immediately after the incident, usually at the incident scene. It is brief and informal and is aimed at capturing immediate feedback while the incident is

still fresh in everyone's mind. A hot debrief provides learning opportunities to crew members, promotes feedback and affords an opportunity for the crew to make suggestions to improve the brigades operational response. The hot debrief may be followed by a formal debrief should the need to carry out one be identified.

(b) Formal Debrief:

A structured and comprehensive review conducted after the crew return from the incident or in the days following the incident. It provides for more in-depth analysis of the incident and the decision made. Such formal debriefing should be conducted using the *National Incident Debriefing Tool* (See Appendix 7)

(c) Interagency Debrief:

If multiple agencies were involved in the response (e.g., An Garda Síochána, National Ambulance Service, Fire Service), a joint debrief can help ensure inter-agency cooperation and learning. Where the fire service is tasked with leading the debrief, the National Incident Debriefing System can be utilised.

It is important to note that care should be given to ensure that such debriefs do not interfere with ongoing Garda or HSA investigations.

3. Consideration should be given for the inclusion of representatives from the relevant Regional Communications Centre (RCC) at debriefings following large-scale or complex incidents that generated significant call volumes or required substantial resource deployment. Input from RCC personnel may offer valuable learning opportunities for both the fire authority and the RCC, enhancing the management of similar incidents in the future.

4. Post-incident debriefs provide opportunities for:

(a) Improving Operational Response:

By analysing what went well, what could be improved, and seeking how improvements can be made, debriefs enhance the future operational effectiveness of the fire authority.

(b) Mitigating Future Risks:

Lessons learned from incidents are crucial for minimising risks and improving safety in future operations.

(c) Organisational Learning:

They facilitate the dissemination of information and lessons learned throughout the

organisation, allowing for adjustments in standard operating procedures where necessary.

(d) Interagency Cooperation:

In complex incidents, especially those involving multiple agencies, debriefs foster collaboration and alignment across organisations.

5. An incident debrief should be carried out after any significant incident or training exercise where there are potential learning opportunities to be explored. Indicators for the need may include:

(a) The Use of Operational Discretion:

If an incident involved the use of professional judgement to significantly deviate from standard operational guidance (SOGs), or established procedures in order to achieve the best possible outcome, a formal incident debrief may be conducted to identify the benefits of the operational discretion deployed and to provide feedback for the development of future operational guidance.

(b) Incident of a Complex Nature:

Incidents involving multiple agencies or complex operations.

(c) Safety Concerns:

Any situation where the fire authority considers potential learning opportunities could mitigate future risk to personnel.

(d) Post-Incident Review Requirements:

If the fire authority mandates an incident debrief for specific types of incidents (e.g., large or complex emergencies, high-risk premises).

(e) Learning Opportunity:

Even routine incidents can present learning opportunities for individuals or the crew. Debriefing provides an opportunity to review the incident management plan with the crew and seek their input. This develops trust between the crew and the decision makers.

Section 3. National Incident Command System

3.1 Introduction

1. The public expects that emergencies will be dealt with safely, effectively and efficiently by emergency services. There is therefore, a professional, social, political and economic demand for the management of emergency incidents to be enhanced wherever possible.

2. The complexity of incident management, coupled with the growing need for multi-agency and multi-functional involvement at incidents has increased the need for a standard system of incident management, not only nationally but also internationally.

3. The use of the National Incident Command System throughout all fire authorities has already provided a standardised approach to managing incidents of varying scales and complexities. This updated guidance attempts to augment the established procedures and create a unified, effective and safer approach to incident management.

3.2 National Incident Command System Framework

1. The NICS is based on a framework that ensures manageable control of all resources deployed at an incident. This provides the Incident Commander with the means to find a way through the uncertainty and complexity of emergency situations and assists with the development of an effective and appropriate incident ground structure.

2. At most large incidents, Incident Commanders are making decisions not only about tactics, reinforcements, logistical problems etc., but also building an organisation structure at the same time. The NICS provides a clear framework that expands from a single Class B attendance to larger incidents and provides the Incident Commander with a ready to use organisational framework.

3. Terminology is important and it is necessary for everyone to use the standard terminology set out at the front of this document. Common role titles, e.g., Incident Commander, Sector One Commander etc assists with management and effective communications at incidents.

4. Multi / inter–agency operations are also enhanced, by all personnel appreciating their position and role in the complete organisation structure.

5. The other main elements of the standard framework are:

   (a) A clearly defined and visible line of command.
   (b) Defining the commander's span of control

(c) The “Command Team”.

(d) Appropriately delegated responsibility and authority, with clear definition and understanding of roles and responsibilities.

(e) Devolved information management and support for commanders.

(f) Predictable patterns of sectorisation, e.g., division of the incident ground into a series of sectors, with Sector Commanders appointed to manage activities to deliver tactical priorities within each sector.

3.2.1 Clear Line of Command

6. The system provides a framework for managing incidents based on a single, clearly defined, line of command, which runs from the Incident Commander to every individual on the incident ground. The line (or chain) of command is detailed in diagrammatic format in *Section 3.6* and shows the framework of the NICS in a developing incident. The command framework is flexible enough to be adapted to incidents of any size and is based upon one essential element, i.e. that every unit on the incident ground, be it a crew or sector, has a single individual who is responsible for the effective supervision of that unit and the achievement of the specific goals assigned to it.

3.2.2 Span of Control

7. The span of control is the number of lines of relatively constant communications that must be maintained. At a serious incident, during stressful and rapidly changing situations, an Incident Commander must deal effectively with many people and a large amount of information.

8. The system therefore requires that direct lines of communication and areas of involvement of any officer be limited, to enable the individual to deal effectively with those areas, and cope with the information flow. The system enables the Incident Commander to maintain an appropriate “Span of Control” throughout the incident by the delegation of command roles when demands on his/her attention become excessive.

No individual should be responsible for so many aspects of the incident that it is difficult or impossible to give sufficient attention to each.

Section 3.6 provides examples how the span of control can be maintained, regardless of the incident's size or complexity.

9. The span of control for tactical roles in every day operations should ideally be limited to **five lines of direct communications,** to ensure that commanders do not become

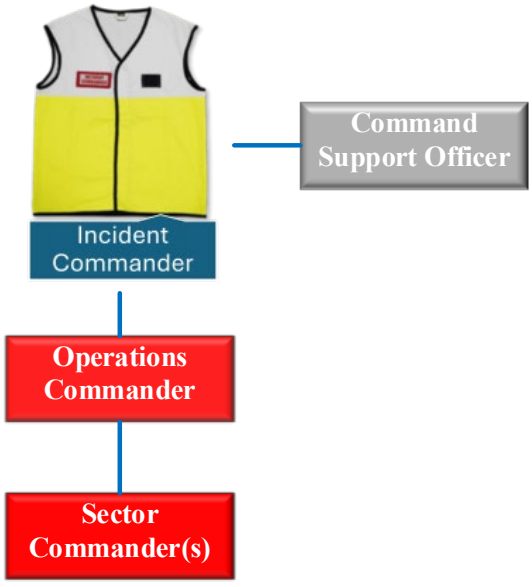
overburdened. (The span of control for functional roles, e.g. the Command Support Officer, may be wider.)

10. In a rapidly developing or complex incidents the span of control may need to be as small as **two to three** lines. In a stable situation, **six to seven** lines may be acceptable. At small incidents where the areas of operations are easily manageable and there are no sectors, the Incident Commander may oversee all aspects of the incident directly.

11. At larger scale incidents, the Incident Commander may appoint an Operations Commander to manage the operational response. This allows the Incident Commander to focus on the strategic issues and the external environment, and to oversee the overall incident management. Likewise, if the number of sectors continues to grow, the Incident Commander may group the sectors under more than one Operations Commander.

3.2.3 The Command Team

12. Incident Commanders cannot manage a complex and rapidly developing incident alone; effective and structured support is essential to successful operations. A Command Team comprises the Incident Commander and officers and staff directly supporting that role. At the simplest level, this is the Incident Commander in charge of a one-pump attendance with Command Support provided by a firefighter who is operating the radio. At larger incidents, the Command Team usually includes four elements:



(a) Incident Commander,
(b) Command Support function,
(c) Operations Commander
(d) Sector Commanders.

13. At large or complex incidents, Sector Commanders may appoint Crew Commanders to oversee personnel performing specific tasks within a sector.

14. Brigades will take different approaches to which roles and functions form part of the Command Team. The aim is to integrate communications and decision-making as seamlessly as possible between the Incident Commander and personnel engaged in

operational tasks. Some of the Command Support functions may take place at a location remote from the incident, particularly at incidents where a coordinated inter-agency response is required..

3.2.4 Communications

15. Effective, efficient and reliable communications on the incident ground are essential for the overall management and the deployment of personnel and resources. Effective communications ensure:

(a) Clarity of Command

Incident Commanders must communicate their strategies, objectives, tactical priorities and decisions clearly to all members of the Command Team. Miscommunication can lead to confusion, duplicated efforts, or critical tasks being overlooked, which can jeopardise the entire operation

(b) Situational Awareness

Continuous updates from various teams on the ground are essential for maintaining situational awareness. Commanders rely on real-time information to assess the evolving situation and make informed decisions.

(c) Safety and Risk Management:

Safety is a paramount concern in any emergency response. Effective communication ensures that all personnel are aware of potential risks, safety protocols, and any immediate dangers.

16. Proper control over the activities of fire service personnel is central to effective, efficient and safe operations. A critical aspect of control at incidents is the flow of information, whether in the form of briefings, instructions, or situation and progress reports. Effective communications assist the Command Team at incidents to initiate, evaluate and monitor operations, and ensure the health and safety of personnel.

3.2.5 Incident Ground Communications

17. The scale and complexity of emergency incidents vary between the small run of the mill one-pump incidents, and those that require the attendance of much greater fire service resources and the services of other agencies.

18. The most effective form of communications is direct verbal communication and is the preferred option whenever reasonably practicable. However, there are many occasions when this is not possible on the incident ground, and alternatives means of

communications should be utilised.

19. Radio communications is the most efficient method of communication over distance, as encountered by the fire service in normal fire-ground operations. Hand-held portable radios are the most frequently used communications device and can enhance the ability of commanders to control the incident ground.

20. The allocation of channels and designation of user call signs is a key element in the management of communications at emergency incidents. Radio discipline and the ability of the users to convey information in a brief, clear and concise manner assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the communications system.

21. Ten UHF channels are currently used by the fire service with hand-held portable radios. Fire authorities should ensure that they retain exclusive rights over these frequencies through engagement with the *Commission for Communication Regulation*.

Channel	Tx. (MHz)	Rx. (MHz)	Purpose
1	462.25		I.C - P.MCO.- B.A.CO. / B.A.ECO-FF
2	462.45		B.A. CO. – B.A. ECO
3	462.475		B.A. ECO. – B.A. Ts
4	462.15	456.65	Re-Broadcast Channel.
5	460.475		I.C – LA Services.
6	466.575		P. MCO – P.Ts.
7	466.5		B.A. ECO. B.A.Ts.
8	466.525		B.A. ECO. B.A.Ts.
9	452.525		O.I.A.
10	466.550		NAS - AGS - LA

Table 8. Hand Portable Radio – UHF Frequencies & Channel Allocations

Explanation of Acronyms for Table 9:

I.C.	-	Incident Commander.
B.A. CO.	-	Breathing Apparatus Coordination Officer.
B.A. ECO.	-	Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer.
B.A. Ts.	-	Breathing Apparatus Teams
P. MCO.	-	Pump Main Control Officer / Water Officer.
P.Ts.	-	Pump Teams.
LA	-	Local Authority.
O.I.A.	-	Other Incidents in the Area.
NA.S.	-	National Ambulance Service
AGS	-	An Garda Síochána
Tx.	-	Transmission frequency.
Rx.	-	Reception frequency.
MHz.	-	Megahertz.

22. The more recent introduction of digital hand portable radios (with user selectable

analogue or digital mode) provides for better voice quality, stronger coverage and longer battery life over that of analogue radios when the digital mode is enabled. Fire Authorities should ensure that all digital hand portable radios are correctly programmed in accordance with the fire service channel plan to ensure interoperability and that all personnel are trained to switch between the digital and analogue modes on direction of the Incident Commander.

23. It is imperative that a communications policy, based upon the provision of suitable equipment, and supported by the adoption of operational procedures and good radio discipline is used by all brigades to ensure effective communications on the incident ground.

24. In order to generate a shared situational awareness amongst attending Principal Emergency Services (PESs), and to ensure a coordinated and effective response, it is essential that there is proactive engagement and communications between the services. Further information with respect to Interagency Coordination is detailed in Section 6

3.2.6 Communication with the Regional Communications Centre

25. Regional Communications Centres play a crucial role in supporting the incident response by managing resources, coordinating with other principal emergency services, and providing logistical and operational support to incident ground activities. Effective communication between the incident ground and the RCC is essential to support:

(a) Resource Management

The RCC is responsible for mobilising resources based on the predetermined attendance and the needs communicated from the incident ground. Accurate and timely information from the Incident Commander allows the RCC to mobilise and deploy additional fire service resources, such as pump appliances, tankers, emergency tenders or other specialist units, when needed.

(b) Strategic Coordination

The RCC often coordinates with other principal emergencies services, or utilities services, to support the incident response. Clear communication and information ensure that all agencies have a shared situational awareness and that efforts are synchronised with the incident management plan. This interagency coordination is crucial for managing complex or large-scale incidents.

(c) Information Flow

The RCC serves as a hub for collecting, processing, and distributing information about the incident to the Incident Commander and any additional resource mobilised, including the RSFO. Effective communications from the fire ground to the RCC ensures that the information shared is accurate and up-to-date. Such information is not only critical for attending brigades but also for managing the broader implications of the incident.

3.2.7 Confirmation of Messages

26. Effective communication is essential for the successful management of the incidents. It enables clear command and control of the incident, maintains situational awareness, ensures safety, and facilitates the efficient of resources. A critical component of effective communication on the incident ground is the confirmation of the message. It is not enough to simply send a message; the sender must ensure that the message has been received and understood correctly. This process involves:

(a) Clarity and Repetition: The message sender should ensure that messages are clear, concise, and repeated, if necessary, in order to confirm understanding. Such messages reduce the risk of misunderstanding and ensures that all parties are aligned regarding the actions to be undertaken.

(b) Feedback Loops: Recipients of messages should acknowledge receipt and confirm their understanding of the message, including any tasks required of them. The feedback loop is a two-way process and the loop is only completed when both parties, the sender and the receiver are clear that the message sent has been correctly received. This is particularly important in high-stress environments where misunderstandings can have severe consequences.

3.2.8 Information Management

27. A comprehensive record should be kept of all events, decisions and the rationale for key decisions and actions. One of the critical functions of Command Support is to manage information so that the plan to bring the situation under control can be articulated and communicated, based on the best available information.

28. At any emergency incident the collation of clear, concise, and accurate information in a timely manner is essential to facilitate the decision-making process. The quality of the information that is presented to decision makers is crucial to effective decision–making and is recognised as a key determinant of the outcome. In emergency situations the Incident Commander is likely to have to make critical decisions based

upon incomplete information; therefore, great efforts should be made to generate and make use of information that is timely, accurate and as clear as possible.

29. Given the importance of the information management function, the appointment of a Command Support Officer should be based on their experience and level of competency commensurate with the complexity and command level of the incident. There should be an information management system that facilitates the Command Support Officer and his/her staff in the effective discharge of this function.

30. Consideration should be given to utilising technological advancements to improve communications resilience and capture data from the incident ground. The ability to provide live incident updates using mobile data terminals and incident management software, can aid mobilising brigades, the RSFO and the RCC. Information captured can also assist in the delivery of post incident debriefs and investigations.

31. For larger, more complex incident, such as those managed by Coordination Groups detailed within the *Framework for Emergency Management*, the Information Management System (IMS) may assist in the identification of key priorities and the delivery of corresponding actions. Such a system may be structured in the format below and presented on a simple whiteboard or paper sheets on a display wall within the incident command unit:

Recognised Current Situation	Key Issues
The present situation, described clearly and succinctly as a basis for co-ordination and decision-making. To include key events that inform understanding and interpretation of the recognise current situation	The important issues arising and against which the overall response needs to be constantly assessed.
Strategic Aim/Priorities	**Actions**
The overall aim (strategic direction) and the priority items that must be actioned in order to meet the aim.	Actions that have been decided in order to bring the situation under control.

Table 9. Information Management System - "Framework for Emergency Management"

3.3 COMMAND ROLES IN THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

3.3.1 The Incident Commander



1. The Incident Commander will normally be the most senior officer present at the incident according to each fire authority's policy determining ranks and responsibilities at incidents. The fire service is a hierarchical service and on occasion a more senior officer may be in attendance at an incident. Under the Fire Services Act, 1981 & 2023, the most senior officer present will have overall responsibility for the incident but need not assume the role of Incident Commander. The more senior officer may opt to assist the Incident Commander, reviewing the Incident Management Plan, assessing resource management, and giving guidance as appropriate. The officer will work directly with the Incident Commander and will not interrupt the chain of command. Alternatively, the more senior officer may choose to assume the role of Incident Commander should it be considered appropriate, and exercise this in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 2.5.

2. The Incident Commander at an operational incident has the authority to exercise command and control over all fire service resources on the incident ground and will focus on situation appraisal, creating the incident management plan, command and control, deployment of resources, the coordination of sectors, and the health and safety of crews.

3. In order to manage the span of control effectively at larger incidents it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to delegate responsibility and devolve authority for some aspects, including operations and Command Support.

4. The Incident Commander will nominate an individual to the role of **Command Support Officer,** as resources and tactics allow, and identify an **Incident Command Point.**

5. The Incident Commander, following a dynamic risk assessment of the incident, may allocate areas of responsibility to officers as necessary e.g. **Sector Commanders** and **Safety Officers.**

6. When taking command on the incident ground, it is necessary to bear in mind the key elements of the role:

   (a) Assume command, don the IC tabard and inform RCC / incident ground personnel by declaring the name of the Incident Commander.
   (b) Confirm the overall incident management plan and the tactics and operations to

achieve this.

(c) Confirm Tactical Mode and safety of all personnel.

(d) Ensure resources are adequate / appropriate for the plan.

(e) Ensure effective and adequate communications are established.

(f) Review operations as they progress.

(g) Ensure welfare of personnel.

(h) Note any learning opportunities for the debrief.

3.3.2 Operations Commanders



7. At large incidents that may demand it, the Incident Commander may appoint an **Operations Commander(s)** with responsibility to manage the tactical and operational response. The role of Operations Commander exists as a means of maintaining workable spans of control when the incident develops in size and complexity.

8. Where, for example, the incident has four operational sectors, and some support sectors (e.g. Foam, Water, Decontamination, etc.) and there are also demands for the Incident Commanders time from specialist support, other agencies and the media etc., the Incident Commanders span of control is likely to be at its upper limit. In this example, the operational sectors should be condensed to one line of communication by using an Operations Commander.

9. The Operations Commander's function is to coordinate the operational sectors and to implement the Incident Commanders strategic plan. The Operations Commander should not become involved in support activities; these should be dealt with by **Command Support.** The Operations Commanders role should be focussed on supervising and supporting the Sector Commanders, co-ordinating their individual operations and requirements and monitoring safety and risk assessment.

3.3.3 Sector Commanders



10. To achieve appropriate delegation, the Incident Commander may choose to sectorise the incident; sectors are created when the Incident Commander wishes to devolve responsibility for particular operations. All crews within a sector should report directly to the **Sector Commander.**

11. When an Incident Commander has identified suitable areas of operations as sectors, a **Sector Commander** should be appointed for each sector. The

Sector Commander will report to the Incident Commander, or where appropriate, to the **Operations Commander.**

12. The Sector Commander is responsible for firefighting and rescue operations within their sector, subject to the objectives and tactical priorities set by the Incident Commander, and for the continued safety and welfare of all personnel under their supervision. Sector Commanders must remain within their sector and provide direct and visible leadership and remain directly accessible and in contact with the Crew Commanders and firefighters for whom they are responsible.

13. Sector Commanders are also responsible for exposures within their sectors, i.e. the exposed parts of adjoining premises, etc, which the fire in their area threatens.

14. An officer assigned as a Sector Commander will assume the sector name as the incident ground call sign, e.g. **"Sector Two Commander".** This identification of the sector names and their use as call signs can be extended to functional support sectors, i.e. **"Water", "Decontamination", "Marshalling"** etc,.

15. The Sector Commander must have an awareness at all times of the personnel under his/her direct control, tasks assigned and duties undertaken. They are responsible for the declaration of the tactical mode within their sector and must communicate this to the Incident Commander.

3.3.4 Crew Commanders

16. At large or complex incidents, or where additional supervision has been deemed appropriate, Crew Commanders can be tasked with supervising specific tasks to meet operational objectives within a Sector using one or more firefighters. The Crew Commander operates under the supervision of a Sector Commander. They remain responsible for the safety of the firefighter(s) operating under their direction and ensure that control measures, appropriate to the task being performed, are implemented.

3.3.5 Command Support Officer

17. Command Support should be introduced at all incidents to assist the Incident Commander in the management of the incident. At small to medium size incidents, the Incident Commander should designate a suitably experienced person from the resources available to undertake the role of **Command Support Officer**. The Command Support function will operate from the designated **Incident Command Point**.



18. Where the situation warrants, consideration should be given to identifying an Incident Command point that is not involved directly in operations. An appliance not involved in pumping, or an officer's car, may be suitable for this purpose.

19. Command Support should initially provide, and maintain, radio communications the Regional Communications Centre and the Incident Commander and may also be allocated the following responsibilities:

    (a) To record sector identifications, personnel assigned and officers duties as the assignments are made.
    (b) To act as first contact point for all attending appliances and officers, and to maintain a physical record of resources in attendance at the incident.
    (c) To operate the Tetra communications link to the RCC, where offsite radio communications will be logged.
    (d) To assist the Incident Commander in liaison with other agencies.
    (e) To collect/return officers/appliances personal tallies or nominal role boards.
    (f) To direct attending appliances to an operational location or marshalling area as instructed by the Incident Commander, and to record the status of all resources.
    (g) To maintain a record of the outcome of the dynamic risk assessment, and subsequent reviews, through the declaration and recording of the Tactical Mode to RCC, as well as any operational decisions or actions taken as a result of it.
    (h) To collect and document all relevant data at the conclusion of the incident in order to assist in an incident debrief or to support the preparation of an incident report, if so required by the Incident Commander.

20. The use of Incident Command Boards, or a digitally based equivalent, assist in fulfilling the duties associated with the Command Support function. To assist those undertaking Command Support duties, the provision of a form of **Command Support Pack**, containing pre-prepared aids and recording sheets is set out in Appendix 6.

21. At a larger or more complex incidents (Command Level 3), a Command Support Unit will normally be mobilised by brigades which will provide support to the Command Support Officer. This Command Support Unit may be a local or regional resource and will mobilise with personnel trained in both its use and the support roles required of them when attending the incident.

22. The Command Support function at an incident should be sufficiently flexible to allow it to vary with the size and complexity of the incident. Just as Incident Commanders can be challenged by increases in information flow, the role of Command Support Officer

can equally be challenging. Ensuring additional personnel are allocated to form a Command Support Team will ensure effective support is in place to underpin the safe resolution of the incident.

23. Additional duties of Command Support at a large escalating incident may well include:

(a) External functions including liaising with other principle emergency as necessary, logging the attendance of visitors under the control of the fire service and dealing with the media, etc.

(b) Briefing designated Command or Functional personnel as directed by the Incident Commander.

(c) Liaison with crews of special appliances to ensure optimum support to operational sectors.

(d) Arranging additional or specialist equipment and crews to Sector Commanders as directed by the Incident Commander.

(e) Arranging the relief of appliances and personnel.

24. Where very large, complex or protracted incidents are being managed offsite Command Support may be necessary. This will generally be provided from the Brigade's own Headquarters.

3.4 Identification of Command and Functional Roles

1. The Command Team comprises officers holding a variety of roles it is therefore essential that each can be easily identified. The following designations should be used within the Incident Command System to identify those holding key roles:

Officer Role	Front	Rear	Description
Incident Commander			Yellow Surcoat with White Shoulders
Operations Commander			Red Surcoat

Officer Role	Front	Rear	Description
Sector Commander			Yellow Surcoat with Red Shoulders
Command Support			Yellow Surcoat with Chequered Red and White Shoulders
Safety Officer			Yellow Surcoat with Blue Shoulders
Entry Control Officer (B.A.)			Chequered Yellow and Black Surcoat

Table 10. Incident Command System Surcoats

3.5 SECTORISATION

1. Sectorisation is central to the application of the principle of limiting spans of control and provides everyone on the incident ground with a clear line of reporting. It should therefore be introduced, when the demands of an incident require that responsibility and authority is delegated, in order to ensure appropriate command and safety monitoring of all activities. Sectors may be created for operations and /or functions on the incident ground. Where the Incident Commander has the ability to monitor tasks effectively by moving around the incident ground, it is unlikely that sectorisation is required. However, if the IC is unable to effectively manage operations and supervise safety at more than one location, then sectorisation is required.

2. Even if it is possible for the Incident Commander to oversee all operations, the need to sectorise will arise if there is so much going on that they risk being distracted and unable to give sufficient attention to each task. This would indicate that the Incident Commanders span of control is too great, and the usual norm is that if it exceeds five

lines of direct communications at a working incident, sectorisation should be considered/introduced.

3. The creation of sectors will only be done on the instruction of the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will choose a sectorisation method appropriate to the demands of the incident. The principle is that sectorising is driven by the need to delegate responsibility and authority; this will ensure appropriate command and safety monitoring of all activities. Sectorisation should generally follow the preferred models detailed below. It is not necessary to sectorise, just to make the incident conform to the sectorisation model, the model is there only to make the role of the Incident Commander more manageable and effective.

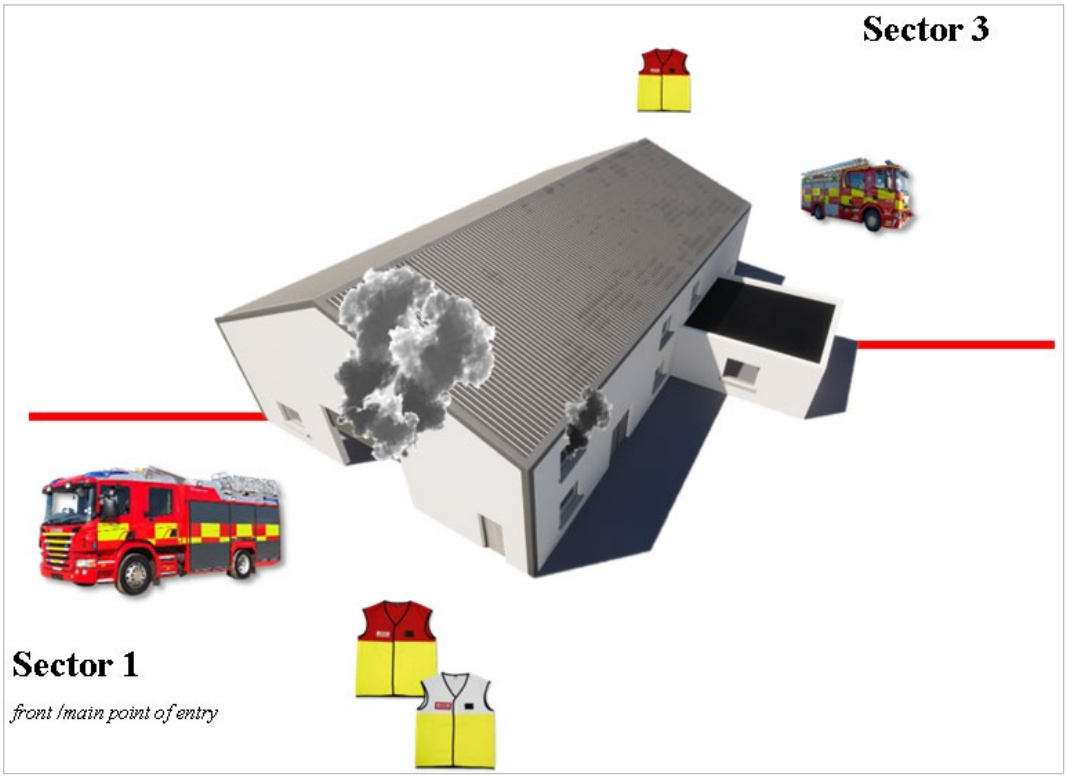


Diagram 4. Two Sectors (Front/Main Point of Entry)

4. The pattern of sectorisation should be both predictable and flexible; for example, at a standard four-sided building, the front (or the main point of entry for operational purposes) is Sector 1, the rear is Sector 3, and the sides, Sectors 2 & 4, in a clockwise pattern.

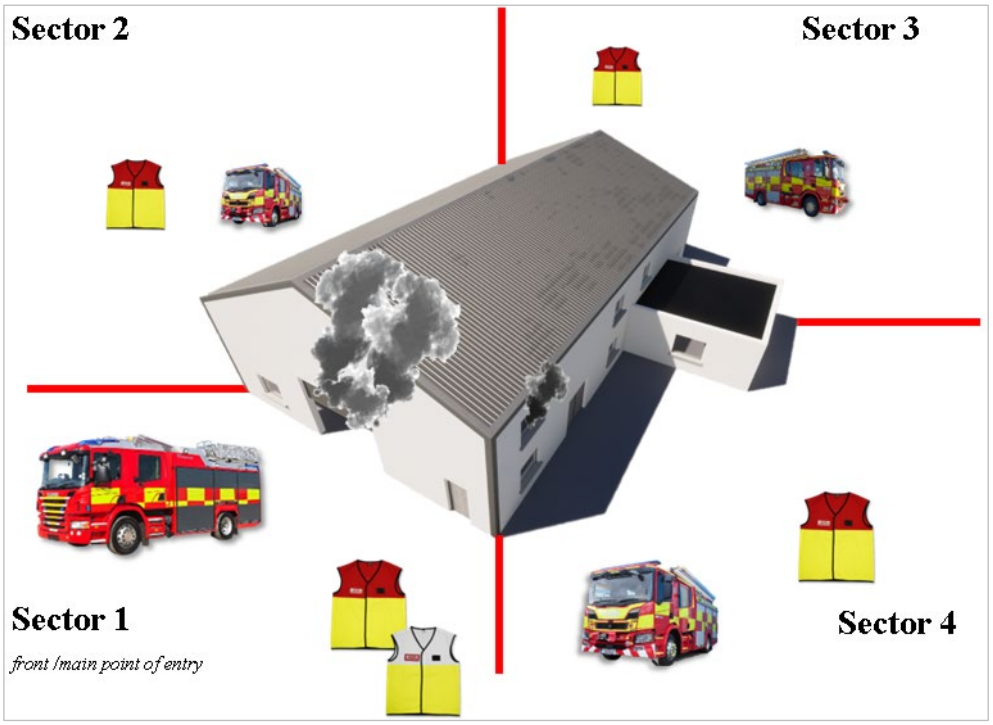


Diagram 5. Four Sectors (named clockwise from Sector 1)

5. Any additional sectors will be numbered in the order that they are set up, regardless of where they are added.

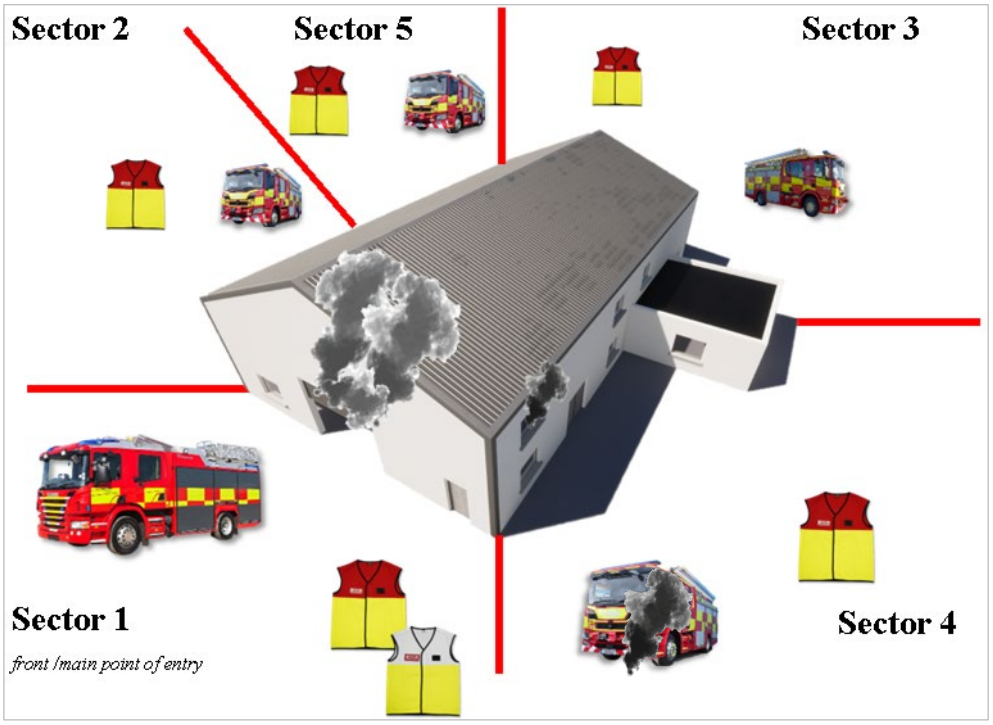


Diagram 6. Five Sectors (Sector 5 introduced after the establishment of four Sectors)

6. It is important to note that where a Sector Commander has been appointed for the rear of a building, it does not necessarily mean that a Sector Commander will be detailed for the front of a building. If the Incident Commander is satisfied that a satisfactory level of command can be retained by him/herself, it is quite appropriate for him/her in such circumstances to retain command of the majority of the incident.

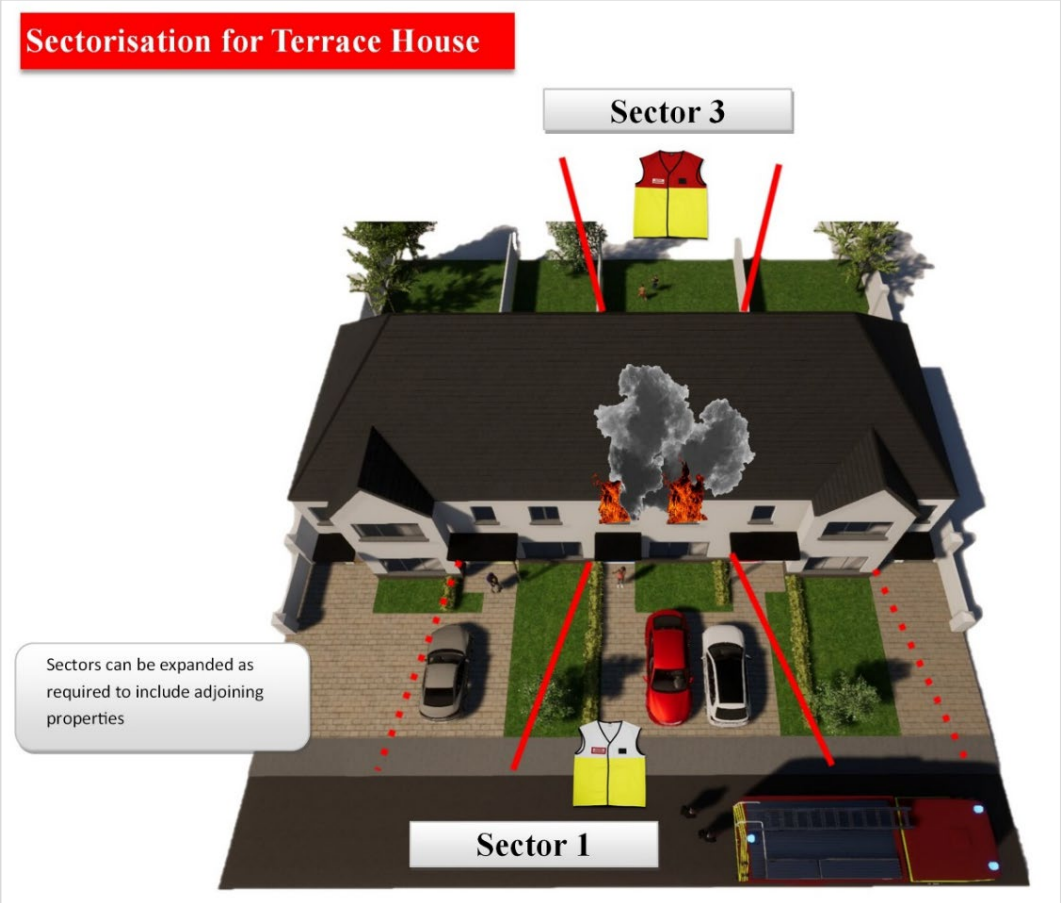


Diagram 7. Sectorisation of a T (IC retains control of Sector 1)

7. Similarly, at most R.T.C. situations there will probably be no need to sectorise, but if crews are required to work at dispersed locations e.g. to a car that has rolled 30 metres down an embankment, while the main scene of operations is on the roadway, it may be necessary to assign that car as a separate sector.

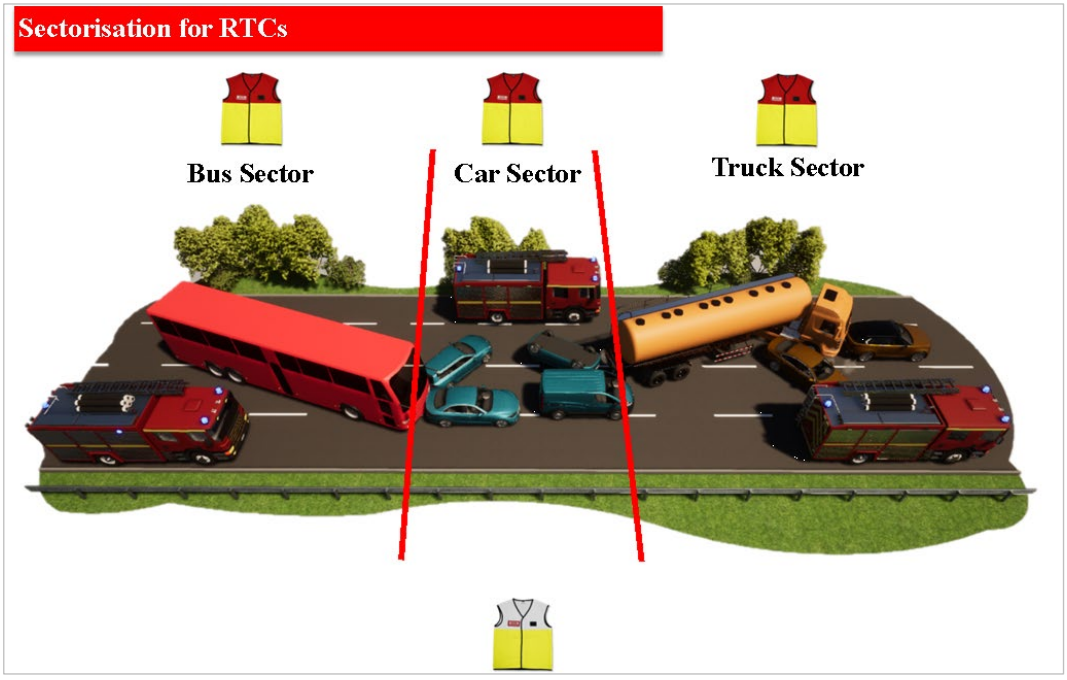


Diagram 8. Sectorisation of an RTC (Note: the IC can manage a sector or delegate responsibility to a Sector Commander)

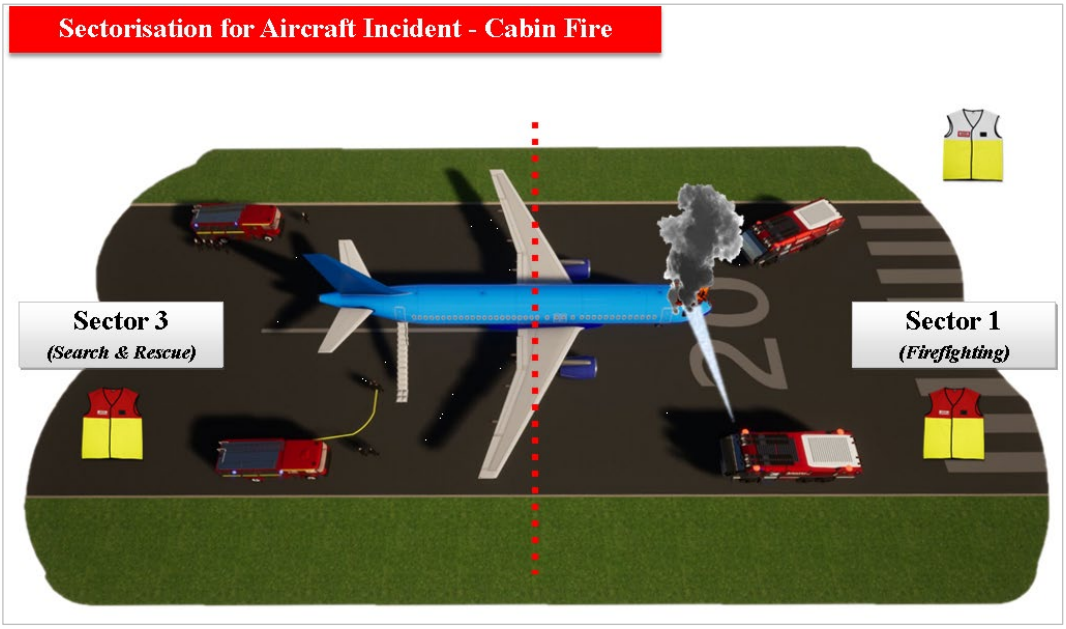


Diagram 9. Sectorisation of an Aircraft Incident

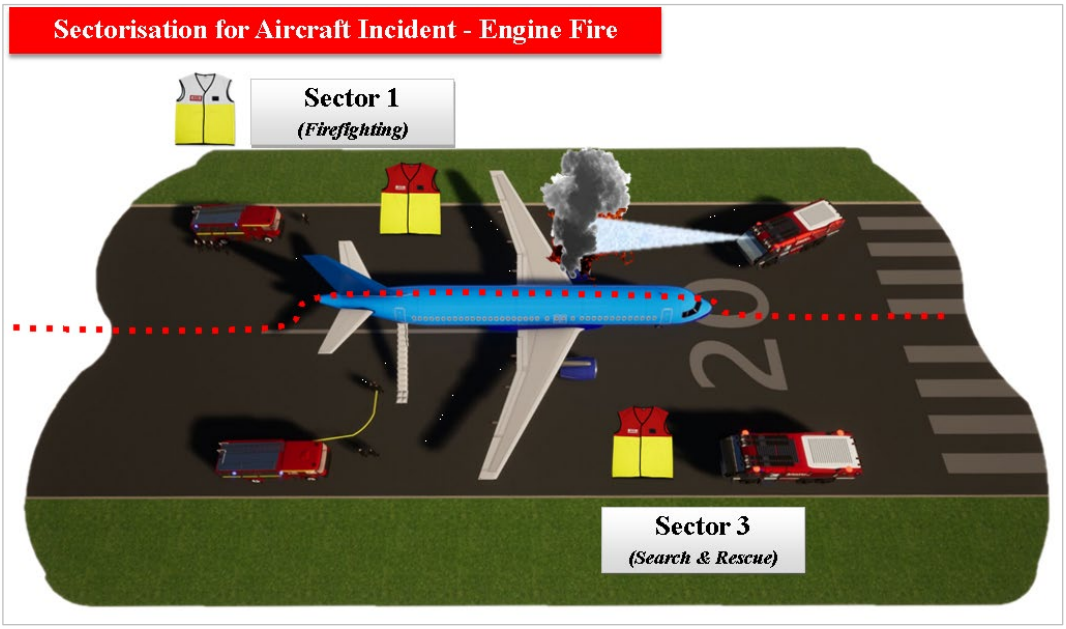


Diagram 10. Sectorisation of an Aircraft Incident

8. Another important use of sectorisation is on the “divided incident ground”, where due to the **geographical spread** (forests, gorse etc.) or separation due to spillage, toxic clouds or building collapse, the Incident Commander does not have direct contact with the areas of operation in progress.

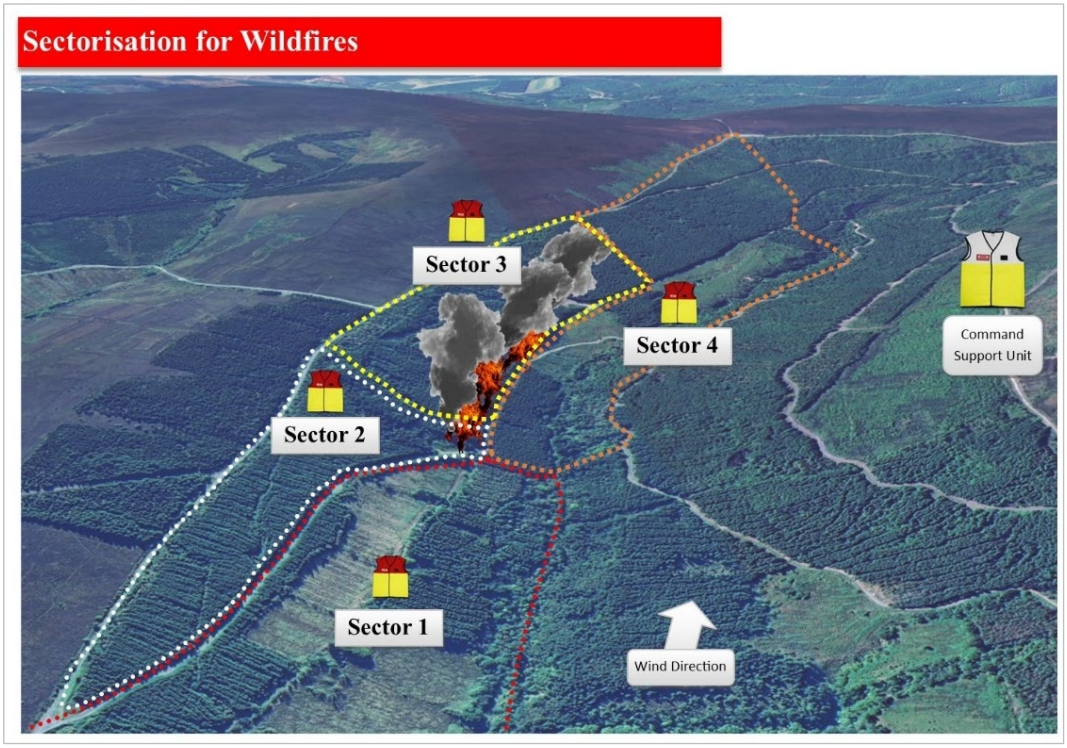


Diagram 11. Sectorisation of a Geographical Area

Vertical Sectorisation

9. Because the circumstances of incidents involving high rise buildings, basements, ships etc. are different, with areas of operations above and below each other, further guidance on the application of the principles of sectorisation at such incidents is necessary. The rationale for this suggested model is based on maintaining effective spans of control when Sector Commanders cannot follow the normal practice of being physically present in the sector, due to smoke etc., as well as cases where internal and external sectorisation is required at the same time.

10. High Rise buildings may be sectorised on a floor basis, i.e. **2nd Floor Sector,** or on the nature of the operation being undertaken, e.g. **Fire Sector, Search Sector, Lobby Sector.**



Diagram 12. Sectorisation of a high-rise structure by floors

11. As with the organisation of any incident, if it is not necessary to sectorise, then, to reduce the possibility of barriers to information flow between crews and the Incident Commander, it is best not to do so. Using the example of an incident in a multi-storey building, the external sectorisation, if necessary (e.g. aerial appliances being used for access or rescue) would follow the normal model, identifying the sectors by number. It may, on some occasions, only be necessary to operate a single "Fire Sector" internally, with external and support sectors operating outside in the conventional way. However, there will occasionally be incidents with large numbers of personnel directly firefighting, involved in search, ventilation, salvage operations etc., where more than one internal sector is necessary. The zones of activity within the structure (e.g., internal firefighting operations) could then be identified as in the following examples and Diagram 13 below:

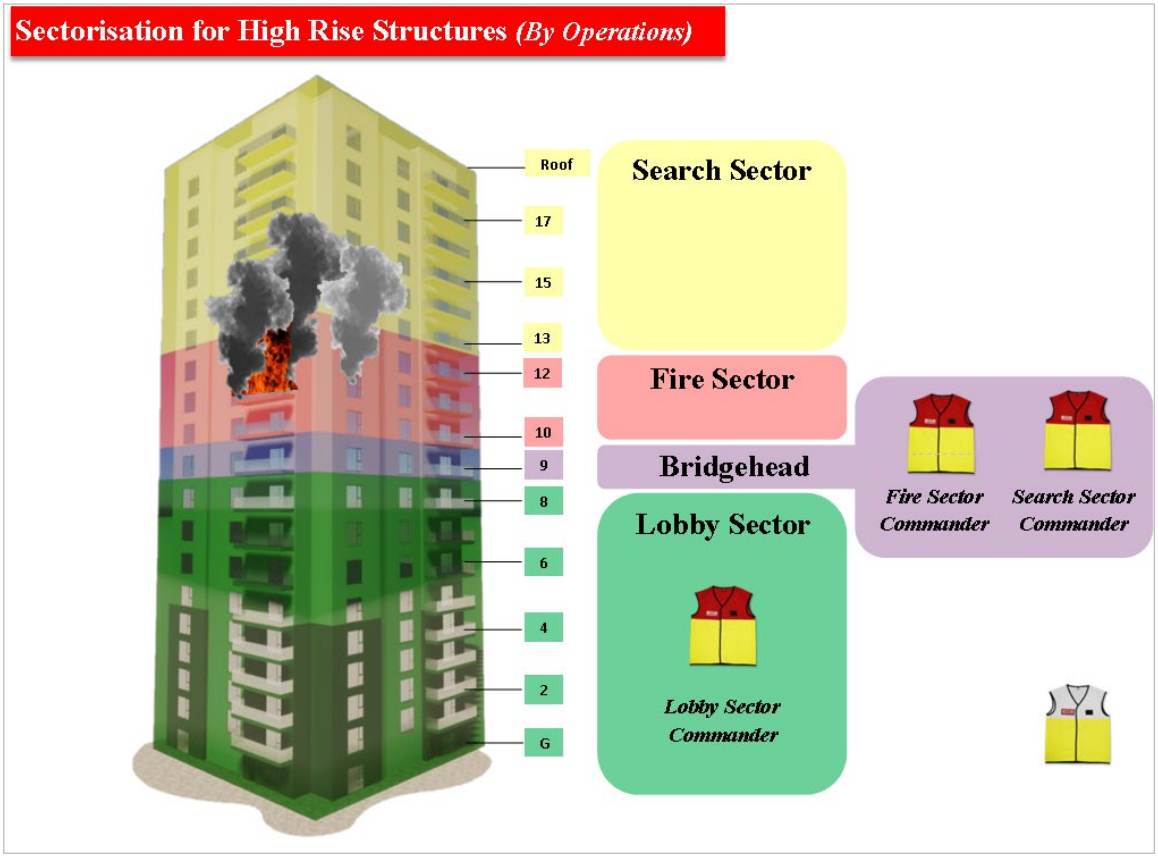


Diagram 13. Sectorisation of a high-rise structure reflecting the operations being carried out

(a) Fire Sector

This would be the main area of firefighting operations, consisting of the floor/s directly involved in fire, plus one level above and one level below. If crews involved in this exceeded acceptable spans of control, consideration should be given to activating a Search Sector.

(b) Search Sector

This would be the area of operations, in a high rise, above the "fire sector" where search and rescue, venting, and other operations are taking place. In a basement scenario the Search Sector would extend from fresh air all the way to the lowest level. If the distance from the ground floor lobby to the bridgehead is more than two or three floors and spans of control require it, consideration should be given to activating a Lobby Sector.

(c) Lobby Sector

This would cover the area of operations from the ground floor lobby to the bridgehead, which is normally two floors below the fire floor. The Lobby Sector Commander will act as the co-ordinator of all logistical needs of the Fire and Search Sector Commanders, who will on most occasions, need to be located at the bridgehead directing operations via radio and liaising with the BAECO's. The

Lobby Sector Commanders would also co-ordinate all operations beneath the bridgehead level, including salvage and ventilation, liaising with fellow Sector Commanders in the usual way.

12. Other approaches may need to be taken. If, for example, in a large complex building it is necessary to introduce more than one sector on a floor, it may mean having two sectors with bridgeheads on different stairwells and the operations being co-ordinated by an Operations Commander from the lobby area.

13. All other aspects of the structure, e.g., lines of responsibility, lines of communication and reporting for the Sector Commander would function in the normal manner. All operational sectors report to the Incident Commander or to the Operations Commander if one is in place. All support sectors report through the Command Support function to the Incident Commander. This is important in preserving the spans of control.

Functional Sectors

14. Specific tasks or **functional sectors** may be identified by the support role they provide, e.g. **BA Coordination, Foam, Water Supplies,** etc. reporting directly to the Command Support Officer.

3.6 EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SPAN OF CONTROL:

Key for the following diagrams:

Incident Commander



Command Support



Operations Commander



Safety Officer



Sector Commander



BA Entry Control Officer



Crew Members



Operational Sector Boundary



Functional Support Sectors



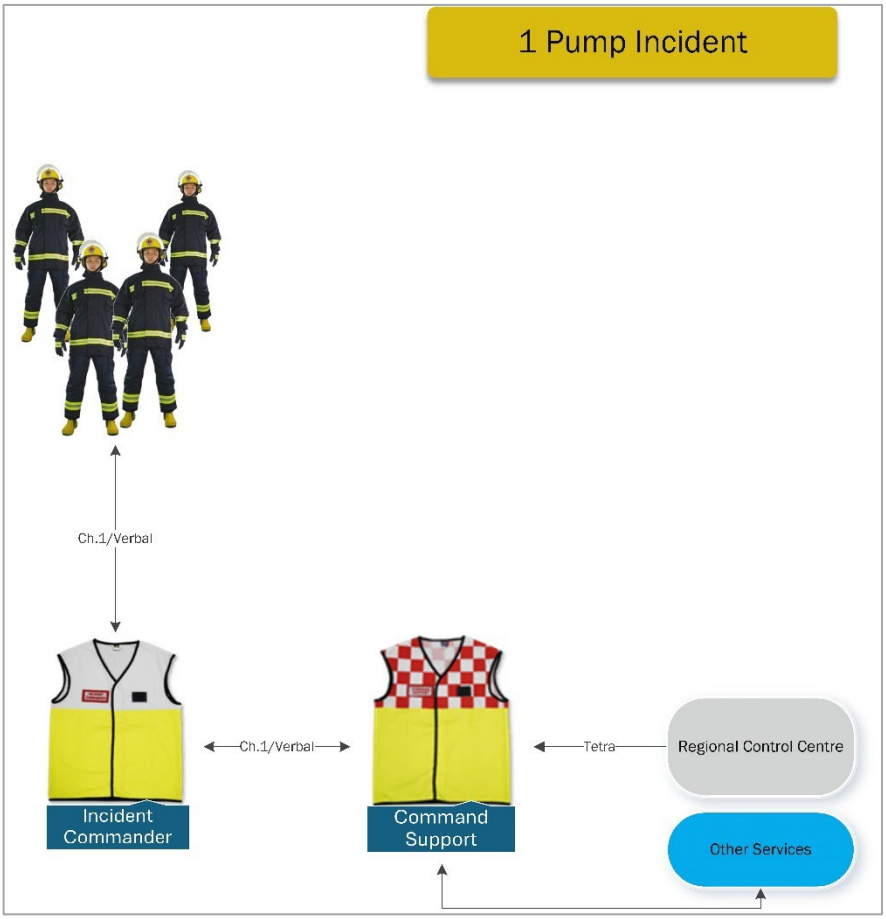


Diagram 14. Communications and Span of Control – 1 Pump Incident

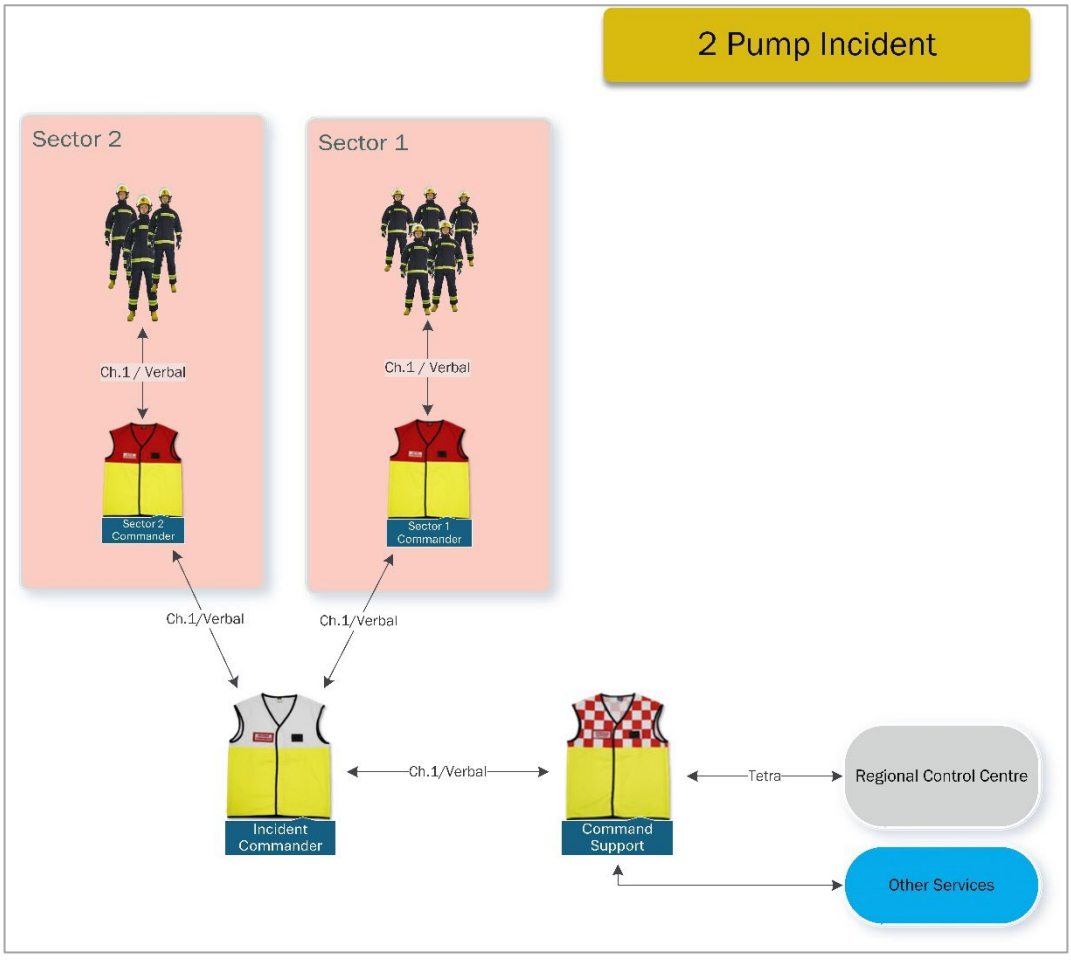


Diagram 15. Communications and Span of Control – 2 Pump Incident

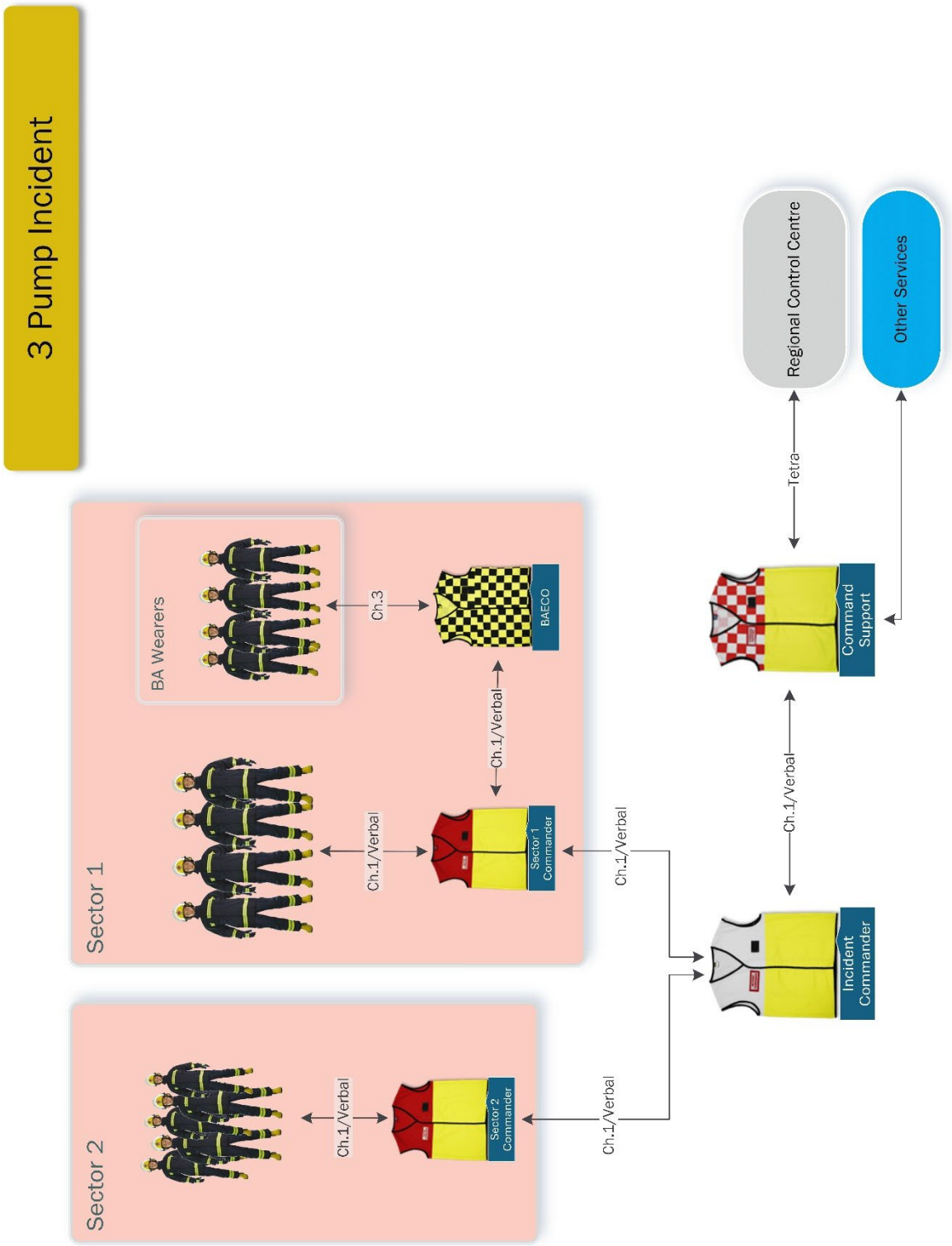


Diagram 16. Communications and Span of Control – 3 Pump Incident

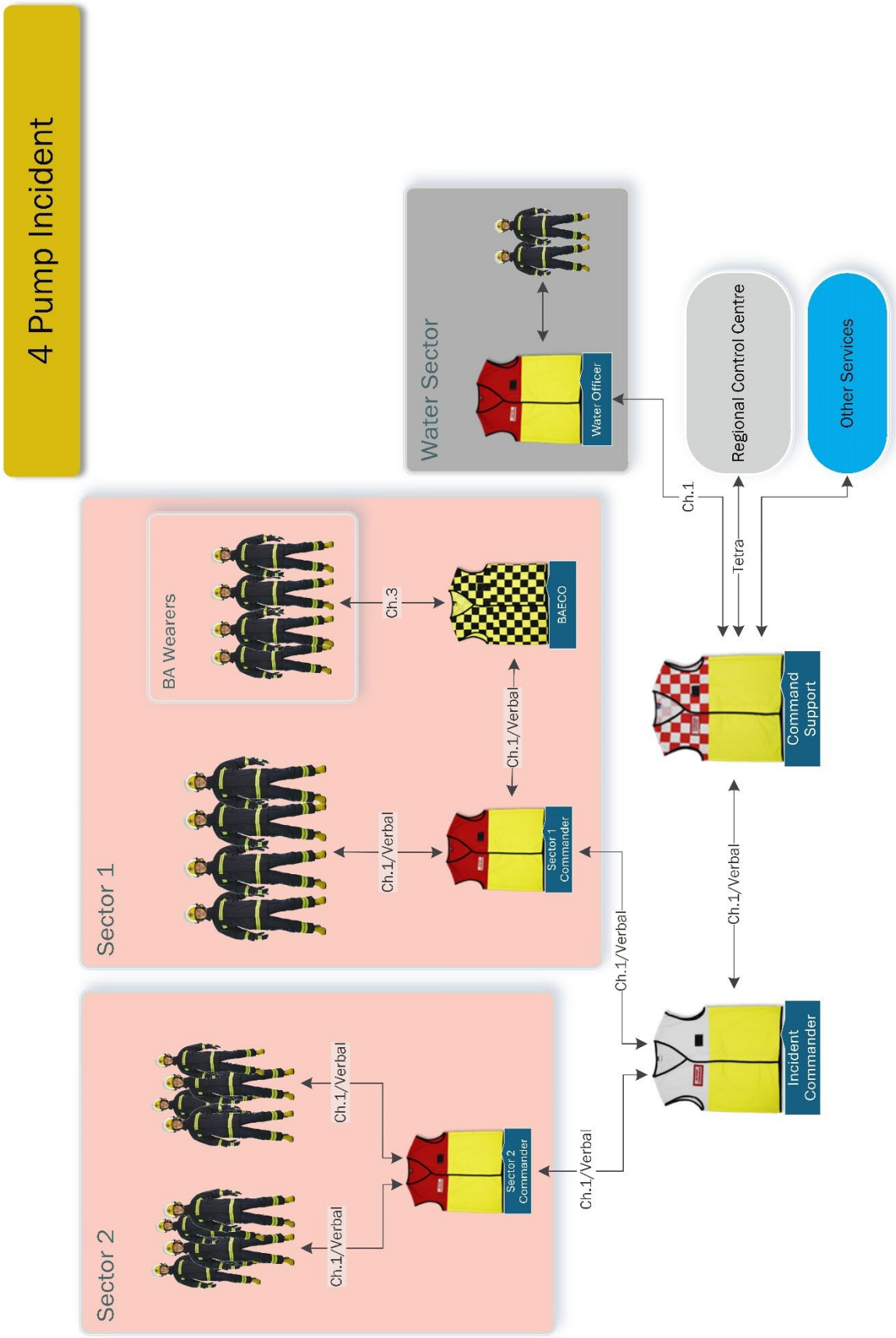


Diagram 17. Communications and Span of Control – 4 Pump Incident

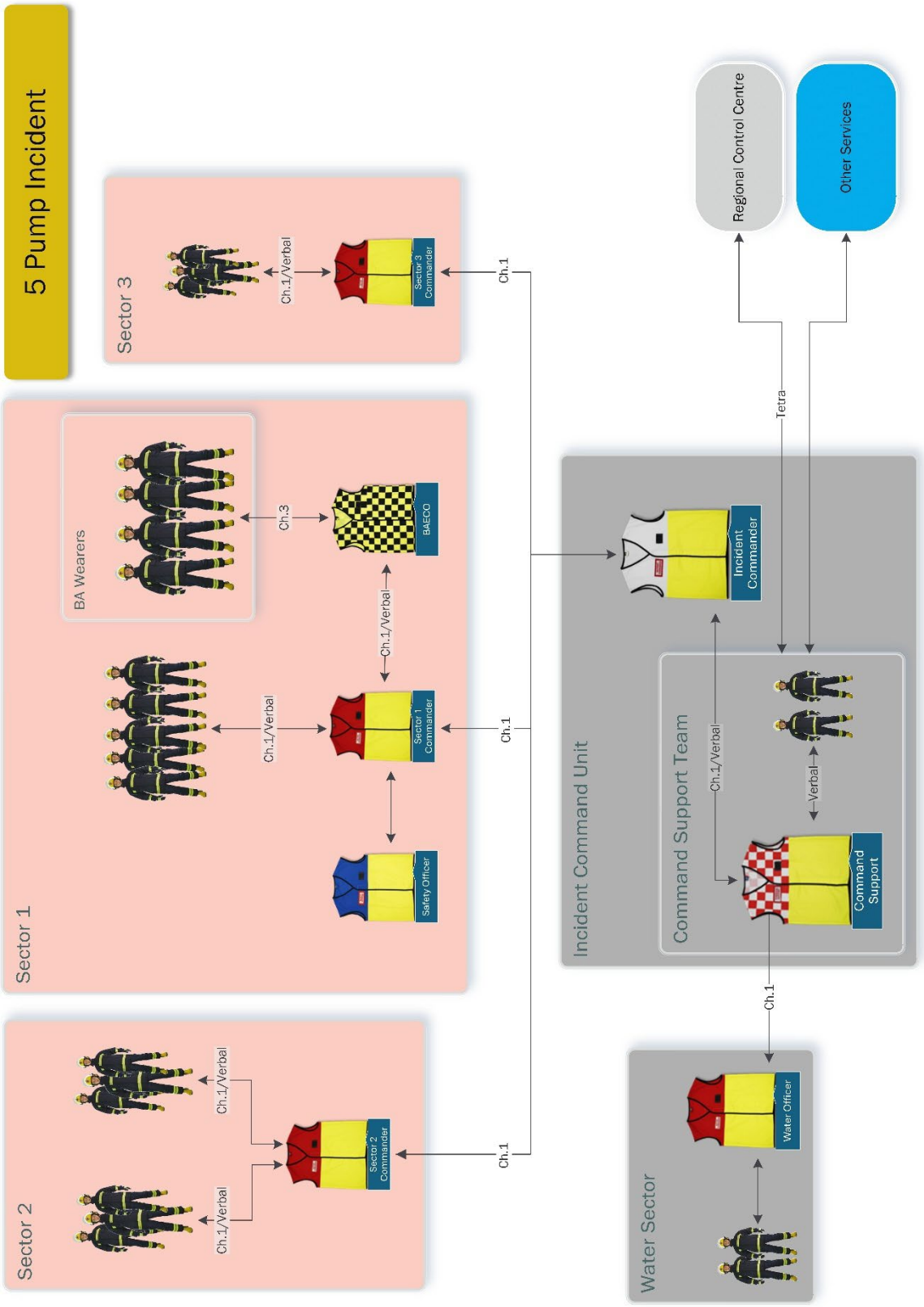


Diagram 18. Communications and Span of Control – 5 Pump Incident

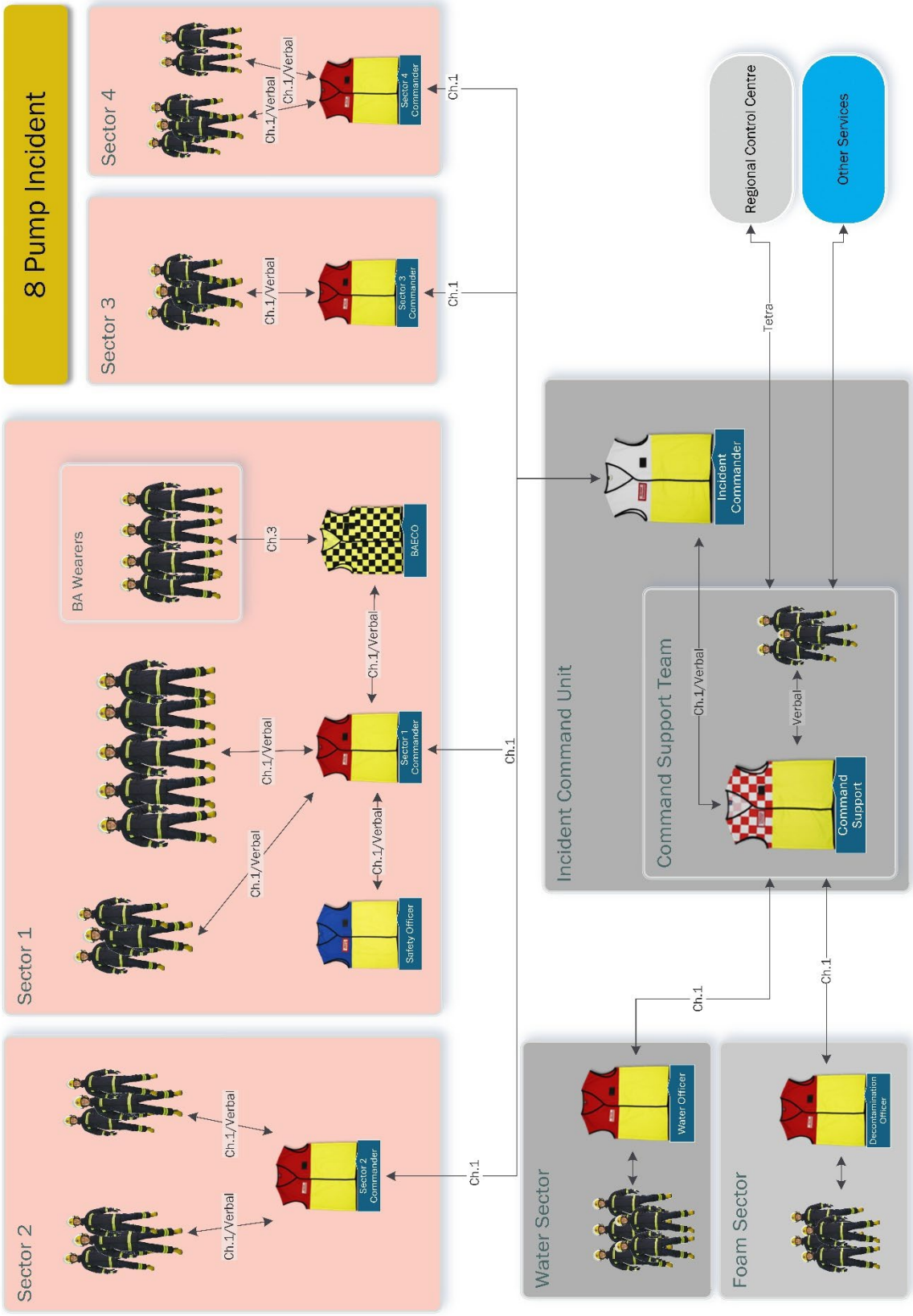


Diagram 19. Communications and Span of Control – 8 Pump Incident

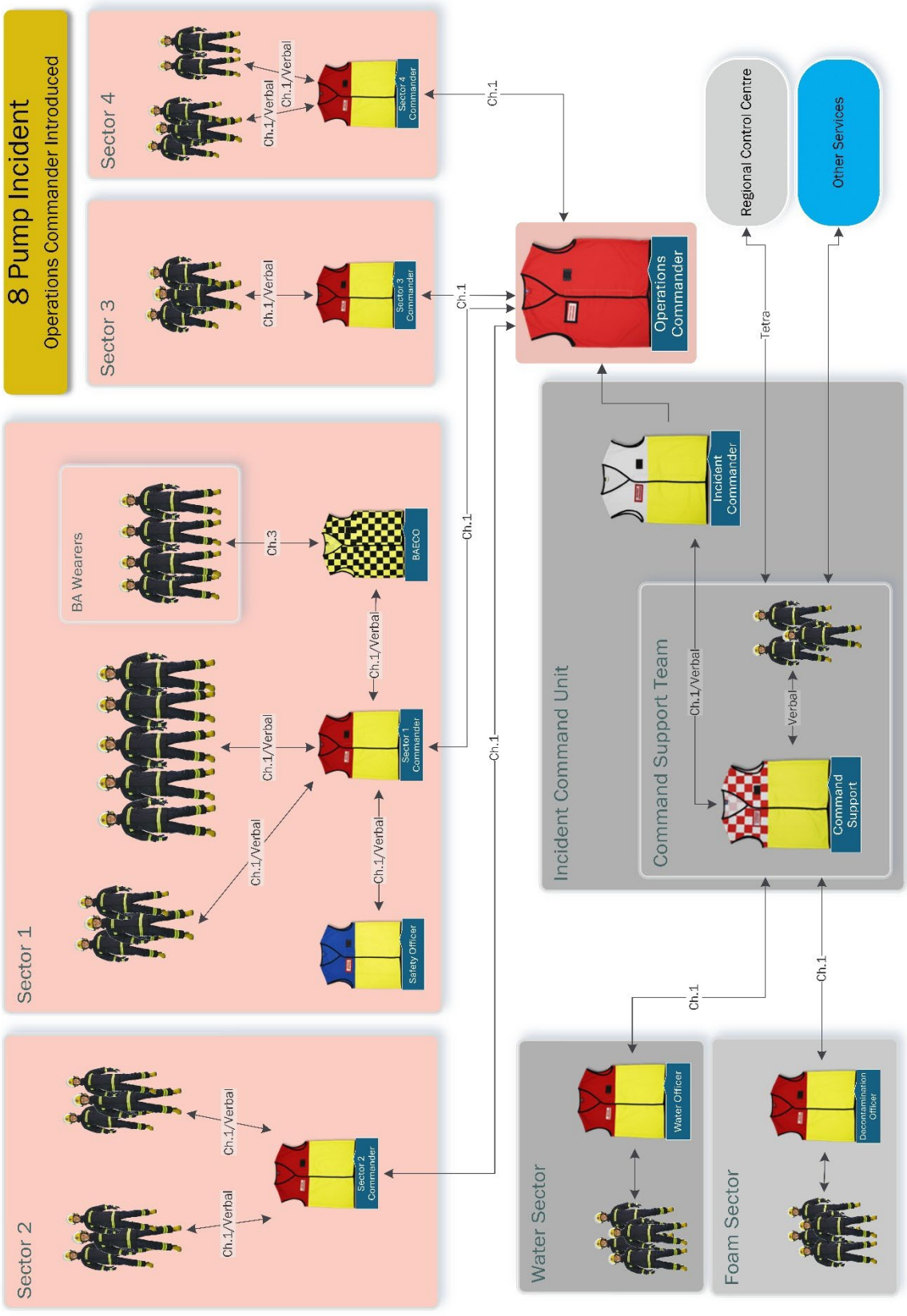


Diagram 20. Communications and Span of Control – 8 Pump Incident – Operations Commander

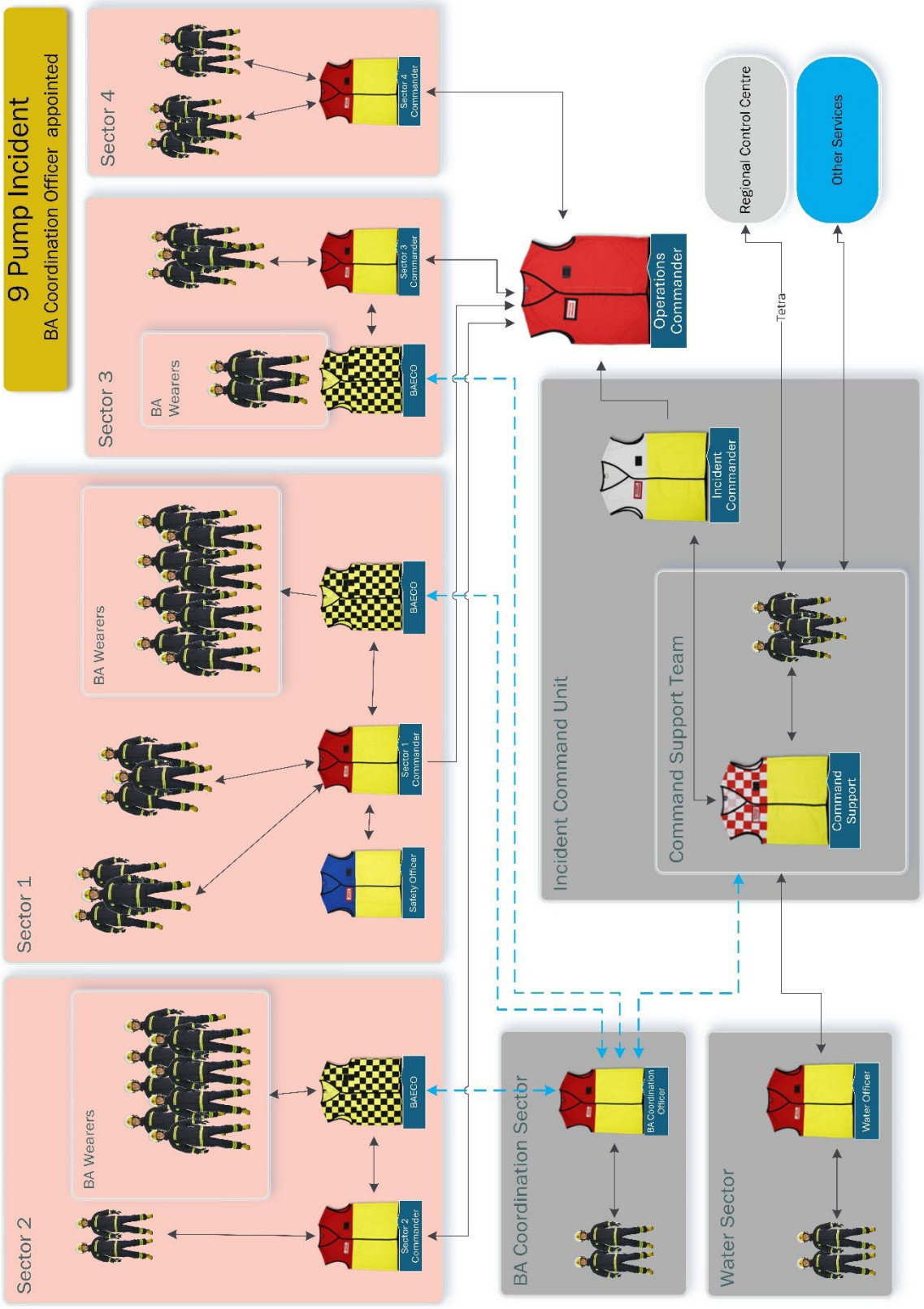


Diagram 21. Communications and Span of Control – 9 Pump Incident (Level 3) – BA Coordination Officer

Section 4. Decision Making

1. Decision-making is a critical component of incident command, directly influencing the success of emergency response operations. In the high-pressure and dynamic environments encountered by fire and rescue services, the ability to make timely, informed, and effective decisions can mean the difference between a well-managed incident and one that spirals out of control. Situational awareness is the foundation of effective decision-making.

4.1 Situational Awareness

1. Situational awareness is defined as a person's perception and understanding of the situation they are facing, including their ability to anticipate how the situation may evolve and the impact of their actions. For Incident Commanders, maintaining situational awareness means staying informed about the incident's dynamics, including hazards, tasks to be undertaken, resource availability, and the status of personnel. This awareness allows them to make informed decisions to effectively manage the incident and ensure the safety of personnel deployed.

2. Maintaining situational awareness can be considered a continuous process, especially in dynamic and rapidly changing environments like fire service operations. It involves a constant loop of observing, understanding, predicting, and then re-observing as new information becomes available. This continuous cycle ensures that decisions are made based on the most current and accurate understanding of the situation.

3. There are three stages of situational awareness, which can be categorised as:

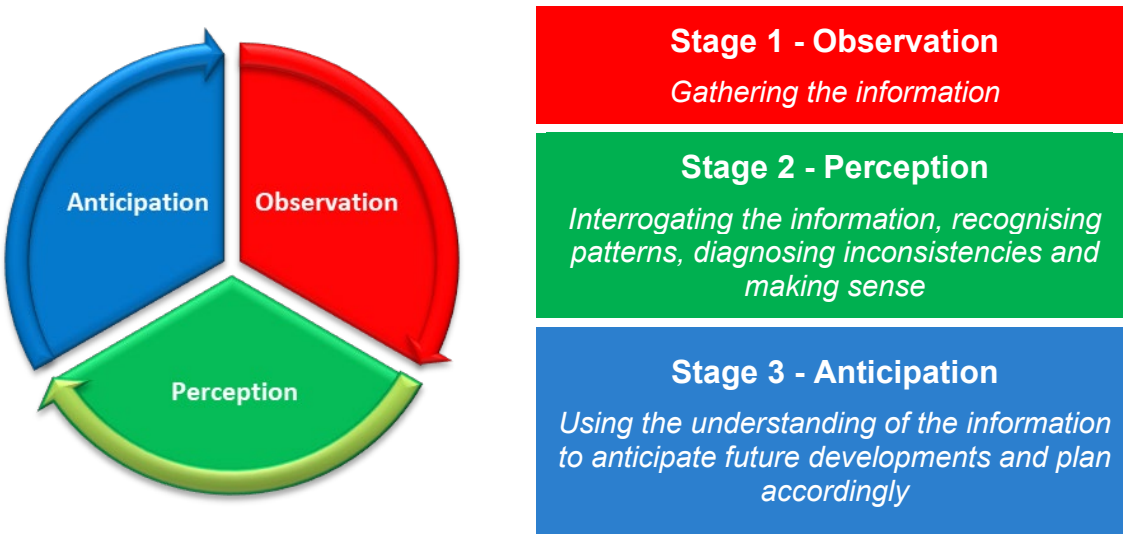


Diagram 22. Situational Awareness

4.1.1 Stage 1 - Observation

4. Observation, or information gathering, is the critical first stage in developing situational awareness during fire service operations. This stage involves the systematic collection and assimilation of data from multiple sources to build an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the incident. Effective observation forms the bedrock of all subsequent decision-making processes.

5. The primary purpose of information gathering is to enable commanders to construct a dynamic mental model of the incident. This model is crucial for making informed decisions, anticipating future developments, and ensuring the safety of both personnel and the public.

6. A mental model refers to the cognitive processes which help an Incident Commander perceive and interpret information from the observations of the environment around them. It consists of using past experiences, learned patterns, and expectations that shape what a person notices and prioritises. For example, an Incident Commander committing a BA team to enter a burning building with persons reported has a mental model of how the fire should behave, where hazards are likely to exist and what external signs indicate a worsening situation. This mental model allows them to perceive critical cues faster and more accurately than someone of lesser experience. A strong mental model improves efficiency and accuracy in recognising important information, while a weak or incorrect mental model can lead to missed or misinterpreted information.

7. To effectively and safely manage the incident, Incident Commanders must continuously gather, assess, and integrate information from various sources into the mental model in order to maintain an accurate understanding of the situation. Continuous observation and reassessment are critical to maintaining an accurate understanding of the situation as the incident progresses.

8. Information can be gathered from a number of sources:

(a) Direct Observation

(i) This includes visual and sensory inputs directly observed from the incident ground by the Incident Commander upon attendance, such as fire intensity, smoke colour and movement, structural damage, or the presence of other hazards e.g. chemicals, unstable structures.

(ii) A rapid, yet thorough, initial scene situation appraisal is essential to establishing a baseline understanding of the incident. Without such a baseline

it is difficult for the Incident Commander to predict how decisions made will affect the incident development.

(b) Communications

(i) Information from the Sector Commander and other personnel deployed on the incident ground is invaluable to the Incident Commander. These communication reports include updates on the progress of specific tasks, newly identified hazards, and changes in the environment within their sector.

(ii) Information obtained from other principal emergency services attending the incident utilising the 3Cs Interagency Approach is essential in establishing a shared situational awareness.

(iii) Local information, such as property owners, keyholders, CCTV or witnesses to the event prior to the attendance of the fire service.

(iv) Regional Communications Centres may obtain relevant information unavailable to the Incident Commander either before, during or after the fire service is in attendance at an incident. This information should be transmitted to the Incident Commander without delay if it is assessed to be instrumental in facilitating a successful operational outcome.

(c) Technological Aids

(i) Technology sources, such as thermal imaging cameras, drones and other monitoring equipment can provide critical insights that may not be immediately visible to the naked eye and may be invaluable to the development of the strategic plan to manage the incident.

(ii) **Geospatial Information Systems**, where available, can provide detailed maps, risks and information on water sources and other critical infrastructure.

(iii) **Mainstream & Social Media,** can provide some useful information during certain incident types. However, care must be taken with respect to the reliability of such information.

(d) Pre-Incident Planning and Intelligence

(i) **Pre-Incident Planning** involves the collection and presentation of information on premises which are considered high risk. Such information includes contact details, occupancies, known hazards & chemicals, premises construction details, hydrant location and nearest alternative water source, fixed firefighting systems, operational notes and salvage priorities. This data is collected and prepared in advance and is critical source of information to the Incident Commander.

(ii) **Historical Data:** Knowledge of previous incidents in the same location or

similar structures can offer predictive insights into how the current situation might evolve.

9. Challenges exist with the collection of information that can have a significant influence on the incident management. Incident Commanders should be cognisant of the following:

   (a) Assumptions based on incomplete information must be verified promptly to avoid persistent misperceptions.
   (b) Distractions can lead to missed information. The span of control should be effectively managed through delegation of operational and functional sectors.
   (c) Anchoring to decisions previously made without review or relying too heavily on one piece of information when making decisions.
   (d) Confirmation bias: where individuals search for, interpret and focus on information that confirms their perception. In this instance, critical information may be overlooked, discounted, or missed by the commander, as it does not fit with their current view of the situation.
   (e) Failing to carry out additional situation appraisals to gather information (ensuring feedback loop is utilised).
   (f) Failure to utilise local knowledge and other sources of information that may be readily available.
   (g) Miscommunication or poor communication channels can impede information flow.

4.1.2 Stage 2 - Perception

10. Perception is the second stage in developing situational awareness during fire service operations. After gathering information through observation (Stage 1), perception involves interrogating and interpreting that information to form an accurate understanding of the situation. This stage is critical as it bridges the gap between data collection during the observation stage and effective decision-making. By maintaining an accurate and flexible perception of the situation, Incident Commanders can ensure that their decisions are well informed and appropriate for the evolving incident.

11. Commanders rely on past experiences to quickly recognise patterns in the data they observe to interpret the current situation. While this pattern recognition can speed up the decision-making process, there is a risk of confirmation bias if new information is ignored.

12. Commanders must continuously compare their mental model of the situation with real-time information from the incident scene. As new information becomes available, the

perception stage requires commanders to reassess and update their mental models to ensure they remain aligned with the evolving situation. This reassessment ensures their perception remains accurate and up to date, allowing timely adjustments to strategies and tactics.

13. Overconfidence in one's perception can lead to stubbornness and a refusal to adapt to new information. Commanders should remain open to the possibility that their initial perception may be incomplete or inaccurate and be willing to adjust their mental model as necessary.

4.1.3 Stage 3 – Anticipation

14. The third and final stage in developing situational awareness involves using the understanding gained during the observation and perception stages to predict how the situation is likely to develop in the near future. This stage is crucial for proactive decision-making and ensuring that responses are not just reactive but also pre-emptive, thereby minimising risks and optimising outcomes. This stage relies on a combination of experience, continuous monitoring, scenario planning, and flexibility to ensure that the response remains effective and adaptive to the changing environment.

15. The primary goal of anticipation is for the Incident Commander to foresee potential changes or developments in the situation based on their current understanding. This could involve predicting how a fire might spread, how structural conditions might deteriorate, or how external factors like wind or weather could impact the incident.

16. Anticipation allows commanders to make decisions that not only address the current state of the incident but also prepare for likely future scenarios on how the incident might evolve. These scenarios help them consider different possible futures and prepare appropriate responses for each. Each scenario is evaluated in terms of its likelihood of occurring and the potential impact it would have. Commanders prioritise their planning around the most likely and most dangerous scenarios. This forward-thinking approach is key to being prepared for a number of potential possibilities which may occur and preventing or limiting escalation.

17. As part of anticipation, commanders continuously reassess risks in light of new information received and the evolving circumstances. This ongoing dynamic risk assessment helps in refining predictions and adjusting strategies.

18. The quality and timeliness of information greatly influence the accuracy of anticipation. Commanders must ensure that they have access to up-to-date and reliable information to make sound predictions and, must continuously monitor the incident and adjust their

predictions accordingly as the incident evolves. This dynamic process ensures that their actions remain relevant to the current state of the incident.

19. Effective anticipation relies on feedback loops where predictions are continuously validated against real-world developments. Any discrepancies should prompt a reassessment and adjustment of strategies deployed. Where anticipations fail to materialise, Incident Commanders must re-evaluate the information available to them and update their actions accordingly.

4.1.4 Maintaining Situation Awareness

20. Effective situational awareness ensures that the interpretation of the information presented to the Incident Commander reflects the actual situation. This is critical in predicting the likely effects of activities and supporting the decision-making process. Incident Commanders should be aware of the factors that can adversely affect situational awareness and put in place the means to monitor the operational environment to detect changes and maintain an accurate understanding of the situation. Aids to maintaining situation awareness include:

(a) Clear Information Gathering

(i) Commanders must gather information from various sources, including direct observations, reports from team members, and make use of available technological tools.

(ii) Recognising factors that can lead to incomplete information, such as distractions, tunnel vision, or poor communication, is essential for accurate situational awareness.

(b) Understanding and Processing Information

(i) Commanders use experience, context, and previous knowledge (mental models) to interpret current information. It's crucial to confirm assumptions early to avoid misperceptions.

(ii) Combining new information with existing knowledge helps build a coherent picture of the situation.

(c) Anticipation of Future Developments

(i) Commanders must use their understanding to try and anticipate what might happen next, including potential changes in the situation and the impact of actions taken.

(d) Clear Communication

(i) Accurate, timely, and clear briefings ensure that all team members share the

same situational awareness, which is critical for coordinated action.

(ii) Effective two-way communication helps in updating situational awareness and ensuring all team members are aligned. Two-way communication ensures that that the message is clearly delivered by the message sender and subsequently confirmed by the recipient of the message thereby eliminating doubt and misunderstanding. *(Refer to Section 3.2.5 - Incident Ground Communication)*

(e) Appropriate Span of Control

(i) Delegating responsibilities and maintaining a manageable span of control prevents information overload and helps in maintaining an overall view of the incident.

(ii) Minimising distractions during critical tasks helps maintain focus and reduces the likelihood of becoming overloaded with information.

(f) Regular Review and Adjustment

(i) Commanders should regularly review and update their mental model of the situation based on new information to maintain accurate situational awareness.

(ii) Implementing decision controls can help avoid decision traps, such as confirmation bias or decision inertia.

(g) Managing Stress and Fatigue

(i) Stress can significantly narrow attention and reduce the ability to process information, leading to poor situational awareness. Commanders need to be aware of stress levels in themselves and their teams and delegate responsibilities to minimise stress.

(ii) Fatigue similarly reduces cognitive capacity, making it essential to manage workload and ensure rest periods where possible.

(h) Positioning

(i) The physical location of the Incident/Sector Commander should allow for optimal visibility, communication and access to information, minimising blind spots in situational awareness.

(ii) Incident Commanders, Operation Commanders and Sector Commanders must ensure that they are easily identifiable on the incident ground in their designated area of operations to all personnel and other responding emergency services.

(iii) The use of the NICS surcoats ensures maximum visibility of those undertaking command rolls within the Fire Service and aids other PESs in identifying key

personnel to initiate the 3Cs Interagency Approach.

(i) Leadership and Shared Situational Awareness

(i) Commanders should demonstrate leadership that instils confidence, encourages communication, and fosters a shared situational awareness across the team.

(ii) Ensuring that all team members have a common understanding of the situation, their roles, and the tactical plan is crucial for effective coordination and decision-making.

(iii) The Incident Commander should ensure that the 3Cs Interagency Approach is undertaken to facilitate a shared situational awareness between all PESs at the incident.

4.2 EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

1. Effective decision-making is a critical skill for Incident Commanders, as it directly influences the outcome of emergency situations. It involves the ability to assess rapidly evolving situations, weigh risks and benefits, and choose the most appropriate course of action under pressure.

2. Effective decision-making is a complex and dynamic process that requires a combination of situational awareness, risk management, analytical and intuitive thinking, clear communication, and adaptability. By integrating these elements, Incident Commanders can make informed, timely, and effective decisions that enhance the safety and success of emergency operations. Continuous learning and adherence to the Decision Control Process further strengthen a commander's ability to navigate the complexities of emergency response.

The following are key components of effective decision-making:

4.2.1 Analytical and Intuitive Decision-Making

3. Effective decision-making often requires a balance between analytical and intuitive approaches.

(a) Analytical Decision-Making

Involves a structured, logical process where commanders systematically evaluate options based on available data. This approach is useful in situations where time allows for a thorough consideration of alternatives.

(b) Intuitive Decision-Making

On the other hand, Intuitive Decision-Making is based on the commander's

experience and instincts. It is particularly valuable in high-pressure situations where quick decisions are needed. Commanders draw on their knowledge and past experiences to make rapid judgments without detailed analysis. Effective decision-makers know when to rely on their intuition and when to take a more analytical approach.

It is important that newly appointed commanders are provided with opportunities to develop their intuitive decision-making skills at fire authority level through incident command training, the management of operational incidents and mentorship of a more experienced officer.

4.2.2 Decision Control Process (DCP)

4. The Decision Control Process is designed to maintain and improve the overall situational awareness by providing a systematic approach to decision making that ensures all relevant factors are considered. By continuously gathering and processing the information, identifying available options, assessing risks, anticipating and evaluating outcomes, the DCP helps to ensure that decisions are made methodically with all relevant influencing factors considered. By following the DCP, commanders can avoid common decision traps, leading to more reliable and effective decisions ensuring both the safety of personnel and the successful resolution of the situation.

5. The DCP provides a clear, step-by-step process for making decisions. This structured approach helps prevent the potential for errors and omissions that could occur in the rapid development of an emergency, ensuring that decisions are supported by sound rationale.

6. The DCP provides a systematic approach for the assessment and management of risk. The process encourages commanders to weigh the potential benefits of their actions against the risks, ensuring that any decision made is proportionate and justified. This is particularly important when considering the use of operational discretion to significantly deviate from standard operating guidance and established procedures.

7. If they fail to monitor and review the impact of their decisions, decision makers will not have full situational awareness of the incident which may in turn limit the ability to make effective decisions. The DCP encourages continuous reassessment of the situation and adjustment of plans as necessary, which is essential in the fluid and often unpredictable environments of emergency incidents.

8. In summary, the Decision Control Process is a vital tool for ensuring that decisions made during incidents are well-informed, carefully considered, and aligned with both

the safety and operational requirements of the incident management. It provides a systematic approach that enhances the effectiveness of incident command by ensuring that all relevant factors are considered, risks are managed appropriately, and decisions are consistently made in the best interests of both responders and the public.

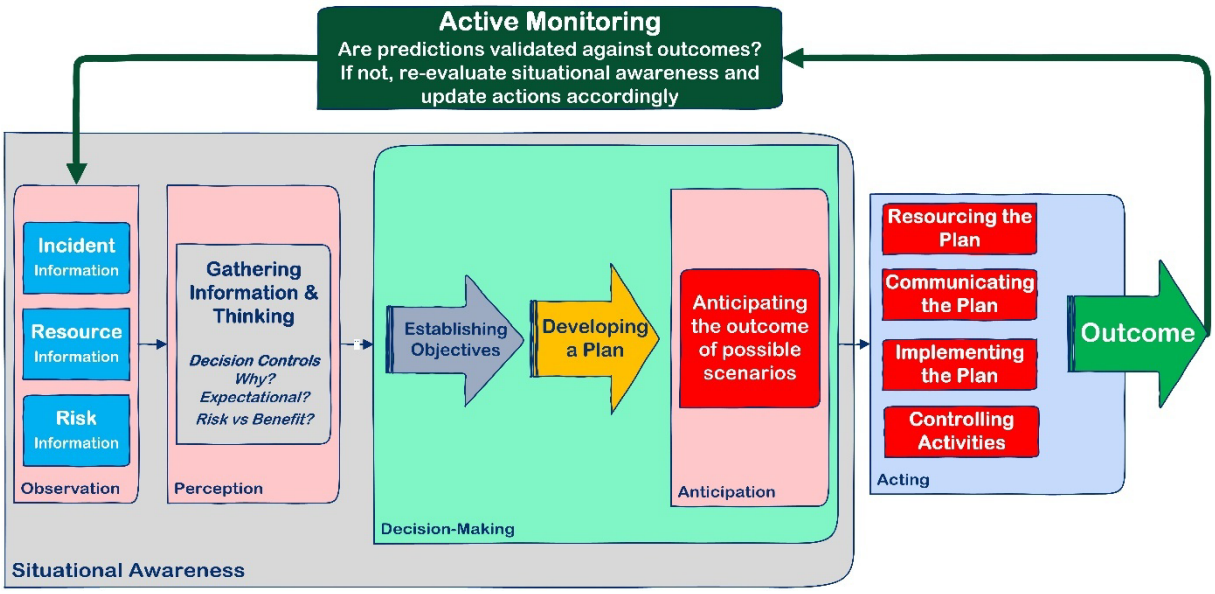


Diagram 23. Decision Control Process

4.2.3 Risk Assessment and Management

9. Risk assessment is a crucial part of the decision-making process. Commanders must identify potential hazards and the associated risks to both first responders and the public, weigh these risks against the potential benefits of their actions, and choose the course of action that offers the best balance of safety and effectiveness. Incident Commanders must be cognisant of the fact that they are responsible for the safety of persons under their control, making this a core consideration when evaluating the risks and anticipating potential outcomes of their actions. Effective risk management involves not only making informed decisions, but also continuously monitoring the situation and being prepared to adapt the plan as new risks emerge.

4.2.4 Communication and Team Involvement

10. Effective decision-making is rarely a solitary activity in incident command. Commanders must communicate their decisions clearly and ensure that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities. Involving the team in the decision-making process, where appropriate, can also enhance the quality of decisions, as it brings in diverse perspectives and expertise. Commanders should foster an environment where team members feel comfortable providing input and raising concerns, which helps prevent groupthink (the desire for harmony and consensuses within a group without critical assessment of the situation which results

in irrational or dysfunctional decision making) and ultimately encourages more robust decision-making by the Incident Commander.

4.2.5 Flexibility and Adaptability

11. In emergency response, situations can change rapidly, and the initial plan may need to be adjusted. Effective decision-makers are flexible and adaptable, ready to revise their strategies as new information becomes available or as the situation evolves. This requires a willingness to reconsider previous decisions and to remain open to alternative courses of action that better address the current conditions.

4.2.6 Continuous Learning and Improvement

12. Effective decision-making is also about learning from past experiences. Post-incident reviews and debriefs provide opportunities to evaluate the decisions made during an incident and to identify areas for improvement. Commanders who actively engage in continuous learning are better prepared to make effective decisions in future incidents. Incorporating lessons learned into training and policy development ensures that decision-making processes evolve and improve over time. *(further information is available in Section 2.12 – Incident Debriefing)*

4.2.7 Decision Traps

13. Decision traps refer to cognitive biases or errors in judgment that can adversely affect the decision-making process during high stress environments where Incident Commanders must make rapid decision with limited information. These traps can lead to flawed decisions, which may result in ineffective or even dangerous outcomes during incident management. Understanding and recognising these traps is crucial for Incident Commanders.

14. The Decision Control Process is a powerful tool in managing decision traps. By incorporating a systematic review and feedback loops to ensure predictions made are realised, the DCP helps commanders maintain objectivity, adapt to changing circumstances, and make well-informed decisions that are less susceptible to cognitive biases. Through its structured approach, the DCP not only enhances the quality of decisions made in the rapidly developing emergency but also contributes to overall safety and effectiveness in incident management.

15. Key decision traps include:

(a) Confirmation Bias

Is the tendency to seek out or favour information that confirms pre-existing beliefs

or decisions while disregarding information that contradicts them. Commanders may unconsciously filter the information they receive, giving more weight to data that supports their initial plan. This bias can prevent commanders from recognising when their current course of action is flawed or when new information requires a change in strategy, leading to poor decision-making.

e.g. An incident commander is responding to a fire in a commercial building. Based on previous experiences with similar buildings, they believe the fire likely started in the kitchen of a restaurant located on the ground floor. The incident commander focuses on the restaurant kitchen, directing resources and attention to this area. They may overlook or dismiss other potential sources of the fire, such as an electrical fault in the building's HVAC system or a fire that started in the storage area due to improperly stored chemicals.

By concentrating on the restaurant's kitchen, the incident commander might miss critical signs of the fire's actual origin, leading to delays in effectively controlling the fire. This could result in greater damage to the building and increased risk to the occupants and responders.

To avoid confirmation bias, the incident commander should ensure a thorough investigation of all possible fire sources, encourage team members to share their observations and insights, and remain open to adjusting their initial assumptions based on new information.

(b) Anchoring

Occurs when a commander places undue emphasis on the first piece of information they receive (the "anchor") and uses it as the primary reference point for all subsequent decisions, even when new and potentially more relevant information becomes available. Anchoring can lead to a fixed mindset where the commander is less responsive to changing conditions or new information, potentially resulting in decisions that are not aligned with the actual dynamics of the incident.

e.g. An incident commander is responding to a fire in a large office building. Upon arrival, they receive initial information that the fire started in the basement storage area. The incident commander anchors their decisions on this initial information, focusing all efforts on the basement. They allocate resources and direct firefighting efforts primarily to this area, assuming it is the source of the fire. By anchoring on the initial information, the incident commander may overlook other critical areas of the building where the fire might have spread or even originated. This could lead

to ineffective firefighting strategies, delays in controlling the fire, and increased risk to both the building's occupants and the responders.

To avoid the anchoring decision trap, the incident commander should verify the initial information through thorough investigation, remain open to new evidence, and continuously reassess the situation. Encouraging input from team members and considering multiple sources of information can help ensure a more accurate and effective response.

(c) Escalation of Commitment

Involves the tendency to continue investing in a decision or course of action despite evidence that it is no longer effective. Commanders may feel compelled to stick with their original plan because of the time, effort, or resources already committed. Escalation of commitment can lead to persisting with a failing strategy, increasing the likelihood of negative outcomes, and potentially escalating the severity of the incident.

e.g. During a rescue operation on a steep embankment, an incident commander decides to use a specific rescue strategy involving rope rescue techniques to retrieve an individual who has fallen down the embankment. As the rescue operation progresses, the incident commander continues to allocate resources to the rope rescue strategy, despite emerging evidence that this approach is not effectively addressing the situation and is causing delays. The commander persists with the original plan, reluctant to change tactics because of the initial investment in the rope rescue setup. By escalating their commitment to the original strategy, the incident commander contributes to delays in rescuing the individual, potentially leading to greater overall risk to their safety.

To avoid the escalation of commitment trap, the incident commander should regularly reassess the effectiveness of their strategy, remain open to changing tactics based on new information, and encourage input from team members. Recognising that adapting the plan is a sign of strong leadership, not weakness, can help ensure a more effective response.

(d) Status Quo Bias

Is the preference for maintaining the current situation or continuing with existing plans, rather than changing course. This can be driven by a fear of making the wrong decision or the comfort of familiarity. This bias can prevent commanders from making necessary adjustments to their plans in response to new

developments, leading to stagnation and a failure to adapt to the changing circumstances of an incident.

e.g. An incident commander is managing a fire in a large commercial building. The commander has used a particular firefighting strategy in similar situations before, which involves attacking the fire from the outside and gradually moving inward. Despite new information suggesting that an internal attack might be more effective in this specific situation, the incident commander sticks to the familiar external attack strategy. This can be driven by a fear of making the wrong decision or the comfort of familiarity, as they have successfully used the external attack method in the past and feel comfortable with it. By adhering to the status quo, the incident commander may miss opportunities to control the fire more effectively. This could lead to greater damage to the building and increased risk to both the occupants and responders.

To avoid status quo bias, the incident commander should remain open to new strategies and approaches, regularly reassess the situation based on current information, and encourage input from team members. Being willing to adapt and try different methods can lead to more effective firefighting and better outcomes.

4.2.8 Decision Inertia

16. Decision inertia refers to the hesitation or delay in making a decision, particularly in situations where a quick and decisive response is required. This phenomenon can occur when Incident Commanders are overwhelmed by the complexity of the situation, information overload, uncertain about the best course of action, or fear the potential consequences of making the wrong decision. Decision inertia can have serious repercussions for the effective management of the incident:

(a) **Delayed Response:** Hesitation to act can result in critical delays in implementing necessary interventions, allowing the incident to escalate.

(b) **Missed Opportunities:** Opportunities to mitigate risks or prevent further harm may be lost if decisions are not made promptly.

(c) **Reduced Confidence in Leadership:** Prolonged indecision can undermine the confidence of the team and other agencies involved in the incident, potentially leading to a breakdown in coordination and trust.

(d) **Loss of Control**: when a decision is deferred or avoided the incident may develop in direction that is not desirable to the Incident Commander. A decision not made in a timely manner may result in the incident moving out of the control of the Incident Commander.

17. Decision inertia might manifest when an Incident Commander is uncertain about whether to apply operational discretion and temporarily deviate from Standard Operational Guidance (SOGs) or established procedures. The fear of potential repercussions or the complexity of the situation might cause them to delay making a critical decision, even when timely action is required to ensure safety or effectiveness.

18. Organisational culture can also influence decision inertia. A culture that heavily penalises mistakes or overly emphasises adherence to SOGs and established procedures might discourage commanders from taking necessary risks or making prompt decisions, leading to inertia. By promoting a culture that supports decisive action while allowing operational discretion, albeit in a controlled manner, Incident Commanders are encouraged to make decision without fear of undue criticism for well-intentioned errors.

4.3 Operational Discretion

1. Most incidents attended by fire services can be managed in accordance with the relevant Standard Operational Guidance (SOGs) and established procedures, with minimal deviation required. SOGs provide a pathway of considerations and actions for the Incident Commander to bring the incident to a safe and successful conclusion. Operational discretion however refers to the flexibility of Incident Commanders to use their training, experience, and professional judgment to significantly deviate from SOGs or established procedures when faced with an incident that cannot be resolved through standard procedures.

2. Operational discretion acknowledges that not all situations can be anticipated, and that flexibility is necessary for effective incident management. It allows commanders to take actions that best fit the immediate needs of the incident when SOGs and established procedures cannot achieve the desired outcome safely and effectively. This discretion may be exercised when urgent action is required to save lives, to prevent incident escalation, or to prohibit actions that might cause harm. Any use of operational discretion is subject to the Incident Commander determining that the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

The Application of Operational Discretion

3. Standard Operational Guidance (SOGs) and established procedures have been developed to ensure safety, consistency, and interoperability across all fire authorities for the safe and effective management of incidents. In situations where the Incident Commander cannot strictly adhere to the relevant SOG or established procedure,

consideration may be given to:

(a) Deviating from established procedures by exercising operational discretion i.e. the potential benefits are deemed to outweigh the risks and therefore enables the Incident Commander to use profession judgement to take an alternative course of action.

(b) Implementing defensive tactics i.e. taking no direct action as the risks outweigh the potential benefits, or

4. Any decision to deviate from SOGs or established procedures must be justified with a clear rationale in terms of risk versus benefit, with the Incident Commander possessing a clear understanding of the actions which are normally required under the SOG or established procedure.

5. Operational discretion should not serve as the primary strategy employed by a commander, as overreliance on it can severely undermine the integrity and effectiveness of established procedures.

6. Moreover, excessive use of discretion may erode the confidence of the crew in the established procedures, leading to a fragmented approach to incident management and a poor safety culture within the organisation. Therefore, while operational discretion is a vital tool for managing incidents during exceptional circumstances, it must be employed cautiously, with the minimum of resources, for a minimum period of time and, only when absolutely necessary to address unforeseen challenges that established procedures cannot adequately overcome.

7. The need to utilise operational discretion may be more evident under specific circumstances, including, but not limited to:

(a) **Immediate Risk to Life:** In instances where established procedures fail to avert the risk of death or serious injury, commanders may be compelled to take prompt action outside the established procedures for a limited duration.

(b) **Unforeseen Circumstances:** When an event poses unique difficulties that were not anticipated, necessitating immediate decision-making to tackle unexpected risks with a creative and adaptable approach.

(c) **Rapidly Evolving Situations:** In scenarios where conditions change swiftly, adherence to established procedures may hinder the ability to respond effectively to emerging risks or opportunities.

8. The fundamental principle is that any decision to deviate from SOGs, or established procedures, must be based on a clear, rational assessment that the deviation is

necessary to achieve a safer and more effective outcome.

Mitigating Risks in Operational Discretion

9. Prior to applying operational discretion, the Incident Commander must be assured that its use is necessary and the deviation from established procedures can be justified. The following considerations may assist decision-makers in determining the appropriateness of applying operational discretion:

   (a) **Justification of Deviation:** The Incident Commander must have a comprehensive understanding of why established procedures are inadequate for the current situation and must clearly articulate the rationale for the deviation.

   (b) **Risk Assessment:** Decisions made under pressure can lead to unforeseen outcomes, and there is a risk that the deviation might introduce new hazards or complications. A thorough assessment of the risks involved in both following the established procedures and deviating from them, must be conducted. The commander must ensure that the chosen course of action minimises risks while achieving the desired outcome.

   (c) **Proportionality and Necessity:** Any deviation from established procedures should be limited to what is necessary to accomplish the objective, ensuring that the actions taken are proportionate to the anticipated benefits.

   (d) **Documenting:** It is considered good practice for Incident Commanders to document key decisions made throughout their management of the incident, especially when utilising operational discretion to bring an incident to a safe and successful conclusion. This documentation may include:

      (i) **Nature of the Deviation:** Clearly describe any deviation from SOGS and established procedures.

      (ii) **Rationale for Applying Discretion:** Provide detailed reasons for the decision.

   The outcome of these decisions can offer opportunities to update guidance documentation and established procedures to better reflect the operational needs of the service. Documenting decisions can be supported using handwritten notes, incident management software, and photography where appropriate.

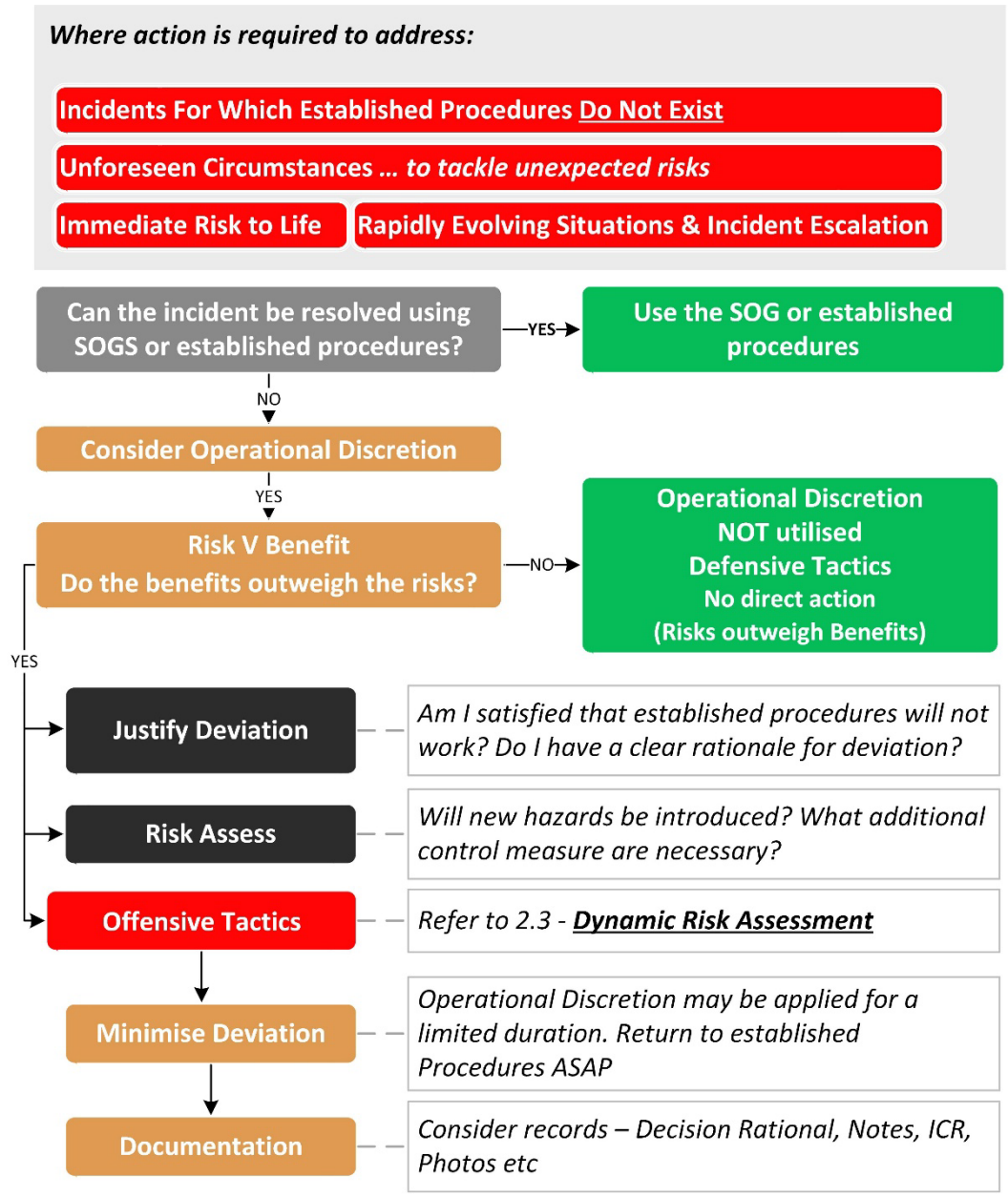


Diagram 24. Use of Operational Discretion

(as detailed on the Incident Commander Prompt Card – See Appendix 3.1)

Review of Operational Discretion

10. When conducting an incident debrief using the National Incident Debrief Tool, the use of operational discretion should be identified along with the rationale for its deployment having considered the associated benefits versus the associated risks and the outcome achieved.

11. Any such review should aim to identify key lessons learned with a view to incorporating them into future training initiatives and revisions to the relevant SOG, or established procedure. The objective of such reviews is to enhance decision-making processes and operational procedures informed by practical experiences.

Section 5. Incident Risk Management

5.1 Risk Management:

1. Fire Services operate under the "Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005" which places an obligation on all employers to conduct risk assessments on work related activities in which their employees may be engaged. The Act places great emphasis on the requirement for all employers to establish and maintain an effective process for the management of health and safety throughout the organisation.

2. Due to the size and nature of the Fire Service there are a wide range of activities to cover, potentially making risk management a very time-consuming activity. At the strategic level, the fire service has the opportunity to evaluate the inherent hazards and risks posed by the varying emergency incidents to which they are obliged to respond. A process that demonstrates a pro-active approach to the management of the health and safety function must be developed and adopted by all fire authorities.

3. A key element of the process will be pre-incident planning, risk visits and a reliable information retrieval system (preferably in digital format) which is accessible to Incident Commanders when on the incident ground. The outcome of the foregoing will result in the provision of both generic and specific risks being identified and an appropriate response being allocated to the particular incident type. The effectiveness of the brigade response will also be enhanced by the introduction of appropriate training programmes, operational procedures and guidelines as are considered necessary.

5.2 Health & Safety on the Incident Ground:

1. Fire service personnel acknowledge that on occasions the nature of their work will put them in hazardous environments, and they are willing to accept risk to their personal safety in order to protect the community. However, they will always try to minimise the risk to which they are exposed by the application of safe systems of work, personal protective equipment and effective supervision.

2. For the Incident Commander, the primary and immediate consideration is the safety of all personnel on the incident ground. This must be established, by assessing the hazards that are present, the possible risks they pose, and the adoption of appropriate safe systems of work. The following summarises the philosophy of the fire service's approach to risk management:

Fire Service personnel shall not be exposed to elevated risk unless there is a reasonable expectation of saving life or preventing rapid and significant escalation of the incident. The greater the potential benefit of fire and rescue actions, the greater the risk that may be accepted. Risk is acceptable only when the benefit is clear, achievable, and outweighs the potential harm.

3. This approach acknowledges that firefighters operate in hazardous environments whilst recognising both our statutory responsibilities to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of everyone our operations may affect, and the challenges of minimising risk with the need to take decisive action to affect a rescue or mitigate an emergency.

4. Incident Commanders will consider the benefits of our interventions and the risks to our firefighters. This should not necessarily be seen as a balance of one against the other, but more as an assessment of whether the benefit is worth the risk; for example, where lives are in danger, the benefit of saving life is high, then a higher risk to firefighters may be justified.

5. Where the incident has high risk but with low immediate benefit, Incident commanders should manage the risk to firefighters, with the activities within the hazard zone likely to be curtailed until such time as the risk is reduced. For instance, a property with no reported missing persons and an unvented fire. In this instance, the Incident Commander is unlikely to commit BA teams to enter until the building has been vented and the immediate risks reduced; entry at this point may be justified to save property. This reflects a cautious approach that prioritises safety while recognising that there is a benefit to saving the property.

6. The term “Dynamic Risk Assessment” is used to describe the continuing assessment of risk that is carried out in a rapidly changing environment.

7. The key elements in any risk management process are:

   (a) Risk Identification.
   (b) Risk Analysis.
   (c) Risk Evaluation.
   (d) Application of adequate Control Measures.
   (e) Re-evaluation of risk as the incident developments

8. When considering what control measures to apply, the Incident and Sector Commanders need to maintain a balance between the safety of personnel and the operational needs of the incident. For example, whereas it may be considered

appropriate to commit personnel into a hazardous environment to save life, it may be that purely defensive firefighting tactics are employed in a similar situation where there is no threat to life.

9. Commanders must ensure that safe practices are followed and that, so far as reasonably practicable under the circumstances, risks are eliminated or, if not, reduced to the minimum commensurate with the needs of the task.

10. Because personnel may be working in sectors or teams, it is important that everyone is aware of their own safety and that of their colleagues. Therefore, all personnel should as a matter of course continually risk assess their area of work and immediately report any changes with respect to identified hazards and the emergence of new hazards immediately to their commander.

5.3 SAFE PERSON CONCEPT:

1. Organisations will protect the health, safety and welfare of people at work by providing and maintaining:

   (a) A competent workforce.
   (b) A safe working environment.
   (c) Safe working equipment.
   (d) Safe systems of work.

2. Any intervention to resolve an emergency incident can involve working in an environment that is constantly changing and is inherently dangerous. People who are competent will be able to function effectively and safely in such environments and occupational competence is rightly regarded as the most effective control measure that is available to the service.

3. To maintain the effectiveness of people in dynamic and hazardous environments, the service needs to ensure that they are as safe as possible. It does this by applying what is known as the “Safe Person Concept”. This concept covers both organisational and personal responsibility.

5.3.1 Safe Systems of Work

4. Operational procedures and practices are designed to promote safe operating systems (safe systems of work). To minimise the risk of injury, Incident / Sector Commanders must ensure that recognised safe systems of work are being used so far as is reasonable and practicable.

5. Where possible, operational crews should work together in teams, and whenever

practicable, the teams should be made up of people who are familiar with each other and have trained together.

6. When necessary, safety briefings must be carried out and, as the incident develops, or where the risks of injury increase, those briefings must be more precise and appropriate precautions deployed.

5.3.2 Organisational Responsibility

7. At organisational level, the fire authority has a legislative responsibility to provide the support necessary to ensure that personnel can remain safe in a hazardous environment. This organisational responsibility extends to:

(a) Firefighter Selection.
(b) Information.
(c) Personal Protective Equipment.
(d) Equipment
(e) Systems of Work.
(f) Instruction.
(g) Training and Development.
(h) Supervision.

5.3.3 Personal Responsibility

8. Each individual must have the ability to make professional judgements about the appropriate use of available resources, in order to control the risks inherent in the unique circumstances of any emergency situation. Therefore, every operational firefighter must be:

(a) Competent to perform tasks assigned
(b) An effective member of a team
(c) Self-disciplined to work within accepted systems of work
(d) Adaptable to changing circumstances
(e) Vigilant for their own and others safety
(f) Able to recognise their own abilities and limitations

5.3.4 Safety Responsibilities of Personnel at Incidents

(a) All personnel on the incident ground MUST wear the personal protective equipment that has been provided.
(b) The Incident Commander, having considered the health and safety of all

personnel, and having taken all reasonable and practicable steps to minimise risks, may vary this standard.

(c) All personnel must be trained in the procedures to be used at operational incidents and must be alert to the ever-changing environment at the scene of operations and the consequences of exposure to hazardous substances.

(d) All personnel must be certain that they clearly understand the tasks that they are required to perform and must follow the instructions of the officer responsible for their area of work.

5.3.5 Safety Officer

9. Where a Safety Officer is appointed, they should:



(a) Liaise with the Incident /Operations/Sector Commander, who will define your responsibilities, e.g. entire incident, sector or specific task.

(b) Unless otherwise instructed communicate with the relevant Sector Commander “face to face” or on the designated radio channel appropriate to the sector.

(c) Safety Officers are advisors to the Sector Commander in respect of all safety issues within or affecting the sector.

(d) Where an unsafe practice is identified, it should be corrected and, where necessary, the Sector Commander must be notified.

(e) Safety Officers should not get involved with firefighting activities or interfere with the Sector Commanders operational plan.

(f) If necessary, liaise with the Sector Commander to request additional Safety Officer(s)

(g) Safety Officers are responsible to monitor the welfare of personnel.

(h) At the close of the incident, or upon being relieved, liaise with the Sector Commander to discuss observed unsafe or incorrect practices in order to identify possible training needs.

10. An aid memoire for the role of the Safety Officer and a supporting check list is detailed in Appendix 5.7

Summary of the Safety Function

(a) Identify safety issues

(b) Initiate corrective action

(c) Maintain safe systems of work

(d) Ensure appropriate P.P.E. being worn by personnel

(e) Observe the environment

(f) Monitor the physical condition of personnel

(g) Monitor the welfare of personnel and ensure appropriate provisions are in place.

(h) Regularly review the control measures implemented.

(i) Effective communications – regular updates Sector / Safety Officers

(j) Review the Dynamic Risk assessment and Tactical Mode as appropriate.

5.4 DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT

1. The main priority of any Incident Commander is the safety of personnel under their control and hence a key function of the Incident Commander is the management of risk on the incident ground. This is the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, implementing appropriate control measures, monitoring and reviewing, in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident.

2. "Dynamic Risk Assessment" (DRA) is a process of risk assessment carried out in a changing environment, where what is being assessed is developing as the process itself is being undertaken. This is further complicated by the fact that the Incident Commander is often faced with the need to perform rescues, protect exposures and place stop-jets before a complete appreciation of all material facts has been obtained. It is imperative, therefore, that an effective risk assessment is carried out at the scene of operations, and that this is reviewed and updated as quickly as practicable. It is important that the outcome of a risk assessment is recorded and entered into the incident log for later retrieval and analysis, such as would be achieved by transmission over the main scheme radio of the Tactical mode.

3. While the management of risk is continuous throughout the incident, the focus of operational activity will change as the incident develops, and it is useful to consider the process in three separate stages:

   (a) The Initial Stage of Incident
   (b) The Development Stage of Incident
   (c) The Closing Stage of Incident

   This process can be summarised in Diagram 25 - Dynamic Risk Assessment Summary

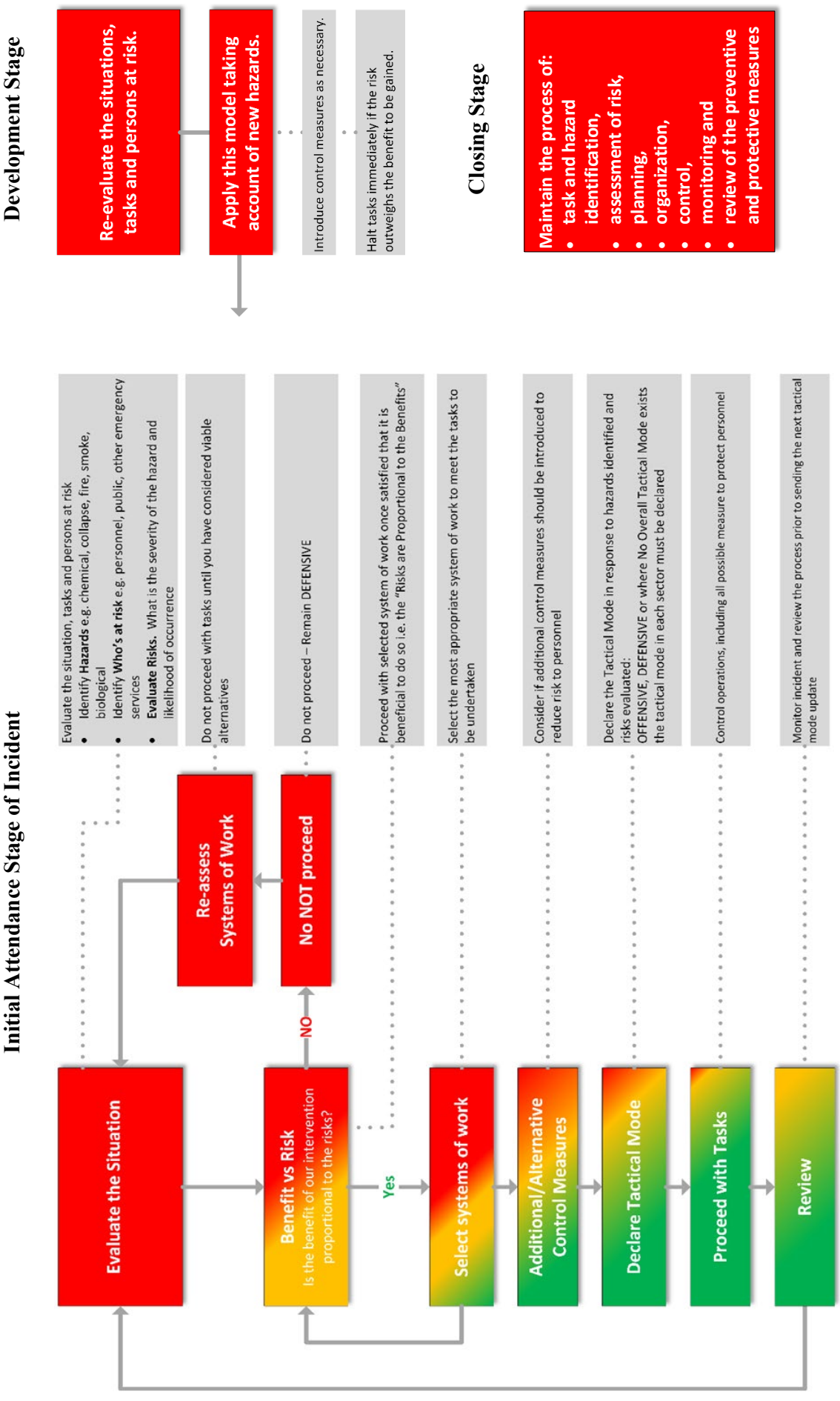


Diagram 25. Dynamic Risk Assessment Summary

5.4.1 Initial Stage of Incident

4. On arrival of the initial attendance the first task of the Incident Commander is to gather information, evaluate the scene and establish situational awareness before applying professional judgement to decide the most appropriate course of action. The benefits of proceeding with a task must be weighed carefully against the associated risks. The following steps should be taken in the course of the initial risk assessment:

   (a) Evaluate the Situation, Tasks and Persons at Risk
   (b) Select Safe Systems of Work
   (c) Assess the chosen systems of work
   (d) Introduce additional control measures
   (e) Re-assess systems of work and additional control measures

Evaluate the Situations, Tasks and Persons at Risk



5. In order to identify hazards, the Incident Commander upon his/her arrival will initially need to consider:

   (a) Operational intelligence available from pre-fire planning, risk visits, fire safety plans and local knowledge, etc.
   (b) The nature of the tasks to be carried out
   (c) The hazards involved in carrying out the tasks
   (d) The risks involved to:
      (i) Fire Crews
      (ii) Personnel from other agencies
      (iii) The Public
      (iv) The Environment
   (e) Resources available such as experienced personnel, appliances, equipment, specialist advice etc.

Select Safe Systems of Work



6. The Incident Commander will need to review and consider the options available in terms of:

   (a) Pre-Incident planning and training
   (b) Standard Operating Guidance
   (c) The possible systems of work available - choose the most appropriate for the situation.

(d) Competence of available personnel to carry out the tasks safely.

Assess the Chosen System of Work



7. Once a course of action, be it offensive or defensive, has been identified Incident Commanders need to make a judgment as to whether or not the risks involved are proportional to the potential benefits of the outcome.

If **YES**, proceed with the tasks after ensuring that:

(i) Strategic Objectives and Tactical Goals are understood.
(ii) Responsibilities have been clearly allocated.
(iii) Safety measures and procedures are understood.

If **NO**, then introduce additional control measures.

Introduce Additional Control Measures



8. Incident Commanders will need to eliminate, or reduce, any remaining risks to an acceptable level, if possible, by introducing additional control measures, such as:

(a) Use of Personal Protective Equipment, e.g., safety glasses, safety harnesses.
(b) Use of Breathing Apparatus.
(c) Use of specialist equipment, e.g. H.P., T.L., etc.
(d) Use of Safety Officers.

Re-assess Systems of Work and Additional Control Measures



9. Even when safe systems of work are in place, there may well be residual risks. Where these risks remain, the Incident Commander should consider if the benefit gained from carrying out the tasks against the possible consequences if the risks are realised:

(a) If the benefits outweigh the risks, proceed with the task
(b) If the risks outweigh the benefits **DO NOT** proceed with the tasks but consider viable alternatives.

5.4.2 Development Stage of Incident

10. If an incident develops to the extent that sectors are designated, the Incident Commander will delegate the supervisory role to Sector Commanders. They will be responsible for the health and safety of all personnel within their sector.

11. Sector Commanders may feel that they can supervise safety within their own sectors. Alternatively, after consideration, the Sector Commander may feel it necessary to nominate a Safety Officer. This officer will be reporting to or working with the Sector Commander. Such an appointment should be carried out in consultation with the Incident Commander.

12. As the incident develops additional factors may make the original course of action inappropriate, for example:

    (a) Firefighting tactics may change from Defensive to Offensive
    (b) New hazards and their associated risks may arise, e.g., the effects of fire on the building stability
    (c) Existing hazards may present different risks
    (d) Operational activities may produce risks to people and / or the environment.
    (e) Personnel may need to be monitored for signs of fatigue.

    Both Incident and Sector Commanders, therefore, need to manage safety by constantly monitoring the situation and reviewing the effectiveness of existing control measures.

5.4.3 Closing Stage of Incident

13. The three key activities involved in the closing stages of the incident are:

    (a) Maintain Control
    (b) Personnel Welfare
    (c) Incident De-brief.

Maintain Control

14. During the closing stage of an incident, personnel must not become complacent. The process of task and hazard identification, assessment of risk, planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures must continue until the last appliance leaves the incident ground.

15. Incident Commanders should ensure that no personnel are exposed to any unnecessary risk at this stage of the incident, and officers should have no hesitation in halting work to maintain safety standards.

16. As circumstances permit the Incident Commander should nominate an officer to gather information for the post-incident review; this may include debriefing crews and officers before they leave the incident, whilst events are still fresh in their minds.

17. Details of any accidents, injuries or near misses that may have occurred must also be obtained and recorded in accordance with the brigade's operational health and safety policy and procedures.

Personnel Welfare

18. The welfare of personnel is an important consideration for the command team. It must be given particular attention at arduous or protracted incidents that require a rapid turnover of personnel; and requires constant monitoring of physical condition of crews by supervising officers.

19. Early consideration of arrangements for the provision of relief crews, food and rest facilities, etc., for personnel should be incorporated into the incident planning process. These facilities should be located outside the immediate incident area and always away from any risk of direct or indirect contamination.

20. Where appropriate, decontamination procedures should be applied that are deemed suitable to the incident type and the level of exposure. At all incidents, there exists a collective responsibility to minimise the risk and implement established procedures, however the Incident Commander may delegate this responsibility to an appropriate officer or the Safety Officer to supervise this task. At larger incidents, and where appointed, the BA Coordination Officer should assume responsibility to ensure arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of contamination where breathing apparatus operations activities were undertaken.

21. The Safety Officer(s), where appointed, are responsible for monitoring and making provisions for the welfare of personnel within their designated area.

Post Incident Review

22. The post incident review may be conducted in either a formal or an informal manner. Generally, the majority of debriefs are undertaken in an informal fashion on return to station from the incident. However, it is sometimes beneficial to conduct debriefs on the incident ground whenever this is possible, as it may assist in explaining and clarifying issues which may arise. This is often referred to as "hot" debriefing.

23. Where a more formal debrief is being conducted, perhaps following a large incident, or multi-agency involvement, or where there are learning opportunities for personnel and the service, the National Incident Debrief Tool should be used (*see Appendix 7 - National Incident Debrief Tool*). Such a debrief should identify non-conformance and corrective actions to be taken and should be conducted in a manner that

promotes open, supportive and constructive discussion of all aspects of the incident

24. The main purpose of the debrief is to review existing:

    (a) Operational intelligence and information.
    (b) Personal protective equipment.
    (c) Systems of work.
    (d) Resource allocation.
    (e) Standard Operational Guidance
    (f) Equipment performance.
    (g) Training and competencies.
    (h) Incident Management.
    (i) The use of Operational Discretion

25. Following an incident, it is important that any significant information gained, or lessons learned must be fed back into the policies and procedures of the brigade. It is important to highlight any unconventional system or procedure used which was successful or made the working environment safe. It is equally important to highlight all equipment, systems or procedures used which did NOT work satisfactorily, or which made the working environment unsafe.

26. Risk-critical issues highlighted during post incident reviews should be addressed immediately through review of personal performance, equipment, working practices or systems.

5.5 TACTICAL MODES

1. The declaration of the Tactical Mode is the outcome of the initial and subsequent risk assessments conducted by the Incident Commander at any incident and should be recorded by Command Support and entered into the incident log by the Regional Communication Centre. The Tactical Mode procedure assists the Incident Commander to manage an incident effectively without compromising the health and safety of personnel by:

    (a) Ensuring that firefighting operations being carried out by a single crew, or sector, do not have adverse effects on the safety or effectiveness of firefighters in other crews or sectors. For example, it will ensure that B.A. wearers inside a building are not subjected to an aerial monitor being opened up above them, or to the impact of a large jet through a window from another sector without warning.
    (b) Generating a record of the outcome of the dynamic risk assessment process

conducted by the Incident Commander

2. Upon arrival at an emergency incident where immediate action is required, the Incident Commander will make an initial judgment as to whether it is safe to proceed with offensive operations. Normally, with usual procedures and control measures in place, it will be declared that the tactical mode is “Offensive”. If the Incident Commander feels it is not safe enough, “Defensive” tactics should be utilised until a suitably safe approach to deal with the incident can be decided upon. If the Incident Commander is unsure, “Defensive” mode should be declared, and the Incident Commander should conduct a review of the risk assessment.

3. There are two Tactical Modes:

(a) OFFENSIVE. **(b) DEFENSIVE.**

5.5.1 Offensive Mode

4. Offensive Mode indicates that personnel are working within the Hazard Zone and are exposed to greater risk because, having conducted the DRA, the Incident Commander has established that the potential benefits outweigh the identified risks. This mode may be applied to an individual sector or the entire incident when every sector is in offensive mode.

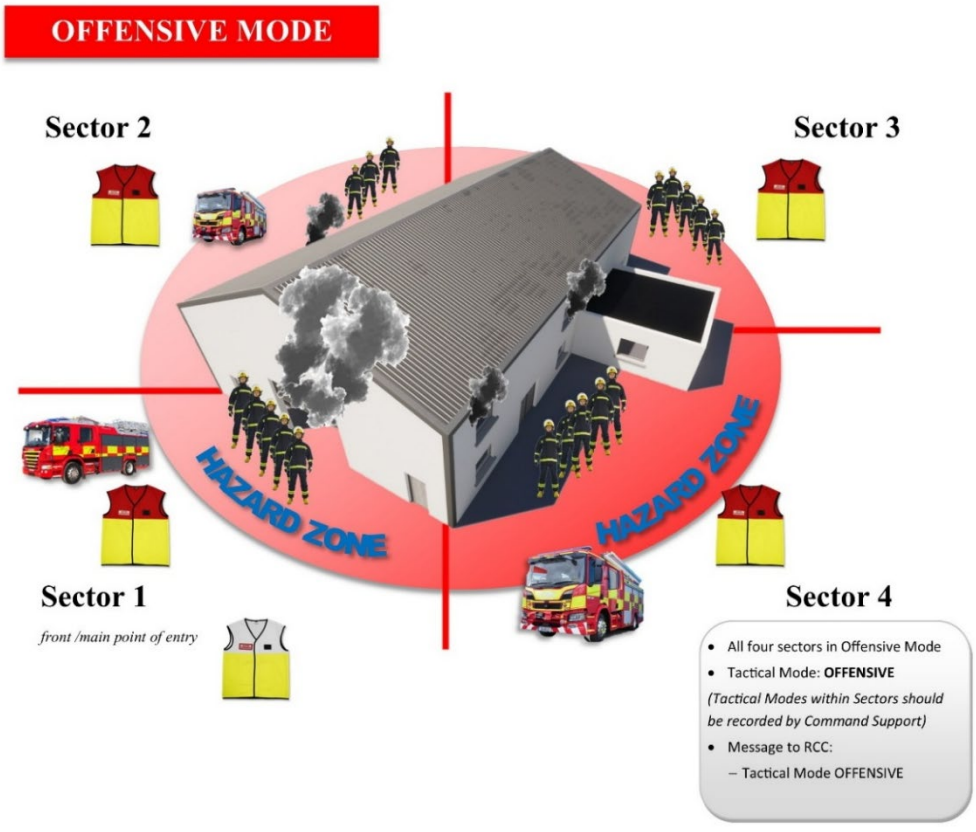


Diagram 26. Offensive Mode (personnel in each sector operating within the hazard zone)

5. An “Offensive” approach is appropriate when identified risks are managed by additional control measures (Risk Control). This may be achieved by some of the following:

(a) Elimination.
(b) Isolation.
(c) Substitution.
(d) Control.
(e) Correct level of P.P.E.
(f) Appointing a Safety Officer.

6. Offensive mode is most likely to be the common mode of operation. Examples of **Offensive Mode** include:

Incident Type	Activities *(where the risks are deemed proportional to the benefits and control measures are in place)*	Hazards (not an exhaustive list)
Structural Fires	BA Wearers operating inside the building to rescue persons or extinguish the fire	• Toxic atmosphere • Structural collapse
	Firefighting personnel operating outside the building but within the collapse or hazard zone.	• Structural collapse • Unsecured roof slates/tiles
RTC	Crews setting up Emergency Traffic Management of a live carriageway	• Collision from live traffic
	Crews operating within the hazard zones to perform a rescue	• Collision from live traffic • Airbag deployment • Ignition of fuel • Instability of vehicle(s)
	Crew making up equipment while operating on a live carriageway with ETM in place	• Collision from live traffic
Chimney Fire	Firefighting personnel extinguishing the fire from the roof using fall arrest equipment	• Fall from height

Table 11. Example of Offensive Mode

7. Where both offensive and defensive tactics are being carried out at the same time but in different sectors, a Tactical Mode of “Offensive” will be declared to RCC. In essence, if any one sector is “Offensive”, the Tactical Mode of the entire incident is “Offensive”. The tactical mode of individual sectors should be recorded by Command Support to assist in the management of the incident.

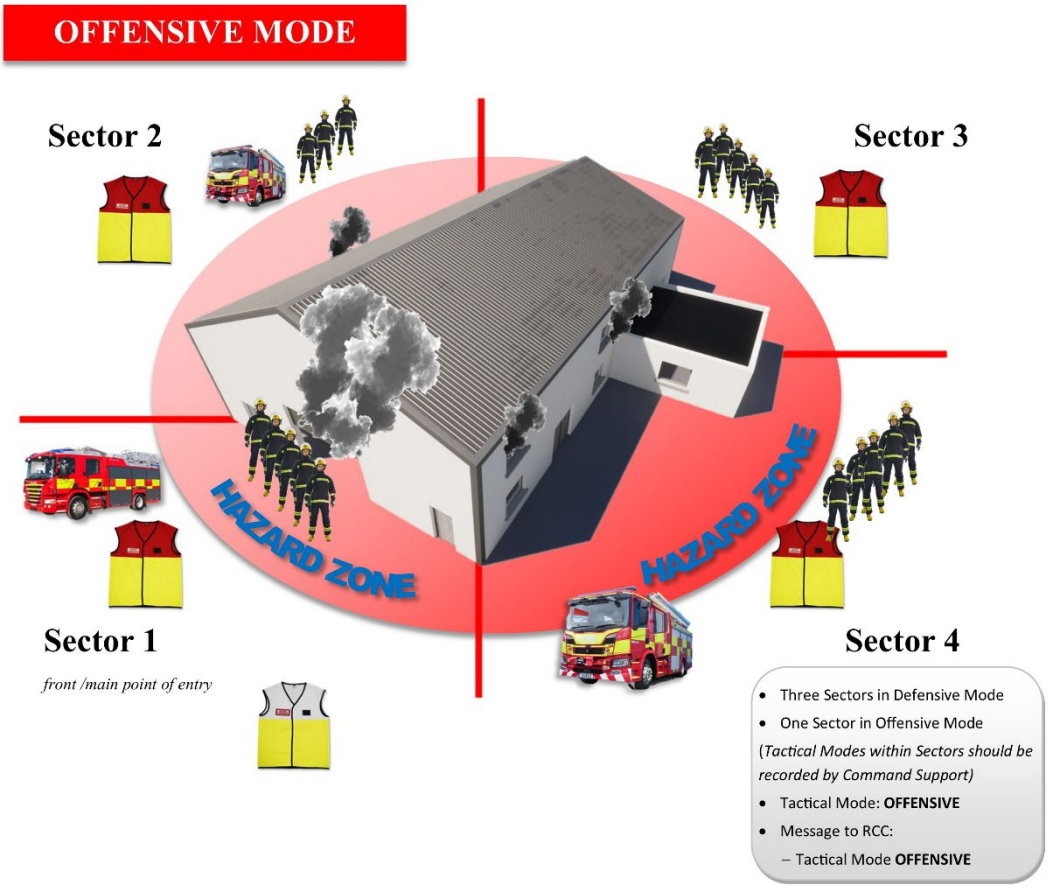


Diagram 27. Offensive Mode (personnel in a sector operating within the hazard zone)

5.5.2 Defensive Mode

8. The declaration of a Defensive Mode follows the outcome of the DRA where the Incident Commander has determined that the incident should be managed from outside of the Hazard Zone, therefore taking a defensive position. In Defensive Mode, the identified risks outweigh the potential benefits, so irrespective of how many additional control measures are put into place at that particular time, the risks remain too great to commit personnel into the Hazard Zone. This mode may be applied to an individual sector or the entire incident when every sector is in defensive mode.

9. Defensive mode does not indicate that operational activity is not taking place, it merely indicates that that personnel are not working within the hazard zone.

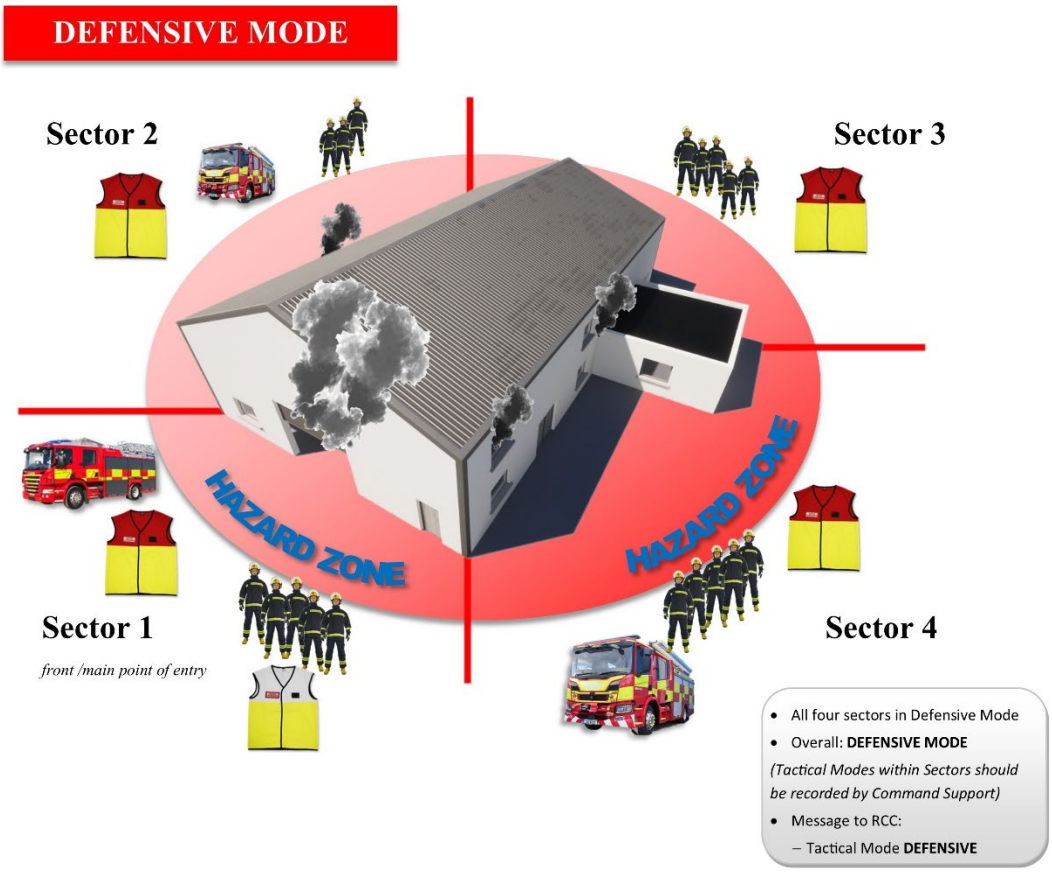


Diagram 28. Defensive Mode (all personnel operating outside the hazard zone)

10. Examples of **Defensive Mode** include:

Incident Type	Activities	Hazards Removed
Structural Fires	Firefighting personnel operating from outside the hazard zone using jets or ground monitors to extinguish a structural fire.	• Toxic atmosphere • Structural collapse • Falling slates/tiles •
	Firefighting personnel operating from outside the hazard zone to prevent the fire spread to adjacent structures using CAFs, water curtains or jets	
All Incidents	Standing by outside the hazard zone awaiting expert advice before committing crews	• All hazards to personnel removed
	Standing by awaiting specialist equipment or specially trained personnel	

Table 12. Example of Defensive Mode

5.5.3 Application of Tactical Mode

11. A Tactical Mode should be decided upon and declared at all operational incidents. As the incident develops and the Incident Commander's span of control increases, it is essential that all personnel are aware of the tactics on the incident ground and the tactical mode of the overall incident or the sector in which they are operating.

12. The first verbal message after the DRA has been concluded, and subsequent messages to RCC, should include a confirmation of the Tactical Mode for the information of oncoming appliances and officers. This should be updated by informing RCC of which mode the incident is in at regular intervals (e.g. 20 mins.) and when Tactical Modes are updated by the Incident Commander.

5.5.4 Changing Tactical Modes

13. Sector Commanders may be required to change tactics from "Offensive" to "Defensive" urgently to ensure the safety of the personnel for which they are responsible. In such circumstance they must inform the Incident Commander of the developments. The tactics should be communicated by the Sector Commander to the Incident Commander and record by Command support. Such a message may include the following phrases:

(i) "Tactical withdrawal of personnel in progress" or

(ii) "Emergency evacuation of personnel in progress"

and subsequently followed with a tactical mode update to "Defensive" once **all** personnel area accounted for.

Where the risk within the hazardous area has increased and personnel are ordered to withdraw, the tactical mode does not change to "Defensive" mode until all personnel have left the hazard zone and have been accounted for.

14. If the Sector Commander wishes to change tactics from "Defensive" to "Offensive", the permission of the Incident Commander **MUST** be sought and no change made until such time that permission is granted. The Incident Commander will assess whether the Tactical Mode within the sector can change to "Offensive", taking into account the tactics being undertaken in all other sectors.

OFFENSIVE to DEFENSIVE
No Permission Required from the Incident Commander
Inform Incident Commander of "Tactical Withdrawal" or "Emergency Evacuation"
Update Tactical Mode to "Defensive" when **all** personnel are clear of the Hazard Zone
Recorded by Command Support
RCC informed

DEFENSIVE to OFFENSIVE
Permission Sought from the Incident Commander.
Sector maintains Defensive tactics until approved
On Approval – Tactical Mode "Offensive" recorded by Command Support
RCC informed

Table 13. Changes of Tactics within a Sector

15. Sector Commanders must be involved in any decision by the Incident Commander to change the Tactical Mode within their Sector. Sector Commanders may then implement the change effectively and ensure that personnel under their command are aware of the change in tactics.

5.5.5 Responsibilities for determining Tactical Mode

Incident Commander

16. The Incident Commander should make an assessment of the incident and decide which Tactical Mode will be appropriate.

17. Any message sent should include which Tactical Mode(s) are in operation at the incident, and this should be repeated at regular intervals e.g. 20 mins until the time that the 'stop' message is sent, and at appropriate regular intervals throughout the duration of the incident. RCC should record the Tactical Modes in the incident log on each occasion.

18. The Incident Commander should review and confirm the Tactical Mode(s) on initial and all subsequent briefings to Crew and Sector Commanders.

Sector Commanders

19. Sector Commanders should continually monitor conditions and operational priorities in the sector and ensure that the Tactical Mode continues to be appropriate by undertaking a DRA of their sector. They must respond to adverse changes, withdrawing personnel from risk areas, if necessary, and advise the Incident Commander of the change in conditions as soon as possible.

20. It is appropriate to consider the appointment of a Sector Safety Officer(s), either for specific areas of concern (e.g. structure stability, dangerous terrain, etc.) or for general support. Sector Safety Officers report directly to the Sector Commander, even if a 'Safety Sector' has been designated, but they must also liaise with the Safety Sector Commander where established.

21. It is essential to update the tactical mode to the crews working in the sector at suitably frequent intervals e.g. 20 mins.

Crew Commanders

22. All crew commanders should continually monitor conditions in the risk area and draw the attention of the Sector Commander to significant developments. They should also react immediately to adverse changes and withdraw crew members from the

risk area without delay where necessary.

Summary of the Procedure

(a) Establish Situational Awareness
(b) Carry out a Dynamic Risk Assessment
(c) Develop Incident Management Plan
(d) Declare Tactical Mode
(e) Communicate Tactical Mode
(f) Commence Operations
(g) Review Tactical Mode

23. Having carried out the dynamic risk assessment and established a tactical mode, the Incident Commander will be aware of the immediate hazards, the people at risk and the control measures necessary to protect those people.

24. Because of the changing nature of the environment at an incident, the Incident Commander should reevaluate the dynamic risk assessment and introduce new control measures as required. The outcome of the review of this risk assessment will either confirm that the dynamic risk assessment and chosen tactical mode was correct or will result in a change of mode with the appropriate declaration and action occurring without delay.

25. Responsibility for the review of the initial risk assessment rests with the Incident Commander, or where sectors have been created, this role may be delegated to the Sector Commander.

26. The outcome of the initial risk assessment review should be recorded by Command Support and entered into the incident log at RCC.

5.6 DESECTORISING

1. Following a DRA, the Incident Commander may determine that the operational response can be scaled back as the incident resolves. Incident Commanders must ensure adequate precautions and safety measures are in place when sectors are stood down and resources released from the incident. When a sector is set to stand down, this must be communicated to the incident ground and responsibility of any remaining hazards within that sector transferred to the remaining sectors. Remaining Sectors Commanders must be informed if their area of responsibility has expanded during the desectorising process.

Section 6. Interagency Coordination

1. Interagency coordination is critical to successfully managing incidents, ensuring that multiple agencies, including Principal Response Agencies (PRA), Principal Emergency Services (PES) and support organisations, can work together seamlessly to respond effectively. The complexity and unpredictability of incidents require a collaborative approach where each agency contributes its expertise and resources to the identification and achievement of common goals. Effective coordination allows for sharing information, joint decision-making, management of risk and efficient use of resources while potentially reducing repetition, confusion and delays. It enhances safety for both first responders and the public by ensuring that risks are understood collectively and managed appropriately. Interagency coordination is essential for delivering a timely, organised, and comprehensive response to incidents, improving outcomes and reducing the impact on individuals or affected communities.

An Interagency Emergency is any emergency where two or more of the Principal Response Agencies (PRA) or Principal Emergency Services (PES) in attendance.

2. Interagency emergencies may require coordination and interoperability of several agencies and in some cases may necessitate the adoption of additional interagency procedures or structures to ensure an effective response. The *'Framework for Emergency Management'* sets out various elements of response that are available and should be considered for every interagency emergency.

6.1 Principal Response Agencies (PRA)

1. The Principal Response Agencies (PRA) in Ireland are the agencies designated by the government to effectively manage emergencies. They cooperate and collaborate through each of the five stages of emergency management, as set out in the *'Emergency Management Paradigm'* to ensure a coordinated approach.



Diagram 29. *Five-Stage Emergency Management Paradigm*

2. The three PRAs are An Garda Síochána (AGS), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and each of the Local Authorities (LA). Each PRA is required to have a Major Emergency Plan that sets out the specific arrangements for preparedness, response and recovery from large or complex emergencies. These plans also outline the coordination arrangements between different agencies

6.2 Principal Emergency Services (PES)

The Principal Emergency Services (PES) are the blue light services that respond to incidents, namely An Garda Síochána (AGS), the National Ambulance Service (NAS), the Fire Services and the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG). The PES are generally the first services to respond to an incident. The Fire Services are the PES for the wider Local Authority, which is the PRA. In many emergencies, the Fire Service may be the initial or only representative present from the Local Authority at the incident.

6.3 3Cs Interagency Approach

To ensure that the efforts of the PES are always coordinated, those in charge of each service must identify themselves to each of the other PES when in attendance. Each responding service communicates its needs and indicates how it can assist the efforts of the other PES to work towards a common goal. This is achieved by carrying out the **3Cs Interagency Approach:**



Diagram 30. 3Cs Interagency Approach

The application of the 3C's Interagency Approach (**Come Together, Communicate, Coordinate**) by all responding agencies will assist in an effective coordinated response to all incidents.

1. At all incidents where two or more of the Principal Emergency Services (PES) are present, the designated person in charge from each agency should **Come Together** at the earliest appropriate time, to form an **Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG)**.

2. In the early stages of an incident, this gathering may be informal and may be short, but it allows an opportunity for each agency to identify the lead person from the responding agency or service. The frequency of interactions will be determined by the pace of the incident development or when significant developments occur. Establishing early communications, ensures that activities are coordinated between the services.

3. When the responding agencies **Come Together,** they can share and further develop situational awareness for each agency. At this meeting, they can decide on the appropriate methods for agencies to **Communicate** with each other during the response and as the emergency develops. They can also consider if any communication or public messaging is required for the general public or specific sections of society that may be affected. Where public messaging is required the OCG can determine how this will be achieved. This meeting may determine what level of interagency **Coordination** will be appropriate and how resources can be effectively managed.

4. This meeting is an initial stage in the coordinated interagency response and is used to determine if any further elements of response from the *Framework for Emergency Management* are required or appropriate.

5. If more formal coordination groups are required, the Operations Coordination Group (OpsCG) can identify these needs and request the formation of additional coordination groups, either on-site or off-site.

6. The 3Cs Interagency approach can assist in providing all responding services with a more complete overview of the incident and the planned response. Some potential outcomes are identified in the table below:

Decision of the OpsCG after conducting the 3Cs Interagency Approach	Potential Outcomes
Determine that the incident is minor with no further interagency impacts.	No further coordination is required. Each PRA/PES responds individually until the emergency is concluded.
Determine that the incident is minor, but continued communication and coordination may benefit the response.	Maintain the OpsCG and agree to meet at regular or relevant intervals to share situational awareness and individual PRA/PES plans.
Determine that the incident is significant enough to require permanent colocation and enhanced coordination.	Establish a TCG and identify a suitable location for an on-site TCC. Consider the request for the activation of an SCG.

Table 14. Operations Coordination Group - Potential Decision Outcomes

6.3.1 Come Together

7. For an effective coordinated response, each of the responding services must **Come Together** and introduce the lead person from each responding agency. In the case of the Fire Service, in the early stages of responding to an emergency, this will be the Incident Commander. In An Garda Síochána, this may be the senior Garda present, and in the National Ambulance Service, it may be the senior paramedic or paramedic supervisor. The initial meeting will identify the person in charge of each service and is an opportunity to share early situational awareness from each of the responding services. **Situational awareness** is critical in emergency response, as it informs decision-making. For Interagency Coordination to operate effectively, the PES need to have a common interpretation of the events or a shared situational awareness.

Shared Situational Awareness *is achieved through:*

(a) Information Sharing

Each PES has a unique set of skills aligned to their area of expertise that facilitates their ability to gather information, understand it and anticipate outcomes. They may have gathered additional information that has not been made available to the other PESs responding. There is an obligation on each to ensure that the other responding agencies have a consistent understanding of the current situation thereby ensuring a more effective response.

(b) Joint Understanding of Risk

Assessing, understanding and sharing knowledge of the risks is crucial to ensuring that all responding agencies are fully aware of the dangers and challenges posed by the incident. It is important that the PES collaborate to assess the full range of risks, including those affecting public safety, first responders, and the environment. This joint approach to risk ensures that all the involved agencies can effectively manage and mitigate hazards in real-time, enhancing the overall safety and effectiveness of the response.

It is important to note that while each PES operate under their own established safe systems of work and are not under the control of the Fire Service, it is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to inform them of the hazards, appropriate control measures and any potential risks associated with rescue efforts.

(c) Real-time Updates

Regular communications between the PES ensure that all agencies remain informed of the latest developments. This allows for each agency to apply timely and appropriate adjustments to their plans for the management of the incident on any new information observed.

8. Sharing situational awareness amongst the PES is required at all incidents, regardless of the size or the complexity. It is essential for effective interagency coordination. It ensures that each agency is working with the most accurate, up-to-date information, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to the overall response effort. This shared perspective reduces confusion, prevents conflicting actions, and helps optimise resource use.

6.3.2 Communicate

9. Effective communication is essential to ensure interagency working arrangements are maintained throughout the response. Continued communications are a key to aid in the development of shared situational awareness. Communications between each of the PES must be:

(a) Promptly Established

(i) To identify the key decision-makers from the other agencies

(ii) To ensure that a shared situational awareness is established

(iii) To agree on how interagency communications will be managed at the incident (regular meetings, shared radio channels, use of command support officers etc)

(iv) To determine if any public messaging is required

(v) To decide if a coordinated media response is appropriate

(b) Consistent

Agencies must use clear, standardised terminology to avoid misunderstandings, especially in high-pressure situations where rapid responses are required.

(c) Efficient

Establishing interagency communication channels ensures that critical information is exchanged quickly, reducing delays in decision-making and action. This is crucial, as each agency manages its own specific response but relies on a joint understanding of the incident to provide a coordinated response.

10. In essence, on-site communication enables coordination between the responding PRAs and PES which allows for a unified response thereby ensuring that all agencies are aligned in their efforts to manage the incident effectively.

6.3.3 Coordination

11. In order to achieve an efficient and effective interagency response, coordination is required. The establishing of an Operations Coordination Group will provide the appropriate forum to commence this coordination. The level of coordination required may be different at each emergency depending on the resources present, the scale and the nature of the emergency. The coordinated response of the PES is designed to flexibly adapt to the size and complexity of an incident thereby ensuring effective management from small-scale incidents up to major emergencies.

12. Individual PES will manage their respective responsibilities. At the initial **Come Together** meeting of the responding services, initial means of communication are established and areas for coordination are identified. As an incident escalates, coordination between the PES may need to become more structured with an increased frequency of communication essential to ensure that the shared situational awareness is maintained.

13. In specific circumstances, such as complex or prolonged incidents, it may be considered appropriate to request additional resources from the Local Authority, such as outdoor workers, engineers or environmental experts. The co-location of PRAs or PES may be deemed appropriate, and where this is required, a **Tactical Coordination Group (TCG)** should be established to oversee the coordination of all responding agencies. This is generally located at or near the incident, but in certain circumstances, such as severe weather or civil disturbances, it may be located away from the incident site. Each PRA must appoint a **Controller of Operations (CoO)** to represent the PRA in the TCG.

14. Where the incident is deemed complex and requires strategic interagency decision-making or oversight, or if a Major Emergency is declared, then the response may require the TCG to facilitate the continued on-site coordination of the PES. In addition, a **Strategic Coordination Group (SCG)** may be established. This is an off-site group, which may be established to manage resources, address broader impacts, and make high-level strategic decisions in consultation with the other PRA.

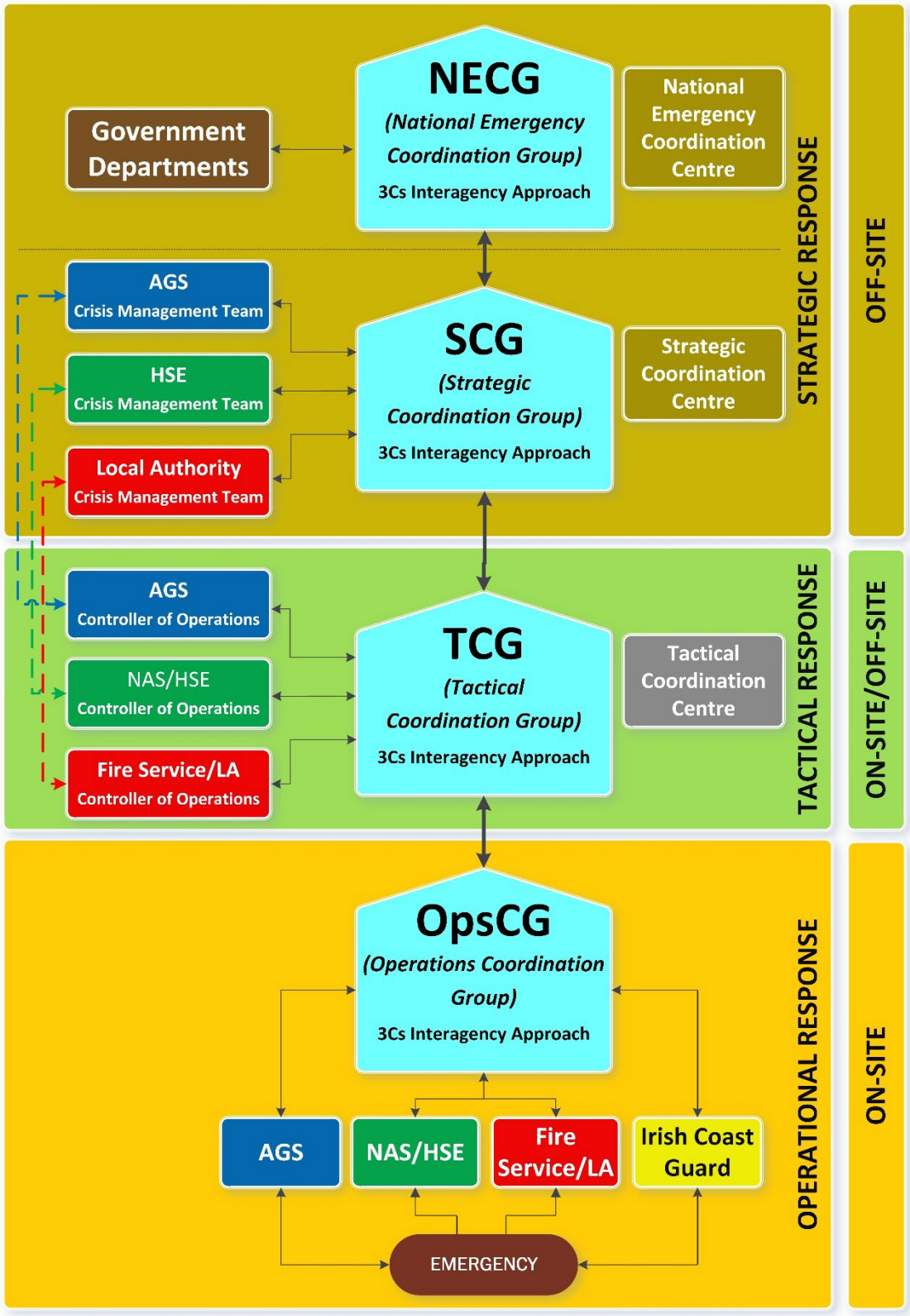


Diagram 31. Interagency coordination structures at large or complex incidents

These structures ensure that strategic coordination is maintained, with regular updates from the incident feeding into a centralised decision-making process to ensure a unified and coordinated response across all levels of command, the SCG comprises of senior managers from each PRA representing the **Crisis Management Team (CMT)** of each agency. This group may be supported by

Information Managers and Media Liaison Officers. It should be noted that any coordination group may be formed in isolation and does not require the lower group to be formed. For example, an SCG may be formed in response or in anticipation of an event where no TCG or OpsCG have been established.

6.3.4 Outcome of the 3Cs Interagency Approach

15. To achieve an effective coordinated approach where shared situational awareness is continued throughout the emergency, the 3Cs Interagency Approach may be an ongoing or repeated process. Repeated meetings of the OpsCG may be required at regular intervals or as the incident develops. The initial meetings may need to be brief and may be conducted in an 'over-the-bonnet' style approach before any incident command unit/structures are made available.

16. The outcome of the 3C's Interagency Approach will be the determination if any of the elements from the response phase from the *'Framework for Emergency Management*' are required. Any element of the Framework that will assist with the successful management of the emergency should be utilised. The Framework should be viewed as a suite of options which can be enacted independently of each other or collectively.

17. Some of the elements of the Framework that may be considered by the Incident Commander:

(a) Lead Agency Concept

Every Emergency Incident Type has a pre-nominated lead agency assigned in the *Framework for Emergency Management*. The lead agency is not responsible for the management of the entire emergency as each PRA and PES maintains responsibility for their own agency or service and their personnel. The lead agency will instigate and manage the coordination element of the interagency response. They will chair any meetings that take place and where meetings have not been agreed, they will determine when and where they will take place. The Local Authority is the lead agency for incidents such as Fires, Hazardous Materials, Aircraft and Rail Incidents, Weather Events, Environmental Incidents and Building Collapse/Explosion. A full list of the lead agency designations is contained in the *Framework for Emergency Management*.

(b) Site Management Plan

One of the outcomes of an interagency meeting may be a site management

plan, where the overall control of an emergency site and the surrounding area is agreed between the PES. This may include the identification of some or all of the following Hazard Zone, Inner and Outer Zones, Traffic Cordons, Access Points/Cordons, Rende Vous Points, location of onsite Tactical Coordination Centre, Casualty Clearing Stations, Holding Areas etc.

(c) Tactical Coordination Centre (TCC)

The Tactical Coordination Centre (TCC) is primarily a facility used by the TCG, which is made up of the Controllers of Operations for each PRA. It is where the co-location of responding agencies can take place. In addition, it accommodates support personnel such as Information Management Officers and Media Liaison Officers. It is designed to coordinate the command and control of the response, facilitate effective communication, ensure shared situation awareness and enable effective decision-making among the PRAs involved.

The TCC can be a standard or purpose-built vehicle, tent, or any temporary structure, or even a nearby building adjacent to the incident site if deemed more appropriate by the Controller of Operations. In certain situations, it may be appropriate for the TCC to be established off-site due to the nature of the event, such examples are severe weather, civil disturbance or emergencies with multiple site locations. This centre facilitates the coordination and management of the site and ensures that communication and information management systems are functioning correctly and passed between the agencies promptly.

Where a Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) has been established off-site, the Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) will liaise with this group and ensure a smooth flow of strategic-level information. By collocating the responding agencies, the TCG can make informed decisions, resolve on-site issues, and provide support for the broader response efforts, ensuring an efficient and organised approach to managing the emergency.

Note: The TCC should not be confused with the Fire Authorities Command Support Unit (CSU). The CSU assists in the operational and tactical management of the incident and may communicate with the TCG to ensure alignment with the overall incident plan. In short, the CSU is focused on the command and control of a single agency's efforts, while the TCC is where multi-agency coordination and decision-making occurs.

(d) Controller of Operations (CoO)

A Controller of Operations is the designated person from each PRA tasked with the overall management of their agency's on-site response to the emergency. Their primary responsibility is to control their agency's activities, make key decisions, and ensure their agency's efforts are fully aligned and coordinated with other PRAs. CoO for each PRA can be identified by the assigned tabards:



Diagram 32. Controller of Operations Tabards

When a PRA is the designated the "lead agency" for the response, as defined within the Framework they will also serve as the Chair of the TCG and manage the TCC.

Pending the arrival of an additional CoO at the incident site, the highest-ranking officer of the initial response team from each of the PES takes on the role of CoO for their respective agency. This officer will assume responsibility for managing the agency's operations at the site until relieved per their organisation's established protocols. For example, the Incident Commander may be required to undertake the role of CoO on behalf of the Local Authority until such time that they are relieved. In most cases, this role will be undertaken by the Rostered Senior Fire Officer pending the arrival of the Local Authority CoO. The Incident Command System and the *Framework for Emergency Management* provide sufficient flexibility to allow for such a role to be undertaken while maintaining an appropriate command structure to manage the operational response.

Each CoO is responsible for briefing their agency's Crisis Management Team, helping to ensure the overall response remains cohesive and well-structured. Furthermore, the Controller of Operations integrates additional services or agencies into the response as necessary, ensuring seamless collaboration. For example, the Local Authority CoO will liaise with the Local Authority Crisis Management Team.

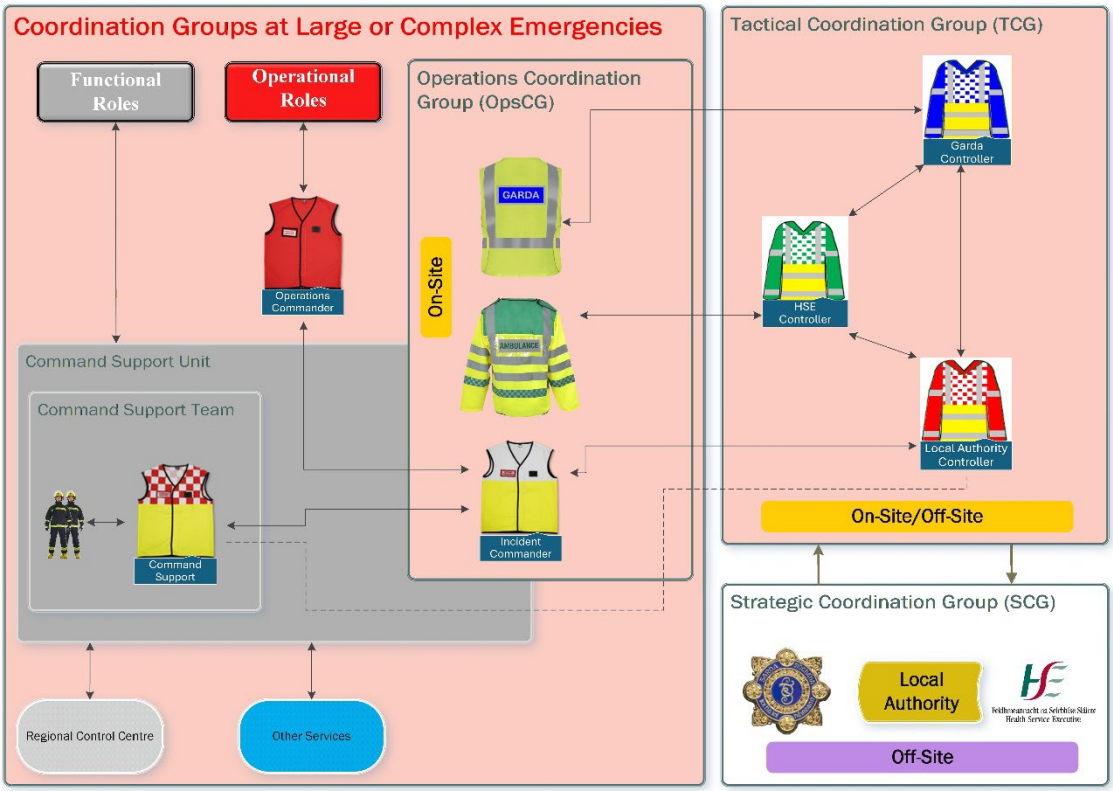


Diagram 33. Span of control at a large or complex emergency

(e) Declaration of a Major Emergency

The declaration of a Major Emergency is not a routine event and each PRA has personnel **authorised** and **trained** in the procedures for declaring a Major Emergency. When a Major Emergency is declared by one agency, the mobilisation procedures of the Major Emergency Plans of the three relevant agencies will be activated immediately. Rostered Senior Fire Officers are typically among those in the Local Authority that are authorised to declare a Major Emergency. The mechanism and format for declaring a Major Emergency is detailed in the individual PRA Major Emergency Plan.

A Major Emergency is defined as:

an event, which may occur with little or no warning, and causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption to the community, to essential services, or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure. The scale or impact is such that it may necessitate the activation and mobilisation of additional resources or expertise to ensure an effective, coordinated response. These may be provided by regional, national or international entities

Incident Commanders who are not authorised to declare a Major Emergency

but consider that the incident meets the criteria of a Major Emergency, will request the RCC to mobilise and brief the RSFO.

The absence of a declaration or the decision to not declare a Major Emergency does not reduce or impact on the need for interagency coordination. Any element of the Framework can be utilised at any emergency where the outcome of the 3Cs interagency approach determines it is appropriate to do so.

6.4 OTHER ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES

1. Where an Incident Commander requires the attendance of another organisation, agency or body (i.e. one that is not a PRA/PES), at the scene of an incident to assist in the delivery of the incident management plan, they will operate under the control and supervision of the requesting service. Such organisations may include Utility Providers, Civil Defence, the Irish Red Cross, environmental agencies, or other private sector specialist contractors. Such bodies must be provided with an overview of the hazards and associated risks before deployment, including the contribution required of them. This ensures that they can operate safely and in line with the overall response strategy.

2. Where such bodies attend the incident at the request of the fire service, the fire service retains responsibility for overseeing their activities, ensuring they follow established safety protocols and work within the designated zones under supervision. To manage the attendance of such bodies, the "**Visitors Roll Board"** is completed by the **Command Support Officer** upon their arrival. This process tracks the presence of external personnel on the incident ground that are under the control of the fire service, ensuring accountability and safety compliance. It remains the responsibility of the fire service to supervise these personnel throughout their time on-site, until such time that they are no longer involved in the incident response and have left the scene.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Nominal Roll Boards

FIRE AUTHORITY	_____
STATION	_____
APPLIANCE CALL SIGN	_____
APPLIANCE REG. NO.	_____
OFFICER	
DRIVER	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	

White – Pumping Appliances

FIRE AUTHORITY	
STATION	
APPLIANCE CALL SIGN	
APPLIANCE REG. NO.	
OFFICER	
DRIVER	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	

Orange – Emergency Tenders

FIRE AUTHORITY	_____
STATION	_____
APPLIANCE CALL SIGN	_____
APPLIANCE REG. NO.	_____
OFFICER	
DRIVER	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	
FF	

Yellow – All Other Specials

OFFICERS ROLL BOARD	
FIRE AUTHORITY	_____
NAME	_____
RANK	_____
CALL SIGN	_____
VEHICLE REG NO.	_____

Red - Officers

VISITORS ROLL BOARD	
ORGANISATION	_____
TIME OF ARRIVAL	_____
VEHICLE REG. NO.	_____
REASON / TASK	_____
	_____
NAME 1	
NAME 2	
NAME 3	
NAME 4	

Blue – Visitors

(under the control of the Fire & Rescue Service)

Appendix 2. Incident Command Boards

Appendix 2.1. Level 1/Level 2 Incident Command Board

INCIDENT COMMAND BOARD – LEVEL __

INCIDENT COMMANDER	COMMAND SUPPORT OFFICER	88:00
LOCATION	TIME OF CALL	
	TIME STARTED	

APPLIANCES – OFFICERS – OTHER AGENCIES

NAME/STATION	CALL SIGN	NO. OF RIDERS	LOCATIONS AND TASK OF CREW/OFFICERS	SUPERVISED BY

TACTICAL GOALS

VENTILATION	☐	SALVAGE	☐	GAS	☐
CONTAIN FIRE	☐	FIRE INVESTIGATION	☐	ELECTRICITY	☐
PRIMARY SEARCH	☐	ADEQUATE RESOURCES	☐	WATER SERVICE	☐
SECONDARY SEARCH	☐	CHEMDATA	☐	POLLUTION	☐
INNER CORDON	☐	DECONTAMINATION	☐	AMBULANCE	☐
OUTER CORDON	☐	TACTICAL PLAN	☐	GARDAÍ	☐
ENVIRONMENTAL	☐	OTHER AGENCIES	☐	COUNCIL	☐
RISK UPDATE	☐		☐	PHOTO	☐
	☐		☐	HAZMAT	☐
	☐		☐		☐

INCIDENT DETAILS AND MESSAGES

TACTICAL MODE _____

SECTOR AND FUNCTIONAL OFFICERS

SECTOR/FUNCTION	NAMES
INCIDENT COMMANDER	
OPERATIONS COMMANDER	
SECTOR COMMANDER___	
SECTOR COMMANDER___	
COMMAND SUPPORT OFFICER	
SAFETY OFFICER	
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	
WATER OFFICER	
BA OFFICER	
HAZMAT OFFICER	

INCIDENT PLAN

INCIDENT COMMAND BOARD – LEVEL __

INCIDENT COMMANDER	COMMAND SUPPORT OFFICER	88:00
LOCATION	TIME OF CALL	
	TIME STARTED	

APPLIANCES – OFFICERS – OTHER AGENCIES

NAME/STATION	CALL SIGN	NO. OF RIDERS	LOCATIONS AND TASK OF CREW/OFFICERS	SUPERVISED BY

TACTICAL GOALS

VENTILATION	☐	SALVAGE	☐	GAS	☐
CONTAIN FIRE	☐	FIRE INVESTIGATION	☐	ELECTRICITY	☐
PRIMARY SEARCH	☐	ADEQUATE RESOURCES	☐	WATER SERVICE	☐
SECONDARY SEARCH	☐	CHEMDATA	☐	POLLUTION	☐
INNER CORDON	☐	DECONTAMINATION	☐	AMBULANCE	☐
OUTER CORDON	☐	TACTICAL PLAN	☐	GARDAÍ	☐
ENVIRONMENTAL	☐	OTHER AGENCIES	☐	COUNCIL	☐
RISK UPDATE	☐		☐	PHOTO	☐
	☐		☐	HAZMAT	☐
	☐		☐		☐

AIDE MEMOIRE

INCIDENT DETAILS AND MESSAGES

TACTICAL MODE _____

SECTOR AND FUNCTIONAL OFFICERS

SECTOR/FUNCTION	NAMES
INCIDENT COMMANDER	
OPERATIONS COMMANDER	
SECTOR COMMANDER__	
SECTOR COMMANDER__	
COMMAND SUPPORT OFFICER	
SAFETY OFFICER	
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	
WATER OFFICER	
BA OFFICER	
HAZMAT OFFICER	

INCIDENT PLAN

INCIDENT COMMAND STRUCTURE AIDE MEMOIRE



APPLIANCES – OFFICERS – OTHER AGENCIES

NAME/STATION	CALL SIGN	NO. OF RIDERS	LOCATIONS AND TASK OF CREW/OFFICERS	SUPERVISED BY

RESOURCES

AT HOLDING AREA

ORDERED FROM CONTROL

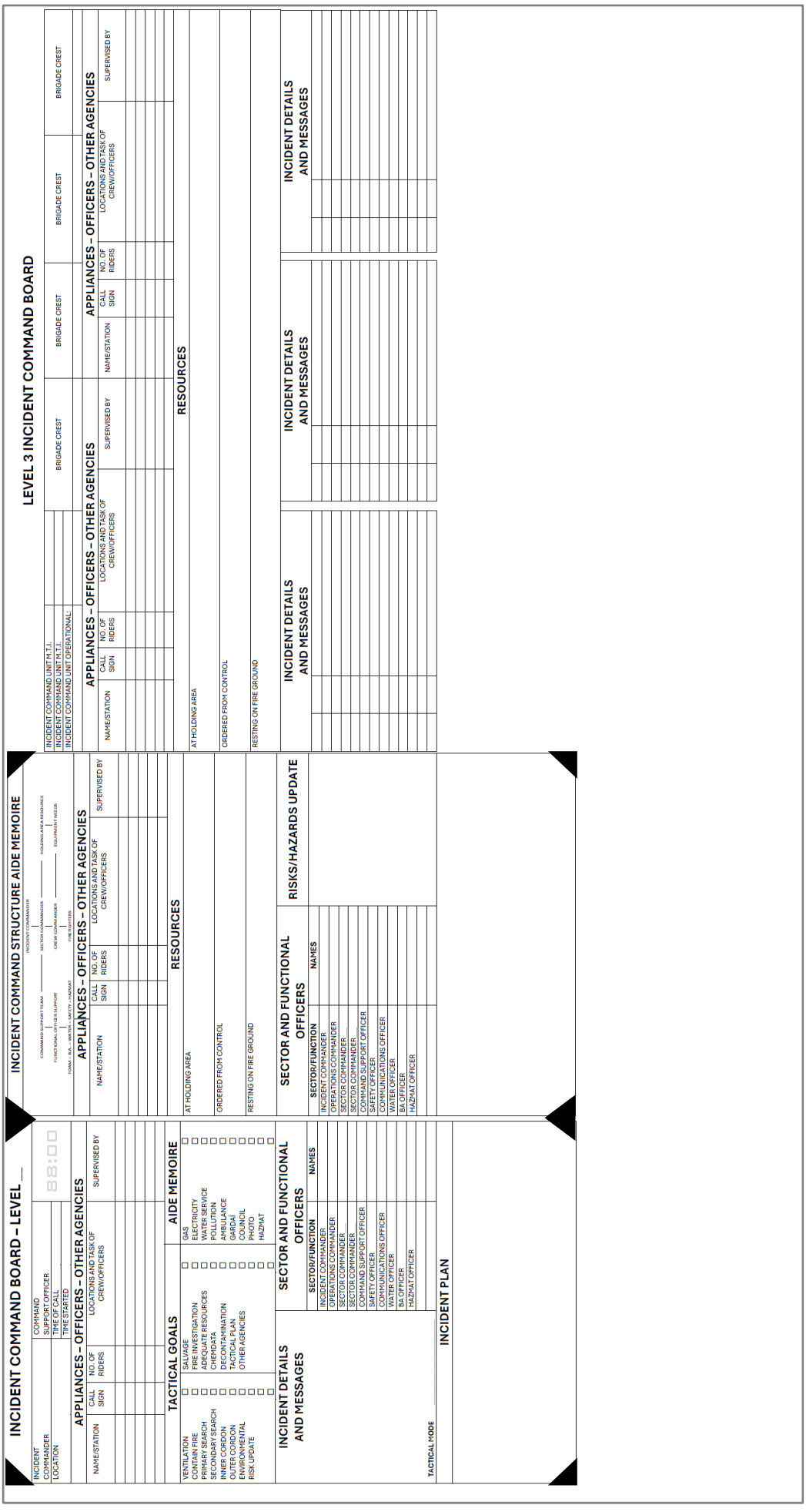
RESTING ON FIRE GROUND

SECTOR AND FUNCTIONAL OFFICERS

SECTOR/FUNCTION	NAMES
INCIDENT COMMANDER	
OPERATIONS COMMANDER	
SECTOR COMMANDER__	
SECTOR COMMANDER__	
COMMAND SUPPORT OFFICER	
SAFETY OFFICER	
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	
WATER OFFICER	
BA OFFICER	
HAZMAT OFFICER	

RISKS/HAZARDS UPDATE

Appendix 2.3. Level 3/4 Incident Command Board



Appendix 3. Prompt Cards

Appendix 3.1. Incident Commander Prompt Card



3.3. Command Structures & Resources





ESB | Gas Networks Ireland | Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)

RSFO

Irish Coast Guard | epa

Óglaigh na hÉireann – Irish Defence Forces

Specialist Providers





Local Authority Resources

Activation of the Emergency Management Framework?

3.4. Communications

3Cs
- **C**ome Together
- **C**ommunicate
- **C**oordinate

- Identify Lead Persons of PESs
- Ensure **Shared Situational Awareness**
  - *Info/Risks/Updates*
- Establish Common Goals
- Coordinate Activities

Fireground Communications

RSFO — *Provide Info. Updates*

Public Information

Media — *Authorised to Engage?*

3.5. Risk Management

1. Perform Dynamic Risk Assessment
2. Assess System of Work
3. Review Tactical Mode
4. Establish Hazard/Inner/Outer Zones
5. Appoint Safety Officer if deemed necessary



3.6. Transfer of Command

Ensure a review of objectives and the current incident plan is carried out before taking over an incident. ***Be aware of Decision Traps.*** Consider:

DRA | **Available Resources** | **Operational Sectors** | **Functional Sectors** | **Bias** | **Site Management Layout**

Stay & Advise *(without taking charge):*

"Carry on in command, as you are"

Stay & formally "take charge":

"I am now assuming command of this incident"

Communicated to Fireground & RCC

***Note**: the highest ranking officer retains overall responsibility*

4. Implementing the Plan

1. Brief the Sector Commander(s) or crew on the plan
2. Seek confirmation of plan
3. Resource the plan
4. Liaise with Command Support
5. Implement the plan
6. Active monitoring - ensure anticipated outcomes are achieved
7. Review the plan
8. Record key decisions & rationale

5. Recovery Phase

- Scene Preservation
- Transfer Responsibility
- Equipment Recovery
- Crew Welfare
- CISM
- Operational Readiness

6. Post Incident Review

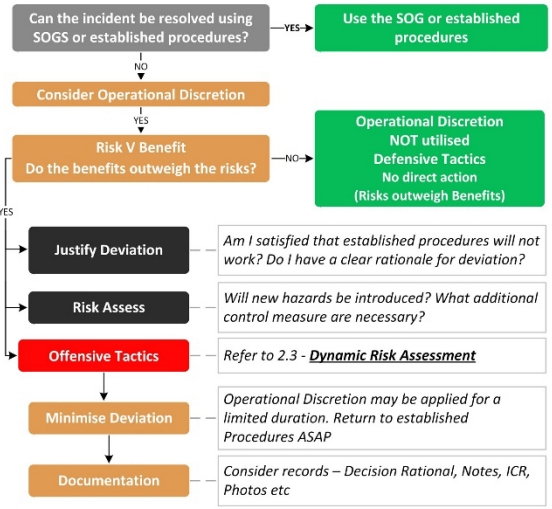
- Hot Debrief
- National Incident Debrief Tool
- Identify Learning Opportunities

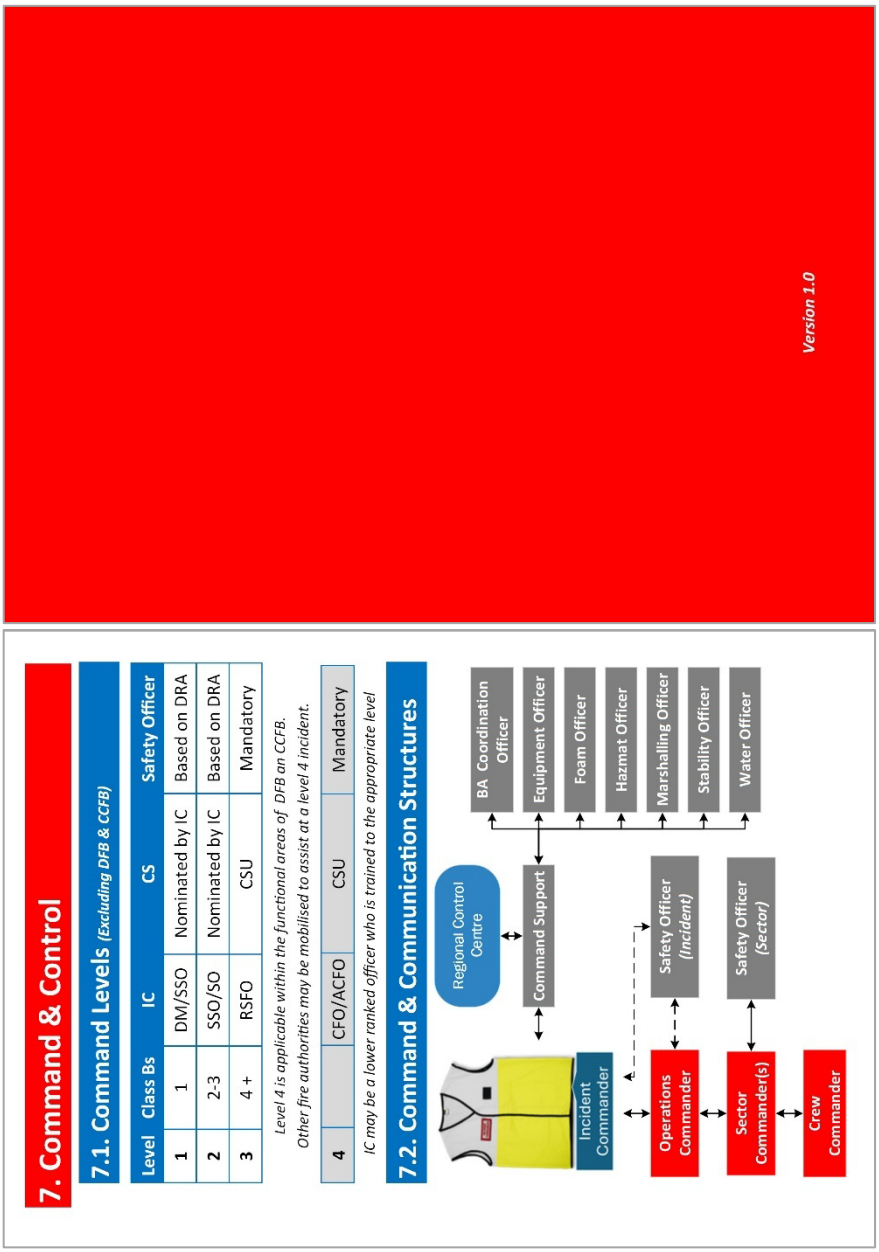
6. Operational Discretion

The ability to exercise professional judgment to deviate from Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) or established procedures when strict adherence would prevent a safe and effective resolution, or when following them would increase risk to personnel or the public.

Where action is required to address:

- Incidents For Which Established Procedures Do Not Exist
- Unforeseen Circumstances … *to tackle unexpected risks*
- Immediate Risk to Life
- Rapidly Evolving Situations & Incident Escalation





Note: this prompt card may be locally amended to reflect the command levels, resource thresholds and rank structures of DFB and CCFB

Stiúrthóireacht Náisiúnta um Dóiteáin agus Bainistiocht Éigeandála

National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management

National Incident Command System

RSFO PROMPT CARD

This prompt card does not contain all elements of the NICS and therefore the IC should be familiar with the NICS manual

This prompt card should be used in conjunction with the Incident Commander Prompt Card

1. Mobile to Incident

- Request Further Information
- Query FRS Resources Deployed
- Consider Potential Hazards
- Consider Additional Resources
- Listen to RCC Communications

Prepare



2. In Attendance

1. Log attendance with Command Support
2. Review Incident Command Board/Incident Management Software

2.1. Establish Situational Awareness

Brief from CS / Brief from IC	Nature?	Hazards?	Deployed?
	Scale?	Risks?	Mobilised?
	Complexity?	Controls?	Sectors?

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

REVIEW	
	Strategic Objectives
	Tactical Priorities
	Sectors and Tactical Modes
	Actions to Date

360°

- *What I observe?*
- *What others can tell me?*

Transfer of command should not take place until situational appraisal is complete

2.2. Transfer of Command

***RSFO** options….*

1. ***Happy & Go** - Inform IC you are departing scene.*
2. ***Stay & Advise** - (without taking charge):*

"Carry on in command, as you are"

***Note:** the highest ranking officer retains overall responsibility*

Incident Audit

Consider undertaking **Incident Inspection/Audit**

Note:

- *Safety Issues must be immediately addressed*
- *Deficiencies should be discussed with IC prior to departing*
- *Identify future training or equipment needs.*

3. ***Stay & Take Charge:***

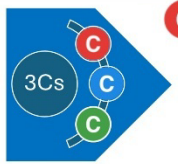
"I am now assuming command of this incident"

***Note:** Change in IC must be communicate to Fireground &*

Consider assigning IC the role of Ops Commander

Reference the Incident Commander Prompt Card

3. 3Cs Interagency Approach



Come Together

- Identify Lead Persons of PESs
- Ensure **Shared Situational Awareness**
  - *Info/Risks/Updates*
- Identified roles and responsibilities for PES
- Agree a site management plan
- Agree on traffic management *(if appropriate)*

C ommunicate

- Establish a method of communication .
- Agree on the mechanism to update each PES. *(Considered a common Tetra channel or regular meetings)*
- Consider the need for public information and agree on a consistent message.

C oordinate

- Establish common objectives and priorities.
- Determine if:
  1) *a higher level of coordination is required (TCG or SCG).*
  2) *colocation of PRAs is necessary?*
  3) *a Controller of Operations for each agency is required.*
  4) *there are off-site implications that need to be addressed.*
- Considered sub-plans that may be relevant *(Media, Mass Fatality, SEVESO - External Emergency Plans, Rest Centres etc.).*
- Identify additional resources that may be required.
- Identify areas where other PESs can assist the FRS & vice versa.

4. Other Considerations

During	**County Fire Cover**	**Relief Crews**
Welfare - *Hydration/Food/Fatigue*	**LA Resources/Sections**	
Advice - *business/home owner/others*	**Media Management**	
Activation of the Framework for Emergency Management		
Post Incident	**Decontamination** - *Equipment/PPE/Firefighters*	
Return to Operational Readiness	**Accidents/Injuries**	
Equipment - *Damage/Replacement*	**Brief** - *CFO/DOS/CEO*	
CISM	**Incident Debrief** - *Fire Service/PRAs/RCC/Others?*	

5. Serious Incident Management Procedure

- *Death serious injury of a firefighter*
- *Death serious injury of 3rd party(ies) as a result of an FRS activity*
- *An accident involving injury to multiple parties (firefighter and or 3rd parties) as a result of FRS activities*

Implement Local Authority Post Incident Management Procedure

Contact: **CFO** **DOS**

Initial Steps:
1. Make scene safe
2. Request additional resources
3. Evacuate non-essential personnel if possible
4. Record witness details
5. Photograph/Document

Refrain from speaking to AGS or HSA without legal advice. Direct them to the L.A Health & Safety Advisor or your line manager

6. Framework for Emergency Management

6.1. Activating Elements of the Framework

Note: *Framework can be used to mobilise the resources of the LA* ***only***

Use ***E.T.H.A.N.E.***

6.2. Declaration of a Major Emergency

Note: *Activation of the MEP mobilises all PRAs*

Local Authority

This is ..... *(Name, Rank and Service).* A ..... *(Type of incident)* ..... has occurred/is imminent at ..... *(Location).*
As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists/is imminent. Please activate the mobilization arrangements in the XXX County Council Major Emergency Plan.

M ajor Emergency Declared
E xact Location of the emergency
T ype of Emergency
H azards, present and potential
A ccess/egress routes
N umber and types of Casualties
E mergency services present and required

Note: this prompt card may be locally amended to reflect the needs and rank structure of full-time fire authorities

Appendix 4. Aides Memoire for Operational Roles

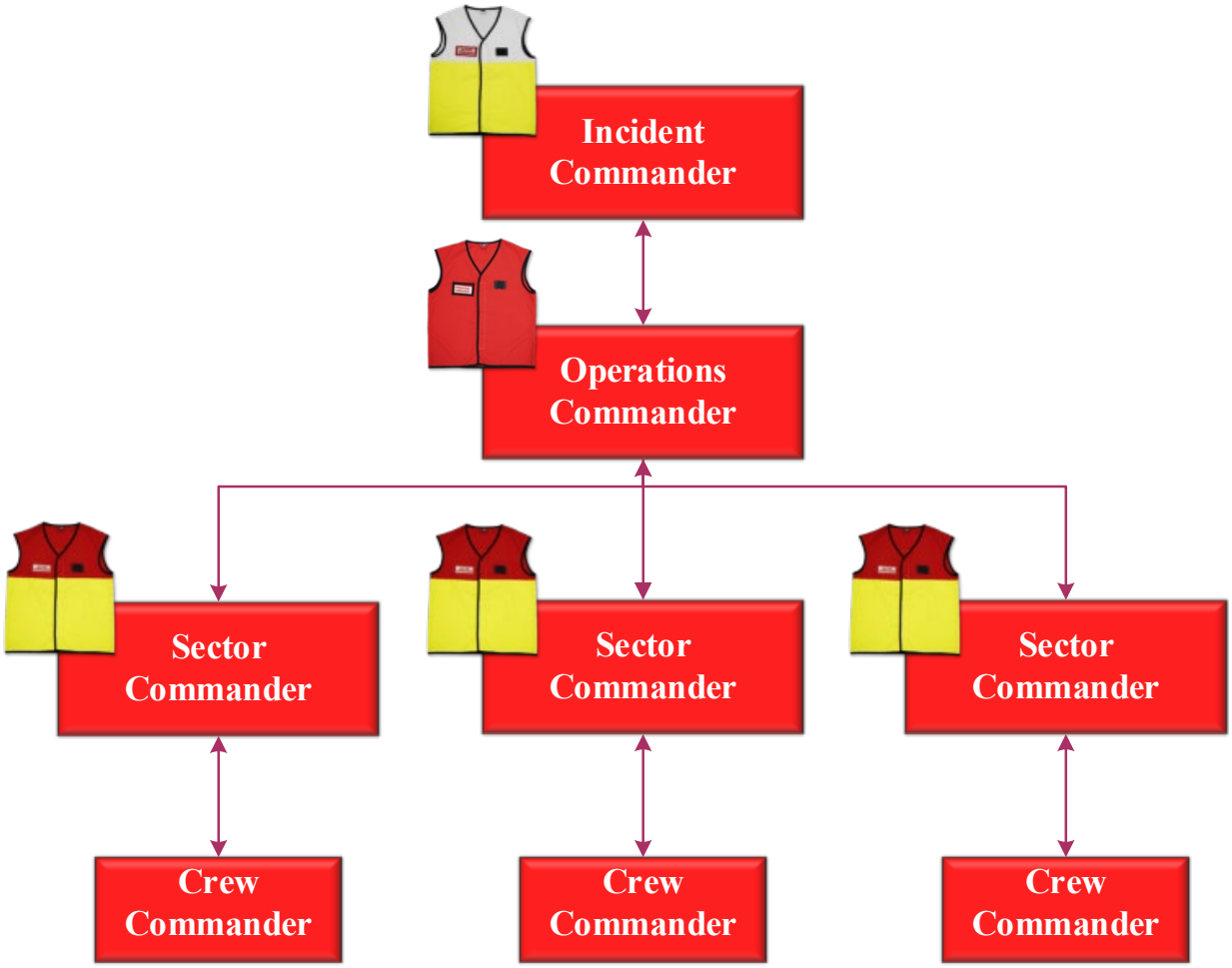
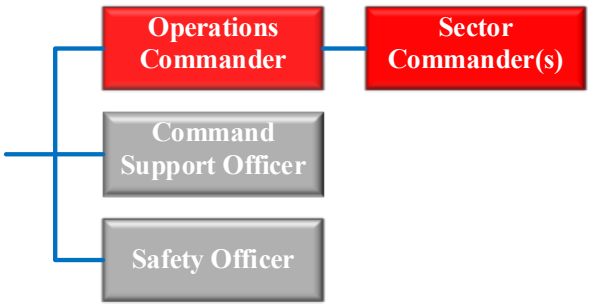


Diagram 34. Reporting Structure for Operational Roles

Appendix 4.1. Incident Commander

Incident Commander





Function

- Management of all activities undertaken to control the incident.
- Management of the interface with organisations and people working outside the incident command structure (i.e. other PESs and Utilities)
- Management of the interface with organisations, communities and people affected by, or likely to be affected by, the incident.

Officer Responsible

- The first attending officer will be the initial Incident Commander.
- The Incident Commander will not necessarily be the most senior officer present. However, the Senior Ranking Officer will carry responsibility for the incident.

Brief

- Establish Situational Awareness
- Undertake the 3Cs Interagency Approach. (Ensure Shared Situational Awareness)
- Carry out a Dynamic Risk Assessment.
- Develop an Incident Management Plan. (Establish Strategic Objectives and Tactical Priorities)
- Declare a Tactical Mode.
- Deploy personnel and resources to meet strategic objectives
- (Rescue, Containment, Conservation of Property /Environment).
- Review the Dynamic Risk Assessment

Duties

- Upon arrival announce via the radio, the establishment of command and provide a brief description of the incident.
- Don the "Incident Commander" tabard.
- Established Situational Awareness through direct observation and communication.
- Conduct a Dynamic Risk Assessment.
- Declare a Tactical Mode.
- Establish longer-term Strategic Objectives and Tactical Priorities
- Develop the Incident Management Plan.
- Establish an effective command structure.
- Initiate, maintain and control the communications process, relative to the complexity of the incident.
- Ensure that safety measures are implemented.
- Request and maintain adequate resources for incident needs.
- Assign officers to operational / functional sectors.
- Provide co-ordination, direction, guidance and resources to Sector Officers and other

agencies.

- Review, re-evaluate and revise the Incident Management Plan as the incident dictates.
- Ensure that a communications log of all Command decisions is maintained.
- Ensure the implementation, continuity, transfer and termination of Command.
- Bring the incident to a close.
- Ensure that all written records and documentation are collected and / or completed
- Identify learning opportunities. Consider Hot Debrief or National Incident Debrief Tool.

Appendix 4.2. Operations Commander

Operations Commander



Function

- To assist the Incident Commander by co-ordinating and managing a number of Operational sectors in order to maintain manageable spans of control, and to ensure the safety of personnel.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander will designate an officer of suitable rank and experience to undertake the role.
- The Operations Commander may, dependant on the prevailing circumstances, be positioned close to the Command Support Unit. This will enable verbal communication with the IC

Brief

- Prior to assuming this command role, the Operations Commander must ensure they receive a full brief and understand what is required. Establish Situational Awareness
- Confirm the Tactical Mode for the sectors with the Incident Commander and establish communications with the Incident / Sector Commanders.
- Develop Tactical Plan based on Tactical Priorities
- Undertake the 3Cs Interagency Approach. (Ensure Shared Situational Awareness)
- If you do not have sufficient resources or cannot achieve your tasks, inform the Incident Commander.

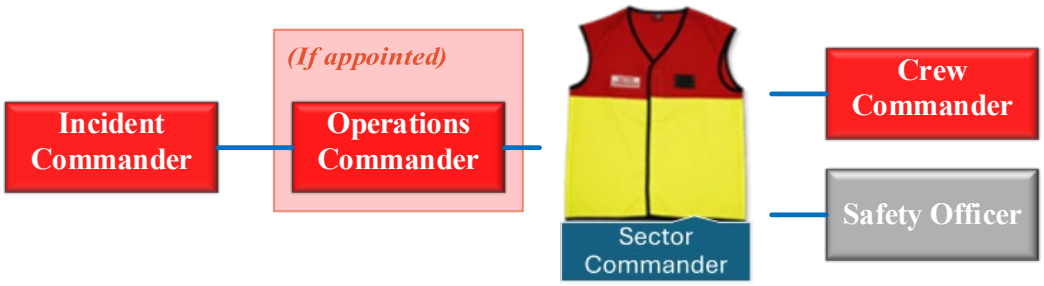
Duties

- Don the "Operations Commander" tabard.
- Established Situational Awareness through direct observation and communication
- Ensure a dynamic risk assessment has been carried out.
- Allocate equipment and personnel to meet the Tactical Priorities established
- Carry out an inspection of the sectors allocated and advise the Incident Commander of the current status of operations within each sector.
- Supervise and co-ordinate the activities of sectors allocated, and support Sector Commanders.
- Co-ordinate requests and requirements of Sector Commanders.
- Monitor and re-direct sector activities as required.
- Monitor general fire ground safety practices and receive reports from the Safety Officer with regard to any unsafe practices or unsafe features identified.
- Introduce additional control measures as necessary.
- Forecast and advise the Incident Commander of the need for additional resources.
- Keep the Incident Commander briefed as to changes within the sectors by regular situation reports.
- Inform Sector Commanders of developments in the overall strategy for dealing with the incident.
- Withdraw resources as operations are completed.

- Plan and arrange for the relief of personnel within your sectors.
- Appoint another Operations Commander if you need relief and inform the Incident Commander.
- Identify learning opportunities. Consider Hot Debrief or National Incident Debrief Tool

Appendix 4.3. Sector Commander

Sector Commander



Function

- To assist the Incident Commander in the management of incident ground activities by assuming responsibility for a designated operational or functional unit of the incident ground.
- Ensure the implementation of the strategy and tactics relevant to the objectives set for the sector by the Incident Commander.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander may designate this role to any officer based on the needs of the situation and the level of responsibility.

Brief

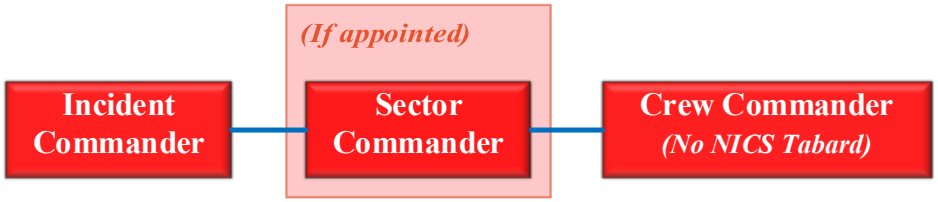
- Prior to assuming this role, ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Establish Situational Awareness.
- Determine and confirm the Tactical Mode for the particular sector with the Incident Commander.
- Establish and maintain your call sign and communications with the Incident / Operations Commander.
- If you do not have sufficient resources or cannot achieve your tasks, inform the Incident / Operations Commander

Duties

- Don the appropriate "Sector Commander" tabard.
- Established Situational Awareness through direct observation and communication.
- Coordinate equipment and supervise personnel to ensure that tactical plans and priorities are implemented effectively and safely.
- Supervise all operations in the sector allocated.
- Confirm and maintain designated channels within the sector.
- Monitor and manage the health and safety of all personnel assigned to your sector.
- Re-direct sector activities as required / necessary.
- Forecast and request additional resources from the
- Incident / Operations Commander.
- Co-ordinate activities with other Sectors.
- Keep the Incident / Operations Commander briefed as to changes within the sector by regular situation reports.
- Ensure crews and crew commanders are informed of the overall strategy for dealing with the incident.
- Withdraw resources as operations are completed.
- Plan and arrange for the relief of personnel within your sector.
- Appoint another Sector Commander if you must leave your sector, and inform the Incident / Operations Commander.

Appendix 4.4. Crew Commander

Crew Commander



Function

- To assist the Incident / Sector Commander in the management of fire ground activities by assuming responsibility for the completion of assigned tasks to achieve the overall objectives of the Incident Commander.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident / Sector Commander may designate this role to any officer based on the needs of the prevailing situation and the level of responsibility.

Brief

- Ensure you are fully briefed and have a full understanding of the task objective. Confirm the tactical mode.
- Confirm designated communications with Incident / Sector Commander.

Duties

- Assess the hazards / risks associated with the assigned task.
- Confirm P.P.E is appropriate.
- Inform personnel of precautions and protective measures to be applied.
- Supervise the use of equipment and the application of operational procedures.
- Monitor conditions in the risk area and inform the Incident/Sector Commander of any significant developments.
- React immediately to adverse changes and withdraw all personnel from the risk area without delay where necessary.
- Request additional resources from the Incident / Sector Commander.
- On completion of the task / assignment report to the Incident / Sector Commander.
- Ensure the welfare of personnel, particularly at arduous or protracted incidents.

Appendix 5. Aide Memoires for Functional Roles:

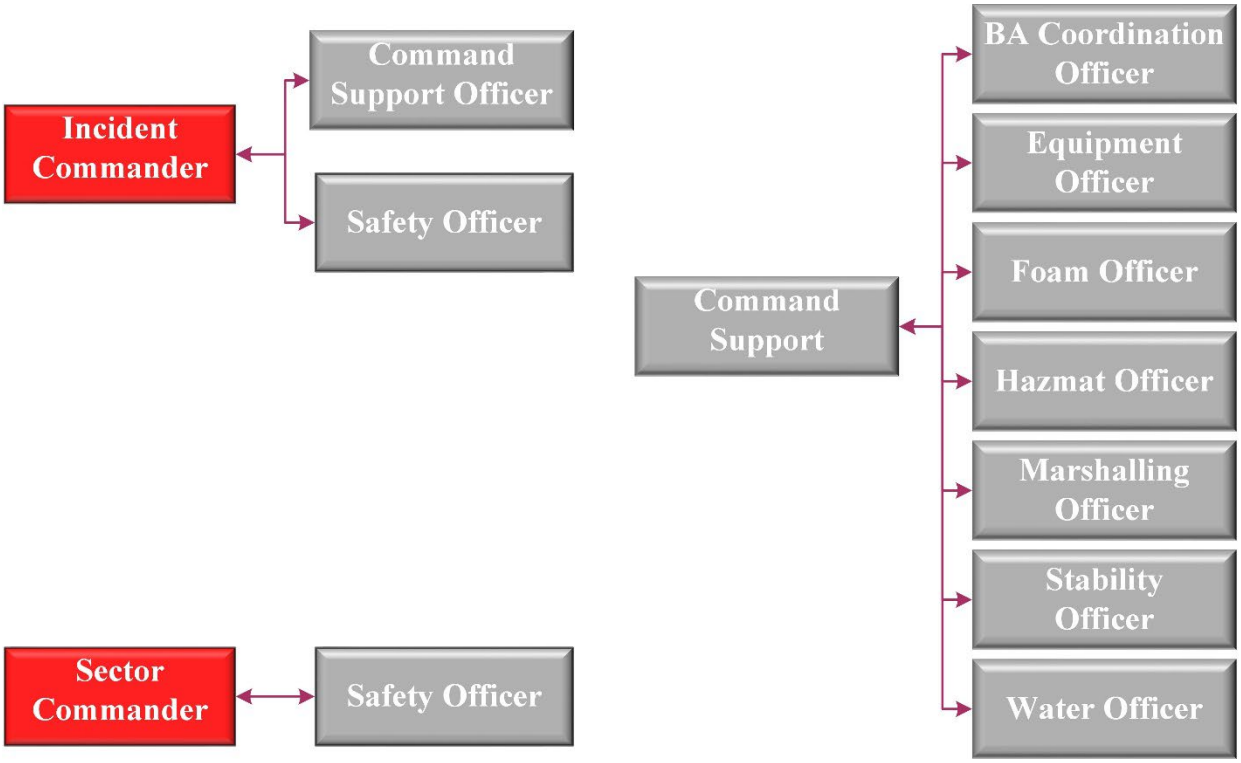
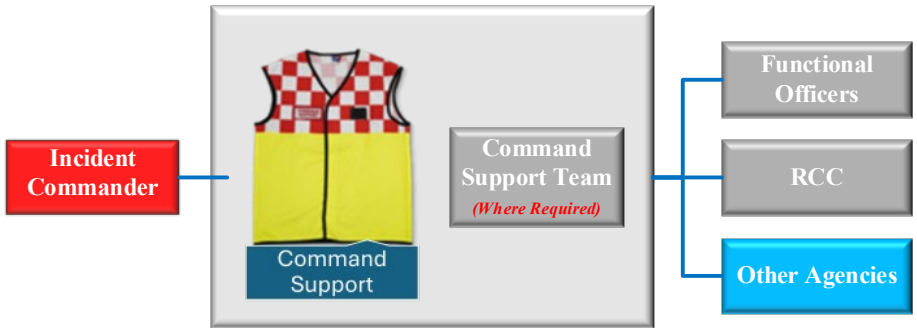


Diagram 35. Reporting Structure for Functional Roles

Appendix 5.1. Command Support Officer

Command Support Officer



Function

- To assist the Incident Commander by the management and control of all Functional Officers and support activities.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander will designate this role to any individual with suitable training and experience based upon the needs of a particular incident.
- At large scale incidents the R.C.C. will mobilise a Command Support Unit in accordance with brigade mobilising procedures.

Brief

- Prior to assuming this role ensure that you have been fully briefed by the Incident Commander and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident Commander, Functional Sectors and the R.C.C.
- Monitor fire-ground communications and channels used by external agencies, as appropriate.
- Advise the Incident Commander of issues requiring his/her attention.
- Request and deploy resources for support activities.
- If further resources are necessary to achieve your tasks, inform the Incident Commander immediately.

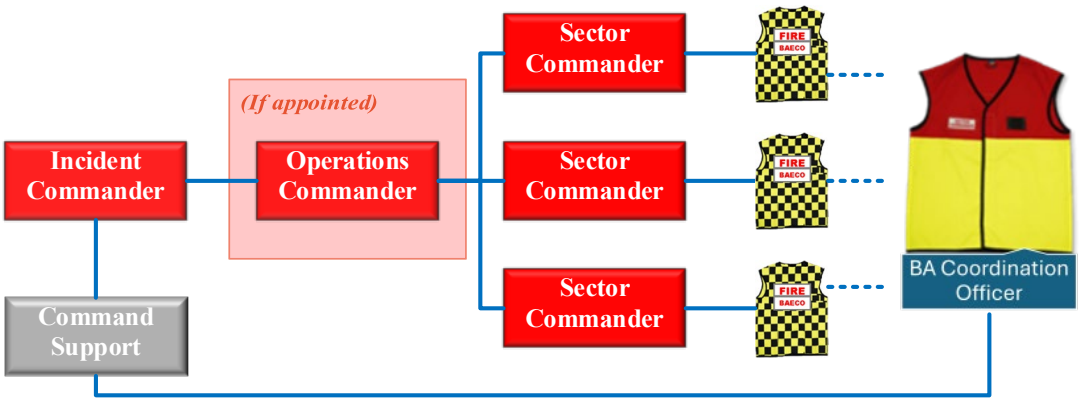
Duties

- Don the "Command Support Officer" tabard.
- Ideally, communicate with the Incident Commander "face to face" and monitor transmissions from Sector Commanders on the assigned channel.
- Ensure designated Command Post vehicle is sited appropriately and is the only one with flashing beacons operating.
- Obtain all necessary information from R.C.C. i.e. appliances attending and retrieve the initial Command Support message log.
- Inform the Incident Commander and R.C.C. when the command post is operating.
- Collect / return Officers /Appliance Personal Tallies or Nominal Roll Boards and handheld radios.
- Ensure situation reports are received from Sector and Functional Officers regularly (20 mins.)
- Maintain information boards in up-to-date, and record sector identifications and officers' duties as the assignments are made.
- Maintain a record of the outcome of the risk assessment and any review, as well as any operational decisions or actions taken as a result of it.
- Ensure Officers and supporting appliances report to the command post and are only deployed on the instructions of the Incident Commander.

- Liaise with Crew Commanders of special appliances to support operational sectors.
- Formulate and transmit messages on behalf of the Incident Commander.
- Provide assistance to the Incident Commander with forward planning, e.g. relief personnel, welfare, etc.
- Facilitate and co-ordinate briefings /meeting /discussions at the request of the Incident Commander.
- On change of either the Incident Commander or Command Support, ensure all relevant information is passed to the new Incident Commander or Command Support
- Prepare and plan for the transfer of duties to a relief Command Support Officer as necessary.

Appendix 5.2. BA Coordination Officer

BA Coordination Officer



Function

- On the direction of the incident commander, to support the management and coordination of BA resources and logistics across multiple sectors during large scale or complex incidents where two or more Stage 2 Entry Control Points are in operation.

Officer Responsible

- The BA Coordination Officer wherever possible should hold the minimum rank of **Sub Officer** with appropriate training, knowledge, and experience.

Brief

- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident / Sector Commander via Command Support as appropriate.
- Identify the location of each BA Entry Control Point and record the name of each BAECO and maintain communications as appropriate.
- If unable to achieve your tasks in support of BA operational activities inform the Command Support Officer immediately.

Duties

- Don the "BA Coordination Officer" Tabard and inform Command Support of delegated role.
- Establish coordination in a safe, accessible location within the Inner Zone and inform BAECOs and Sector Commander that a "BA Coordination Officer" has now been appointed to assist BA operations.
- Communicate on the designated radio channel or "face to face" with sector BAECOs and Command Support wherever practical.
- Request the assistance of personnel to support BA activities where incidents are large or complex.
- **Coordinate Logistics**, ensuring:
    1. Persons are appointed to collect, transport and resupply BA cylinders and ancillary equipment.
    2. The establishment of the incident Full and Empty cylinder banks.
    3. The maintenance of used BA Sets where requested.
    4. BA Emergency Teams are resourced with the appropriate equipment for immediate deployment, including the provision of emergency air supply kits.
    5. TICs, radios and other battery-operated equipment are readily available for deployment, including replacement powerpacks.
- **Assist in the management of BA Wearer welfare**, including:
    1. The provision of hydration and hygiene supplies to all BA Wearers.

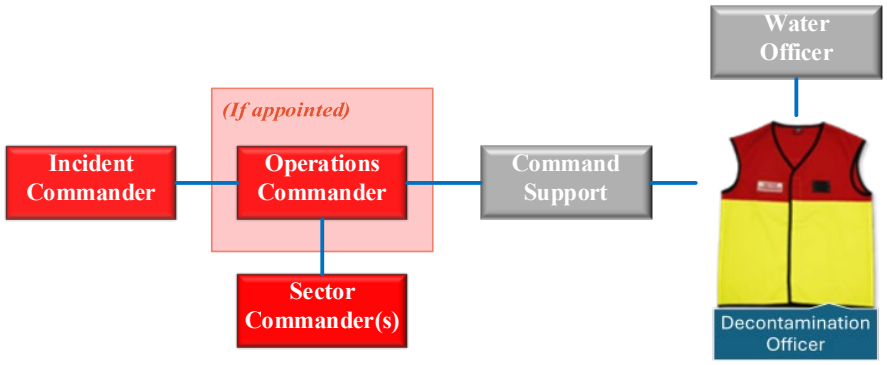
- **Manage Contamination Control**, ensuring:
    1. Decontamination procedures are applied that are suitable to the incident type and the level of exposure. (reference should be made to the fire authority's policy on protecting of firefighters from the products of combustion)
    2. Resources are appointed for the collection and the bagging of all contaminated PPE for transport.
    3. The provision of clean PPE to BA Wearers, or a suitable alternative, post BA activities.
    4. BA equipment is decontaminated, or transported for decontamination, post BA activities.
- **Maintain up to date records** of:
    1. The number of BA Wearers deployed.
    2. Equipment available on the incident ground, including BA Sets (complete), BA Cylinders, TICs, emergency air supply kits etc.
    3. Equipment and resource available within the fire authority including BA Sets (complete), BA Cylinders, TICs, emergency air supply kits etc.
    4. Communications and decisions made.

- **Coordinate with Command Support** and ensure all actions are logged and communicated.

Reference should be made to the latest edition of the "The Use of Breathing Apparatus in the Fire Service" for a more detailed overview.

Appendix 5.3. Decontamination Officer

Decontamination Officer



Function

- To assume responsibility for the control and co-ordination of Decontamination Procedures.

Officer Responsible

- The Decontamination Officer wherever possible should hold the minimum rank of Sub Officer and be trained to carry the role assigned.

Brief

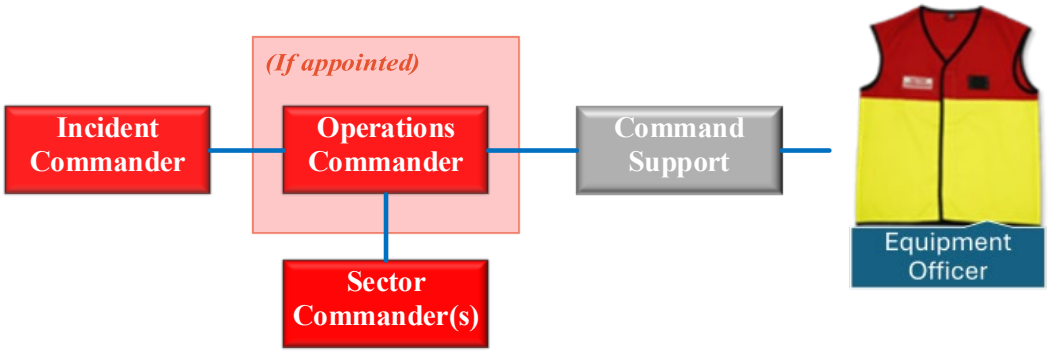
- Prior to assuming this Functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident/Sector Commander (via Command Support) as appropriate.
- If you cannot achieve your task or require more resources inform the Command Support Officer immediately.

Duties

- Don the "Decontamination Officer" tabard.
- Liaise with the Incident Commander via Command Support.
- Communicate on the assigned channel or "face to face" unless otherwise instructed.
- Liaise with the Hazmats Officer and other specialist personnel as appropriate to determine the method of decontamination according to:
    1. The nature and quantity of material involved.
    2. Whether or not the hazardous materials are readily identifiable, or difficult to deal with.
    3. The number of personnel contaminated or suspected of being contaminated.
- When selecting a decontamination area consider:
    1. Slope of the ground.
    2. Wind direction.
    3. Comfort of personnel.
    4. Location of pumping appliances.
    5. Location of drains.
    6. Mains water supplies.
- Ensure the availability of equipment and personnel.
- Consider environmental protection from pollutants.
- Ensure application of full operational procedures.
- Maintain decontamination details.

Appendix 5.4. Equipment Officer

Equipment Officer



Function

- To provide a central point for the collection, allocation, distribution and return of equipment at an incident.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander will designate this role to any individual based upon the circumstances at the time.

Brief

- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident / Sector Commander via Command Support as appropriate.
- If unable to achieve your tasks inform the Command Support Officer immediately.

Duties

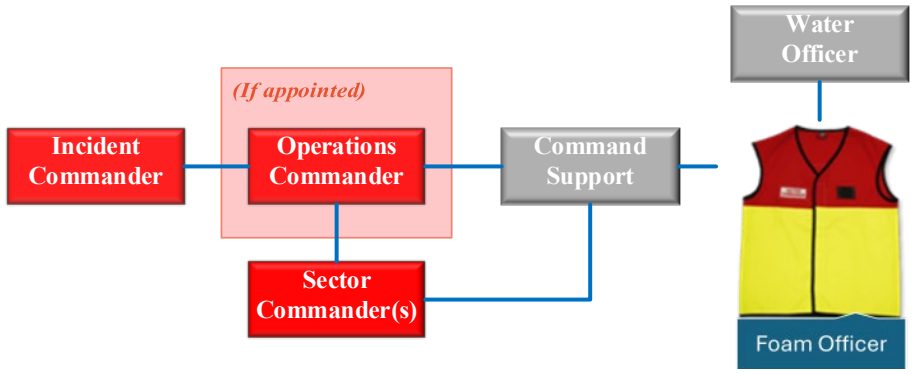
- Don the "Equipment Officer" tabard.
- Liaise with the Incident Commander via Command Support
- Support and Marshalling Officer to identify the type of equipment that may be required in each area of operations.
- Communicate on the designated radio channel or "face to face" where this is practical.
- Arrange for all necessary equipment to be collected and stored at a central point, and advise Command Support team of its location.
- Arrange for the allocation and distribution of equipment to each sector as required.
- Where appropriate, keep a written record of all equipment movements to and from the Equipment Pool and record the defects or servicing requirements that occur.
- At protracted incidents arrange for servicing, re-fuelling etc, of equipment on site.
- Arrange for the return of all equipment to the correct appliance, station or brigade and inform the O.I.C. of any defects or maintenance requirements for each item as necessary.

Note

- The Equipment Officer will not be responsible for the provision of B.A. sets, cylinders and ancillary equipment etc. This will be the responsibility of the B.A. Coordination Officer.

Appendix 5.5. Foam Officer

Foam Officer



Function

- To ensure sufficient supplies of foam concentrate and equipment are available on the fire-ground, prior to the commencement of application.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander may designate this role to any individual, the size of the incident should govern the rank of the Foam Officer.

Brief

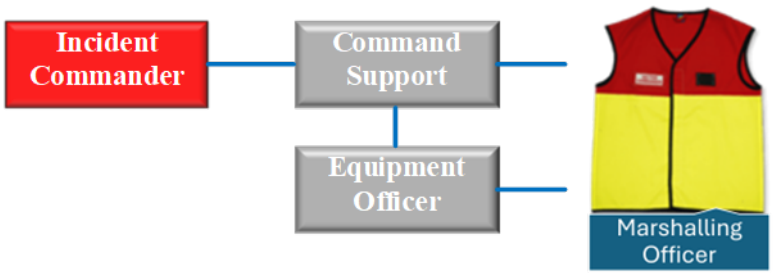
- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident / Sector Commander (via Command Support) as appropriate.
- If resources are inadequate or you cannot achieve your tasks inform Command Support immediately.

Duties

- Don the "Foam Officer" tabard.
- Liaise with the Incident and Sector Commander via Command Support and ascertain the type of fire / spill and the area to be covered. Confirm the type, number and location of foam branches to be deployed.
- Communicate on the assigned channel or "face to face" unless otherwise instructed.
- Calculate the foam concentrate required and if necessary, implement special foam procedures as required.
- Liaise with:
    1. Water Officer.
    2. Command Support Officer.
    3. OIC. Foam support appliance.
    4. Site / Company Management.
- To ensure that sufficient water supplies are available and the foam concentrate is transported to the appropriate sectors.
- Monitor the foam stocks whilst in use and ensure that sufficient foam is available to effectively extinguish the fire or cover the spill and conclude the incident.
- Monitor the application of the foam solution and liaise with the Incident Commander to arrange for the possible attendance of the Environmental Protection Agency to monitor the effects from the use of foam.

Appendix 5.6. Marshalling Officer

Marshalling Officer



Function

- To assist the Incident Commander in controlling the attendance of appliances and personnel on the fire-ground

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander may designate this role to any individual. The size of the incident should govern the rank of the marshalling officer

Brief

- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident Commander (via Command Support) as appropriate.
- If resources are inadequate or you cannot achieve your tasks inform the Command Support Officer immediately.

Duties

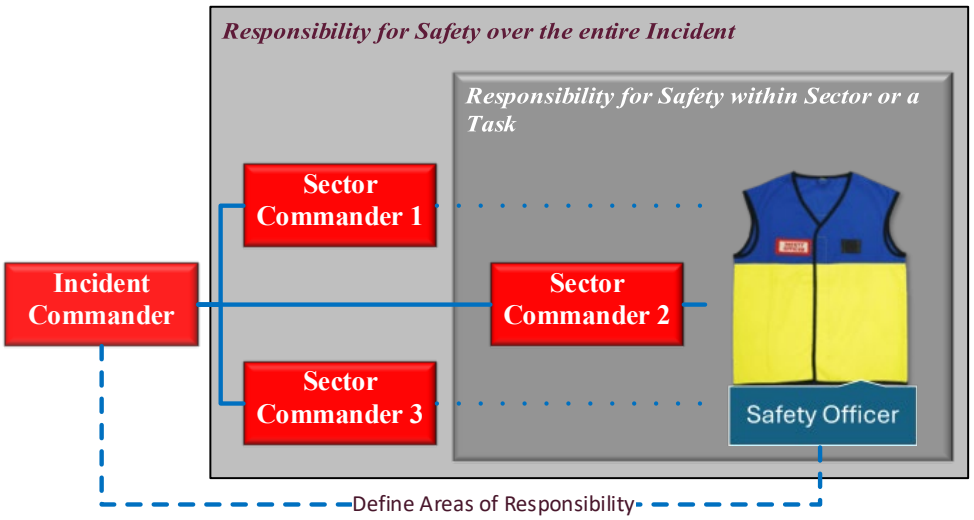
- Don the "Marshalling Officers" tabard.
- Liaise with the Incident Commander, Equipment Officer and/or Command Support Officer to ascertain the marshalling requirements of the incident.
- Communicate with Command Support on the designated channel or "face to face" unless otherwise instructed.
- Maintain a written record of all resources in attendance at the Marshalling Area and details of those resources that have been operationally committed to the incident.
- Direct appliances in attendance at the Marshalling Area to locations specified by the Incident Commander (via Command Support).
- Carry out any other tasks at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

Marshalling Area Log		
Call Sign	Appliance Type	Deployed to:

Appendix 5.7. Safety Officer

(Note: The Safety Officer role incorporates the role of welfare)

Safety Officer



Function

- To ensure that the health and safety of all personnel within a specified Sector or area is given the appropriate consideration during any incident.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident / Sector Commander may appoint a Safety Officer at any incident as deemed necessary. The Safety Officer will usually be given responsibility for safety within a specified Sector of operations.
- The Incident Commander retains overall responsibility for safety on the incident ground, but may delegate the role of supervision of safety to nominated officers, having been fully briefed.
- Where sectorisation has taken place Sector Commanders have a responsibility to supervise safety in their sector and how actions in their sector affect others. Sector Officers may nominate a Safety Officer to assist them to supervise safety for their area of responsibility.
- If an officer is nominated as Safety Officer they should report to that sectors Commander.

Brief

- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident Commander or relevant Sector Commander as appropriate.
- If you do not have sufficient resources or cannot achieve your tasks inform the Sector Commander immediately.

Duties

- Don the "Safety Officer" tabard.

Safety Duties

- Ensure all nominated Safety Officers carry their personal issue whistle.
- Liaise with the Incident / Sector Commander, who will define your responsibilities, e.g. entire incident; sector or specific task.
- Unless otherwise instructed communicate with the relevant Sector Commander "face to face" or on the designated radio channel appropriate to the sector.
- Safety Officers are advisors to the Sector Commander in respect of all safety issues within

or affecting the sector.

- Where an unsafe practice is identified, it should be corrected and, where necessary, the Sector Commander must be notified.
- Safety Officers should not get involved with firefighting activities or interfere with the Sector Commander's operational plan.
- If necessary liaise with the Sector Commander to request additional Safety Officer(s)
- Liaise with the Environmental Protection Agency, Health and Safety Authority and Local Authority as required.
- At the close of the incident, or upon being relieved, liaise with the Sector Commander to discuss observed unsafe or incorrect practices to identify possible training needs.

Welfare Duties

- Liaise with the Incident/Sector Commander regarding drinking water requirements and encourage hydration within the crews.
- Liaise with the Incident/Sector Commander to ensure crew members are rotated in their role to share the workload.
- Secure proper toilet and sanitation facilities.
- Arrange for a clean area on site for eating or alternatively make arrangements locally for eating off site.
- Liaise with all personnel regarding their welfare concerns.
- Provision for decontamination of personnel, their PPE & equipment.
- Hygiene.
- Thermal clothing in extreme cold or at flooding incidents.
- Relief of personnel showing signs of fatigue.
- Ensure that CISM process is available to all and record.
- Ensure personnel exposure to chemical records are made where appropriate.
- Keep the Incident Commander briefed on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the crews.
- The need for additional appliances, equipment and personnel, these should be requested from the Incident Commander as required.

Note:

All Safety Officers have the authority to evacuate when considered necessary

The following list, whilst not being definitive, identifies points for consideration by all Safety Officers.

SAFETY OFFICER

EQUIPMENT ON APPOINTEMENT



☐



☐



☐

AREA OF RESPOSIBILITY

Incident Safety Officer	☐
Sector Safety Officer	☐
Sector Number	___
Radio Channel	___

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

SITE SPECIFIC	STRUCTURES	WELFARE
☐ Ground Conditions	☐ Building Construction	☐ Contamination
☐ Weather	☐ Structural Stability	☐ Biological Exposure
☐ Working Near Water	☐ Flashover	☐ Chemical Exposure
☐ Electric/Overhead Cables	☐ Backdraught	☐ Wind Direction
☐ Traffic (FRS & Public)	☐ Building Contents/Hazards	☐ Physical Fatigue
☐ Public Access	☐ Utilities	☐ Mental Stress
☐ Illumination	☐ Occupants	☐ Evacuation Procedure
☐ Other _____	☐ Other _____	☐ Other _____

Where Hazards are identified, controls must be put in place in consultation with the IC/SC
Emerging Hazards should be immediately identified to IC/SC

COMMUNICATION

☐ Hazard Zone Identified & Communicated *(Consider Cordon)*

☐ Fire Service crews operating within "Hazard Zone" aware of hazards and associated risks

☐ Hazards & Risks communicated to other Principal Emergency Services

☐ Persons under FRS Control informed of Hazards *(Contractors, Utility Providers etc)*

☐ Communicate need for additional resources to manage Sector/Incident safety if necessary

PPE

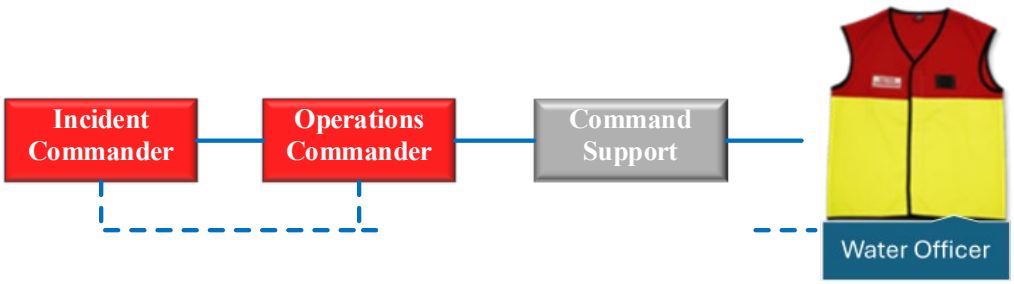
Required ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	 Turnout Gear	 Fire Helmet	 Fire Boots	 Fire Gloves	 Eye Protection	 Dust Mask	 Ear Protection
In Place ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Required ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	 Flashood	 Fall Arrest	 BA	 Hi-Vis	 Life Jacket	 CPC	 Face Shield
In Place ○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

ALL SAFETY OFFICERS HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO EVACUATE WHEN CONSIDERED NECESSARY

Appendix 5.8. Water Officer

Water Officer



Function

- To assist the Incident Commander in the management of fire ground activities by assuming responsibility for the provision of an adequate supply of water to the fire-ground.

Officer Responsible

- The Incident Commander may designate this role to any individual.
- The size of the incident should govern the rank of the water officer.

Brief

- Prior to assuming this functional role ensure you have been fully briefed and understand what is required.
- Maintain communications with the Incident / Sector Commander (via Command Support) as appropriate.
- If you do not have sufficient resources or cannot achieve your tasks inform the Incident / Sector Commander immediately

Duties

- Don the "Water Officer" tabard.
- Liaise with the Incident Commander regarding water requirements, and information concerning water supplies.
- Communicate on the assigned channel or "face to face "unless otherwise instructed.
- When operating a water relay, communicate on the designated channel and allocate call signs to each pump in the relay system.
- Monitor water usage to ensure it is effective and efficient.
- Meet the water supply requirements of the Incident Commander by taking account of the following:
    1. The type, number and size of branches in use or likely to come into use at an incident.
    2. The water supplies available and the method of transporting that water to the fire-ground.
    3. The appliances, equipment and personnel available the time required to set up water relays.
    4. Liaise with the Incident / Operations Commander regarding sectors requiring additional water supplies.
    5. the need for additional appliances, equipment and personnel, these should be requested from the Incident Commander as required.
- Maintain a plan of the water supply including:
    1. Source and capacity of water supply
    2. Position of each pump in the relay
    3. Identification of each pump in the relay including the radio call sign allocated to them

4. Number of lengths between pumps and whether single or twin lines.

- Monitor the safety and welfare of personnel assigned to the supply of water to the fire-ground and all other personnel likely to be affected by the provision of water supply.
- When foam is to be used, liaise with the Foam Officer for requirements for foam production.

Appendix 6. Command Support Packs

Appendix 6.1. Command Support Pack (Level 1/2)

INCIDENT DETAILS						
Incident No:				Incident Date:		
First Attending Call Sign				Incident Type:		
Incident Location:						
Incident Commander:				Safety Officer:		
Command Support Officer:				Water Officer:		
Operations Commander:				BA Officer:		
Sector Commander				HazMat Officer:		
Sector Commander				Other _____		
Sector Commander				**Command Level**		
Sector Commander				**L1**	**L2**	
Time of Command Level Change				:	:	
Initial Attendance	**Call Sign**	**Call Sign**	**Call Sign**	**Call Sign**	**Call Sign**	

TACTICAL MODES						
Overall Incident Tactical Mode	Time	Overall Incident Tactical Mode	Time	Sectors Tactical Mode		
				TM	Sector	Time
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
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OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:
OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF/NOTM	:	OFF/DEF		:

RESOURCES					
Assistance		Required	Requested (Time)	In Attendance (Time)	Notes
RSFO		☐			
Ambulance Qty		☐	:		
Garda		☐	:		
ESB Networks		☐	:		
Gas		☐	:		
Irish Water		☐	:		
Environmental/EPA		☐	:		
Local Authority		☐	:		
Other:		☐	:		
Other:		☐	:		

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS			
HIN			
UN No.			
FF Media			
Notes			
HIN			
UN No.			
FF Media			
Notes			

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS			
HIN			
UN No.			
FF Media			
Notes			

COMMUNICATIONS LOG			
Time	**Message /Information**	**To**	**From**
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:			
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SITE SKETCH *(INCLUDE SECTORS & LOCATIONS OF RESOURCES)*

Appendix 6.2. Command Support Units

The Command Support Unit support pack provides an overview of the considerations to be undertaken by the Command Support Team on mobilisation and attendance at a Level 3 incident. Fire Authorities may augment this based on the technological capabilities of the Command Support Unit available to them.

Command Support Pack (Level 1/2)/Incident Command Board Level 1/2 will be transferred to the Command Support Unit upon attendance.

☐	Locate the Contact Point
☐	Liaise with the Command Support Officer
☐	Site the C.S.U. as appropriate
☐	Transfer all information to the C.S.U.
☐	Test communications are operational: RCC, Fire Ground, Mobile Phone
☐	Assign Radio Operators: RCC, Fire Ground, Mobile Phone/Email
☐	Ensure Computers, Fax, Mobiles and Radios are working
☐	Ensure recording materials. Board Markers, Pens, Pencils, Clip Boards, Paper, Log Sheets, etc, are available.
☐	Activate External Information Points (TV Displays)
☐	Prepare drone and drone feeds for use *(where available and when requested by IC)*
☐	Inform Brigade Control / Incident Commander that you are now the Contact Point
☐	Allocate tasks to Support Crew
☐	Distribute I.C.S. role tabards as necessary

ADVISE INCIDENT COMMANDER			
Assessments	**Resources**	**Welfare**	**Reliefs**
Risk Assess. *Tactical Mode.*	*Appliances* *Manpower* *Equipment, etc.*	*Hot & Cold* *Drinks, etc*	*When ?* *Where?* *How many?*
Messages	**Rehabilitation**	**Support**	**Liaison**
Informative, *Assistance,* *Updates*	*Equipment,* *Personnel, etc.*	*Outside Agencies,* *Specialist Assistance*	*Media,* *Other Emergency Services, and* *Local Authority*

		L3	**L4**
Time of Command Level Change		:	:

PRIMARY TASKS

- ☐ Handover from the primary Incident Command Point (if applicable)
- ☐ Retrieve Existing Command Support Log
- ☐ Allocate Tabards CSU Personnel
- ☐ Maintain and Monitor Existing Comms.
- ☐ Maintain and Monitor Comms. To / From RCC
- ☐ Introduce and Maintain Incident Communication Logs
- ☐ Confirm existing Tactical Mode *(Overall Tactical Mode/Sector Tactical Mode)*
- ☐ Update Command Team when Operational

SECONDARY TASKS

- ☐ Nominate Runners
- ☐ Formulate Messages
- ☐ Record Outcome of Risk Assessment
- ☐ Sketch Site Plan
- ☐ Keep Bridge Control Appraised
- ☐ Prepare for Handover to Relief Officer

SECTORS					
Sector _____ Commander			Sector _____ Commander		
Location			Location		
Tactical Mode		:	Tactical Mode		:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:

Sector _____ Commander			Sector _____ Commander		
Location			Location		
Tactical Mode		:	Tactical Mode		:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:

Sector _____ Commander			Sector _____ Commander		
Location			Location		
Tactical Mode		:	Tactical Mode		:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:

Sector _____ Commander			Sector _____ Commander		
Location			Location		
Tactical Mode		:	Tactical Mode		:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:
		:			:

COMMUNICATIONS			
Role	**Fire Ground Channel**	**Tetra ISI**	**Mobile**
Incident Commander	1		
Command Support	1		*Predesignated*
Operations Commander	1		
Sector __ Commander	1		
Sector __ Commander	1		
Sector __ Commander	1		
Sector __ Commander	1		
Sector __ Commander	1		
B.A. Wearers	3		
BA ECO	3		
BA Officer	2		
Functional Sectors	1		
Ambulance Service	10 *(where provided with Fire Service Radio)*		
Gardai			
Local Authority			

Note:

1) Communications to other services may require the establishment of a “talk group” which can be established by Tetra Ireland.

2) Communications can be augmented by using Tetra ISI to ISI

3) Fire Service Hand Portable channels can be designed as above. Further reference should be given to standardised channel allocations. (*Refer to Table 8, Section 3.2.5)*

Appendix 6.3. Incident Log

This is a sample template of an Incident Log. Fire Authorities may adopt this template or modify it to meet their needs

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE:

INCIDENT LOG NO.:

INCIDENT ADDRESS:

INCIDENT DATE:

MOBILISATION TIME:

DISTRICT/REGION:

CLOSE DOWN:

STATION TURNOUT AREA:

OFFICERS IN CHARGE

ATTENDING BRIGADES:

MAP COORDINATES:

SECTION 1: FIRE SERVICE RESOURCES

1.1 OFFICER ROLES & FUNCTIONS

Name	Rank	Functional Role	Call Sign

1.2 COMMAND SUPPORT ROLE

Name	Rank	Functional Role	Call Sign

1.3 SITE SKETCH (INCLUDE SECTORS & LOCATIONS OF RESOURCES)

SECTION 2 - RISK ASSESSMENTS & TACTICAL MODE

Sector	Hazard/Risk	Action Taken	Tactical Mode	Time
				:
				:
				:
				:
				:
				:
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				:
				:

SECTION 3 – LOG OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES ATTENDING

Name	Agency	Reason	Location	Time In	Time Out
					:
					:
					:
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SECTION 4 – CORDON LOCATIONS & RECORDS

4.1 OUTER CORDON:	
Location:	
Agency in Control:	

4.2 INNER CORDON:	
Location:	
Agency in Control:	

4.3 INNER CORDON AGENCY PERSONNEL ENTRY/EXIT RECORD

Name	Agency	Assignment	Safety Brief	Time In	Time Out
					:
					:
					:
					:
					:
					:
					:
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SECTION 5 – INJURIES/CASUALTIES/FATALITIES/DAMAGE

5.1 INJURIES/CASUALTIES/FATALITIES			
Name	**Nature of Injury**	**Time of Injury**	**Contact Number**

5.2 PROPERTY DAMAGE		
Address	**Extent of Damage**	**Owner/Occupier**

SECTION 6 – INCIDENT SUMMARY

Appendix 7. National Incident Debrief Tool

Appendix 7.1. Using the National Incident Debrief Tool

1. The National Incident Debrief Tool is designed as a post incident debriefing mechanism to promote group learning from our operational response. It involves creating an environment where individuals can openly share views and contribute without fear of criticism. It is a tool to facilitate learning and implement change within the brigade or across the fire authority. It provides an opportunity to generate discussion around the operational response and to explain to all individuals what decisions were made and on what basis tasks were allocated. This is an important part of the learning and development process. At its core, it's about finding out what went wrong, what went right, and suggesting improvements to better the brigade and service as a whole should such an event occur again.

2. It is important to establish the ground rules for those participating in the incident debrief at the very start. Without rules, a debrief can quickly become a blame game and an opportunity to shift blame for mistakes made. The only mistake is one from which we learn nothing. Those participating should be made aware that:

   (a) Debriefing an incident is an opportunity for learning and a mechanism for change. Incidents test our systems to their full potential. If there are shortfalls in our systems, it is important to identify them and provide corrective actions.
   (b) Debriefing is also a tool to provide a learning experience for others who attended the incident but who are unaware of the decisions made and more importantly, why they were made.
   (c) Debriefing provides an opportunity to discuss alternative solutions and to anticipate the outcome.

3. Debriefings should be facilitated in a manner which recognises successful performance, identifies lessons to be learned and enables review of relevant plans and arrangements.

How to use the Incident Debrief Tool

4. Each crew member is provided with three different coloured Post-its. The colours indicate the stages of the incident debrief. For example:



WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT DIDN'T GO SO WELL

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

5. During the preparation for each stage, participants are requested not to discuss or confer with each other. The benefit of such a request is that individuals are committed to writing their own opinions, and subsequently verbalising those opinions, before they are influenced by the group. In theory, such a system aims to get to the core opinions of individuals rather that the perceived group opinion.

6. The tool requires the active participations of all members and does not allow for certain individuals to hijack and dominate the process. The debrief is principled on an equal voice to all stakeholders across four stages:

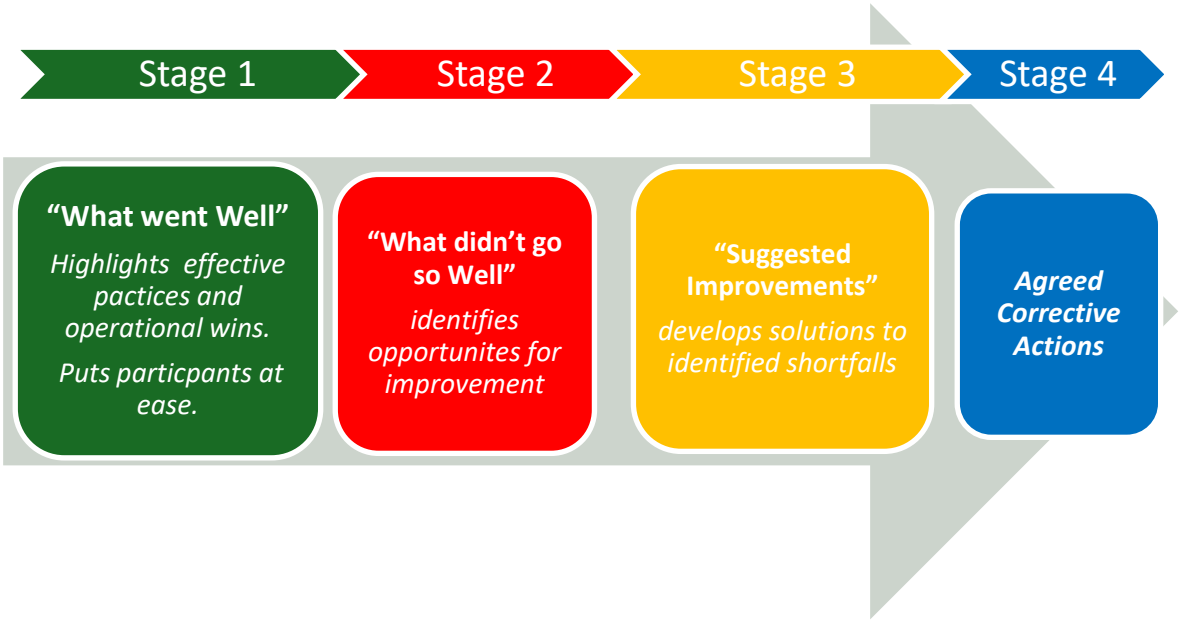


Diagram 36. Stages in conducting an Incident Debrief

Stage 1

7. Stage 1 involves putting participants at ease and is an opportunity to reflect on what when well during the incident. On the designated coloured Post-it, all participants are required to write "What Went Well" at the incident for the individual, the brigade or the Fire Authority. During this phase, participants should not communicate or confirm with others to ensure they do not influence the thought process of other participants.

8. When all participants have indicated that they have identified and noted "What Went Well", the process of exploring the comments can commence. Individually, participants are requested read aloud their written comment and categorise it by placing it on one of the nine predefined categories detailed on the incident debrief board. The comment is then probed by the debrief facilitator and discussion generated with the participants.

9. The process continues until all participants have offered up their comments on what

went well. At the end of this stage, the board will indicate to the participants areas where the brigade/fire authority performed will.

Stage 2

10. Stage 2 indicates where the brigade/fire authority underperformed or "What Didn't Go So Well" with their operational response to the incident. This stage is where most of the discussions and learning opportunities will be had. Indeed, solutions to difficulties identified may well be discussed with the participants as part of the debrief.

11. It is important to note that it is in this stage that the facilitator must ensure that it does not become an opportunity to apportion blame. At all times it is the point that should be challenged and not the individual.

Stage 3

12. Stage 3 identifies suggestions on how the operational response may be improved. It's an opportunity to identify possible solutions and to field test them with those participating.

Stage 4

13. One of the primary purposes of carrying out an incident debrief is to identify corrective actions. When the first three stages are completed, any actions identified should be documented in the form of an Incident Debrief Report with actions assigned to responsible persons. These reports should feed into the fire authority's safety management system as a mechanism for change to update training, operational procedures or guidance, pre incident plans etc. A Incident Debrief Report template is included in Appendix 7.3.

Appendix 7.2. Incident Debrief Board



Diagram 37. Incident Debrief Board (available for download from the NDFEM SharePoint site)



Diagram 38. Completed Incident Debrief Board

Appendix 7.3. Incident Debrief Report Template

SECTION 1 – INCIDENT DEBRIEF DETAILS

1.1 DEBRIEF DETAILS			
Incident Debrief No.	**Date**	**Time**	**Venue**

1.2 ATTENDING FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL			
Attending Personnel	**Brigade**	**Attending Personnel**	**Brigade**

1.3 OTHER ATTENDING PERSONNEL			
Observers	**Agency**	**Observers**	**Agency**

1.4 FACILITATOR(S)		
Name	**Rank**	**Brigade/Organisation**

SECTION 2 – INCIDENT DETAILS

2.1 INCIDENT DETAILS

Incident Number	Date	Time	First Turnout Brigade

Incident Address

2.2 INCIDENT RESOURCES

Brigade	Appliances	No. of Personnel

2.3 INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Details of Incident: *(Indicate key incident details relevant to the incident debrief)*

SECTION 3 – INCIDENT PICTURES

SECTION 4 – INCIDENT DEBRIEF BOARD *(COMPLETED)*



SECTION 5 – INCIDENT DEBRIEF FEEDBACK

Note: Refer to Appendix 7.1 on how to deliver the National Incident Debrief Tool

5.1 DEBRIEF FEEDBACK: *(DUPLICATE AS REQUIRED)*			
Category	**Classification** *What Went Well - What Didn't Go So Well - Suggested Improvements*	**Comment**	**Actionable** *(Yes/No)*

SECTION 6 – CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

	Actionable Item	Priority Level *1 – 5 (1- Top)*	Responsible Person	Timeframe
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
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11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
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25				

Appendix 8. Bibliography and References

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London Fire Brigade	Review of Policy 341 – Decision Making Model
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	Fire Service Operations "Incident Command"
	Fire and Rescue Service Manual Volume 4
	Fire Service Training "Foundation Training and Development"
Her Majesty's Stationery Office	"Dynamic Management of Risk"
	Health and Safety A Fire Service Guide
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	"Incident Command System"
Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service	Operational Procedures "Incident Command"
London Fire Brigade	Operational Note
	"Incident Command Procedures"
New Zealand Fire Service	Fire Incident Management Systems (FIMS)
North Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Operational Notes "Incident Command"
Northern Ireland Fire Brigade	Operations Policy & Performance Review "Incident Command System"
Melbourne Fire Brigade	"Incident Management System".
NSW Fire Brigades:	Standard Operational Guidelines.
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