



**Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association
Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association
Central Texas Regional Procedures**



#01

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Adopted
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UPDATED
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PURPOSE

This procedure is designed to provide for the safety of all Williamson County Fire Department and Travis County Fire Department personnel operating at emergency incidents through improved systematic Command and control (or management of emergencies), improve the use of resources and increase tactical effectiveness, and meet federal, state, and local regulations including, but not limited to, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard NFPA 1561: *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, and the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) *Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel; Chapter 435 - Fire Fighter Safety; Section 435.11 – Incident Management (IMS)*; and will give guidance to all Williamson County and Travis County Fire Department personnel who may manage and/or Command a Type 5 or Type 4 incident so that information flows between all involved agencies in a consistent manner at every incident.

BACKGROUND

While it is good practice to manage all incidents using a Command and control system, it is also state law enforced by the TCFP as seen in Texas Local Government Code:

§419.044. Incident Management System

- a) A fire department shall develop and maintain an incident management system. The system shall include a written standard operating procedure for the management of emergency incidents. The system shall require operations to be conducted in a manner that recognizes hazards and prevents accidents and injuries.*
- b) A fire department shall require all fire protection personnel to be trained in and to use the incident management system. The system shall also be applied to all drills, exercises, and other situations that involve hazards similar to those encountered at actual emergency incidents.*
- c) The incident management system shall comply with the minimum standards established by the National Fire Protection Association or its successor.*

§435.11. Incident Management System (IMS)

- c) The IMS shall meet the requirements of the applicable sections of the NFPA 1561, Standard on Fire Department Incident Management System.*

On February 1, 2020, after several years of work, Automatic Aid Agreements went live between members of the Capitol Area Fire Chiefs Association (CAFCA) and the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFCA). Central Texas Regional Procedure #01 *Incident Management System* is a cooperative effort between all members to ensure personnel and resources are effectively and efficiently managed in a like manner across Williamson County and Travis County. The foundation for this new regional procedure is the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association Regional Procedure #06 – *Incident Command System* and the Austin Fire Department A101.4 – *Fireground Operations*.

Williamson County Fire Departments and Travis County Fire Departments respond to a wide range of emergency incidents, many of which are Automatic Aid Agreement emergencies. To effectively manage personnel and resources during an incident, drills, exercises, or other hazardous situations, and provide for the safety and welfare of personnel, WCFCA and CAFCA agree to always operate within the parameters of the Incident Management System. This Regional Procedure outlines the processes to be employed at a minimum in establishing the components of the Incident Management System.

DEFINITIONS

Branch: A supervisory level established in either the operations or logistics function to provide a span of control. [NFPA 1561]

Command: The Incident Commander (IC) or the incident Command function.

Companies/Crews/Teams: Groups of two or more individuals who have been assigned a common task, are in communication with each other, coordinate their activities as a work group and support the safety of one another.

Division: A supervisory level established to divide the incident into geographic areas of operations [NFPA 1561]

Group: A supervisory level established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. [NFPA 1561]

Incident Action Plan (IAP): The strategic goals, tactical objectives, and support requirements for the incident. All incidents require an action plan. For simple incidents the action plan is not usually in written form. Large or complex incidents require that the action plan be documented in writing.

Incident Safety Officer: A member of the “Command Staff” who works directly under and with Command to help manage the risks that firefighters face at emergencies.

Level 1 Staging: Staging of resources responding to an initial alarm that have not yet been given an assignment by SOG or Command.

Level 2 Staging: A centralized staging location used for staging resources at multiple alarm incidents.

Rapid Intervention Crew/Company (RIC): A minimum of two fully equipped responders who are on site and assigned specifically to initiate the immediate rescue of injured, lost or trapped responders. [NFPA 1561]

Tactical Channel(s): Radio channel designated for Command to communicate with Division/Group Supervisors and for Division/Group Supervisors to communicate with crews performing tasks and tactical objectives to accomplish the IAP. Most commonly the channel the incident was dispatched on.

Type 5 Incidents: Local, discipline specific. An organization formed at an incident capable of operating an incident management system from its initial establishment up to and including a full operational period as defined by the agency or jurisdiction. [NFPA 1561]

Type 4 Incidents: Local, agency, or jurisdiction specific. An organized team capable of operating an incident management system that could involve resources from multiple agencies from the discovery of, and arrival

at, an incident up to and including a full operational period as defined by the agency or jurisdiction. [NFPA 1561]

Unified Command: An application of the Incident Command system (ICS) that allows all agencies with jurisdictional responsibility for an incident or planned event, either geographical or functional, to manage an incident or planned event by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies. [NFPA 1561]

PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

- A. WCFCA/CAFCA Automatic Aid departments shall develop and maintain departmental policies that require the use an Incident Management System in compliance with NIMS and NFPA 1561 as described in this policy.
- B. The WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System shall be utilized at all emergency incidents and planned events.
- C. The WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System shall integrate risk management into the regular functions of incident command. The risk management plan shall meet the requirements of Chapter 4 of NFPA 1500.
- D. Command must conduct an initial risk analysis to consider the risk to firefighters in order to determine the strategy and tactics that will be employed (see Central Texas Regional Procedure Structure Fire Incidents SOG #03).

IMPLEMENTATION

- A. The WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System is flexible and shall be implemented based upon the needs of the incident.
- B. The WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System shall be designed to meet the particular characteristics of the incident based on its size and complexity, as well as the operating environment.
- C. The Incident Commander (Command) shall apply the incident management system in a manner that is appropriate for the circumstances of each specific situation.
- D. WCFCA/CAFCA has prepared and adopted written plans based on the WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System that address the requirements of the different types of incidents that can be anticipated (refer to Central Texas Regional Procedure #03 Structure Fire Incidents).

COMMAND STRUCTURE

- A. All positions identified within WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1026.
- B. The WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System is modular to allow the application of only those elements that are necessary at a particular incident and to allow elements to be activated or deactivated as the needs of the incident change with time. The system also provides for a routine process of escalation as additional resources are utilized.

- C. Command shall determine which levels and elements of the system are to be implemented at each incident and shall develop the command structure by assigning supervisory responsibilities according to SOPs.
- D. An effective span of control shall be determined by the ability of each supervisory position to monitor the activities of assigned resource and the ability to communicate effectively within them.

COMMAND

- A. The first responder on scene of an incident shall establish Command. For multi-unit incidents, the first responder will establish command and name command on the assigned radio channel.
- B. Command must be clearly identified at the scene for the duration of the incident. There shall be one clearly identifiable Command for the duration of the incident, from the arrival of the first unit until the incident is terminated.
- C. Command shall:
 - 1. Have overall authority for management of incidents.
 - 2. Conduct an initial and ongoing situational assessment of the incident.
 - 3. Develop the incident objectives from the situational assessment and form applicable strategy and tactics.
 - 4. Deploy available resources and request additional resources based upon the needs of the incident.
 - 5. Develop an incident organization for the management of the incident.
 - 6. Provide for control of access to the incident scene.
 - 7. Be responsible for the overall responder accountability of the incident and shall maintain awareness of the location and function of all companies or units at the scene of the incident.
 - 8. Designate and assign a rapid intervention crew/company (RIC) to initiate the immediate rescue of injured, lost, or trapped responders.
 - 9. Appoint an Incident Safety Officer (ISO) at all applicable emergency incidents.
 - 10. Evaluate the risk to members operating at the scene and, if necessary, request that at least BLS personnel and patient transportation be available as required in Chapter 8 of NFPA 1500.
 - 11. Be responsible for the continuation, transfer, and termination of command at an incident.
 - 12. Order the demobilization of resources when appropriate.
 - 13. Make appropriate incident status notifications to key people, officials, and the agency administrator.
 - 14. Ensure that a post-incident analysis complying with NFPA 1500 is conducted.
- D. Command retains the responsibility and duties of all unassigned IMS positions.
- E. Command may be transferred to another responder on scene to improve the quality of the Command.

COMMAND POST

- A. Following the initial stages of an incident, the Command shall establish a stationary command post.
- B. In establishing a command post, Command shall ensure the following:
 - 1. The command post is located in or tied to a vehicle or physical location to establish presence and visibility.
 - 2. The command post includes radio capability to monitor and communicate with assigned tactical and command (alternate/scene channel).

3. The location of the command post is communicated to the communications center.
 4. The incident commander, or his or her designee, is present at the command post.
 5. The command post is located in the cold zone of an incident.
- C. Command should establish a Unified Command at a multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional incident when agencies have jurisdictional responsibility for an incident, either geographic or functional.
- D. When vests are used at a Command Post, the following colors shall be used:
1. Command and command staff positions: white vests
 2. Operations Chief and subordinate positions: red vests
 3. Planning Section Chief and subordinate positions: dark blue vests with the following exceptions:
 - a. Intelligence/Investigation position: tan vests
 - b. If intelligence/Investigation becomes a section: tan vests
 4. Logistics Section Chief and subordinate positions: orange vests
 5. Finance/Administration Section Chief and subordinate positions: green vests
 6. Technical specialists: yellow vests
 7. The on scene Safety Officer shall wear a green helmet that shall be unique and identifiable to the position.

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

- A. Command shall be responsible for developing and/or approving an incident action plan (IAP).
- B. Command shall communicate the IAP verbally all on-scene resources.
- C. Command shall keep the Operations Section Chief, those in supervisory level positions, and the safety officer informed of the strategy, tactical objectives and any changing conditions.
- D. Command shall evaluate the risk to responders with respect to the purpose and potential results of their actions in each situation.
- E. The following risk management principles shall be utilized by Command:
1. Activities that present a significant risk to the safety of responders shall be limited to situations that have the potential to save endangered lives.
 2. Activities that are routinely employed to protect property shall be recognized as inherent risks to the safety of responders, and actions shall be taken to reduce or avoid these risks.
 3. No risks to the safety of responders shall be acceptable where there is not possibility to save lives or property.
- F. Command is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and revising the IAP and overall strategy of the incident.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. The radio communication system utilized by WCFCA/CAFCA Automatic Aid departments will:
1. Provide for communications interoperability with auto aid resources or other agencies that could be expected to respond to a major incident.
 2. Provide a tactical radio channel for initial use at an incident separate from the dispatch channel.

3. Have the capacity to provide a command radio channel (alternate/scene channel) and additional tactical channels, as needed.
- B. Clear text/plain language shall be used for radio communications.
 - C. Standard terminology shall be used to transmit information, including strategic modes of operation, situation reports, and emergency notifications of imminent hazards.
 - D. To enable responders to be notified of an emergency condition or situation when they are assigned to an area designated as immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH), at least one responder on each crew or company shall be equipped with a portable radio and each responder on the crew or company shall be equipped with either a portable radio or another means of electronic communication.
 - E. The term “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday” shall be used to alert responders that a member(s) need immediate help.
 - F. When a “Mayday” condition is announced on the radio for an immediate condition for a responder, the Command shall make sure the “Mayday” is broadcast utilizing “Emergency Traffic” terminology and a plan is implemented to facilitate the immediate action to address the situation.
 - G. In the event of potential building collapse, high tension wires down, or any other extraordinary hazard, or a change in conditions that creates an imminent danger to personnel, members will communicate this information by using “Emergency Traffic” on the radio to identify the situation and as a designation to clear radio traffic.
 - H. When a responder has declared an “Emergency Traffic” message or a “Mayday” situation, that person shall use clear text/plain language to identify the type of emergency, change in conditions, or change in tactical operations.
 - I. When the emergency has been abated or all affected members have been made aware of the hazardous condition or emergency, Command shall permit radio traffic to resume.
 - J. To ensure a safe working environment telecommunicators should assure:
 1. Dispatch will monitor all assigned radio channels
 2. When monitoring a tactical channel during an incident, Dispatch will inform Command as a time stamp every 10 minutes from the first unit on scene time.
 3. Dispatch will prompt Command if radio communication especially emergency traffic, priority traffic or MAYDAY traffic is missed by Command
 4. Dispatch will provide, if requested by responding units, an initial weather update on all structure fires, wildland fires, and hazardous materials calls both verbally and through the message feature through CAD. The following information will be given
 - a. Temperature
 - b. Wind speed and direction
 - c. Humidity level
 - d. Changing weather conditions

SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

- A. Risk management principles shall be employed routinely by supervisory personnel at all levels of the incident management system to define the limits of acceptable and unacceptable positions and functions for all responders at the incident scene.
- B. Supervisory personnel shall:
1. Assume responsibility for activities within their span of control, including responsibility for the safety and health of responders and other authorized persons within their designated areas.
 2. Work toward assigned objectives, within the overall strategy defined by Command
 3. On a regular basis, report progress, or lack of progress, in meeting those objectives as well as any deviation from established plans.
 4. Be alert to recognize conditions and actions that create a hazard within their spans of control.
 5. Have the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to correct imminent hazards and to advise their supervisory personnel regarding such action.
 6. Coordinate their activities with other supervisory personnel at the same level and shall provide direction to supervisory personnel at a lower level or to responders within their spans of control.
 7. Maintain a constant awareness of the position and function of all responders assigned to operate under their supervision. This awareness shall serve as the basic means of accountability that shall be required for operational safety.
- C. Where conflicting orders are received at any level of the incident management system, the individual receiving the conflicting order shall inform the individual giving the order that a conflict exists. If the conflicting order is required to be carried out, the individual giving the conflicting order shall inform the individual who provided the initial order.

BRANCHES, DIVISIONS AND GROUPS

- A. The use of Divisions and Groups provides a standard system of dividing the incident scene into subordinate units or areas. Division is the organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. Groups are the organizational level responsible for a specified functional assignment at an incident.
- B. Divisions and Groups allow Command to communicate principally with these organizational levels, rather than multiple, individual company officers, which provides for effective command and incident scene organization.
- C. Division and group responsibilities should be assigned early in the incident, typically to the first company assigned to a geographic area or function. Early establishment of Divisions and Groups provides an effective ICS organizational.
- D. Divisions assigned to specific geographic areas will be designated by A, B, C, or D, pronounced: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta respectively. Alpha would be the front (normally street address side) of the building and the others would go clockwise around the building in alphabetical order.
- E. In multistory occupancies, Divisions will usually be indicated by floor number (e.g., Division 5 indicates 5th floor). When operating in levels below grade, such as basements, the use of Subdivisions is appropriate.

- F. In multi-unit occupancies, exposures can be indicated by a letter identifier for the side of the extension followed by a number that starts adjacent to the unit on fire. For example Bravo 1 exposure.
- G. Groups will be identified by the function (i.e., Loss Control Group, Evacuation Group, Ventilation Group, etc.).
- H. When the incident exceeds the span of control that Command can effectively manage, the organization should be expanded to meet incident needs by assigning Branches or an Operations Section Chief, or both. An Operations Section Chief is responsible for Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several Divisions and Groups and should be assigned a separate radio channel, if available.

RESOURCE ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. WC/FCA/CA/FCA Automatic Aid departments shall develop and maintain departmental policies that require the use a system to maintain accountability for all resources assigned to the incident with special emphasis on the accountability of personnel.
- B. This accountability system shall include:
 - 1. A method to maintain accountability for the location and status condition of all resources at the scene of the incident.
 - 2. A specific means to identify and keep track of responders entering and leaving hazardous areas, especially where special protective equipment is required.
 - 3. The use of additional accountability personnel based on the size, complexity, or needs of the incident.
 - 4. A process for responder accountability to be maintained and communicated within the incident management system when responders in any configuration are relocated at an incident.
 - 5. A process for Supervisors to maintain accountability of resources assigned within the Supervisor's geographical or functional area of responsibility.
 - 6. An expectation that responders are personally responsible for following the personnel accountability system procedures.
 - 7. Procedures for the evacuation of responders from an area where an imminent hazard condition is found to exist and a method to be used to immediately notify all responders.
 - 8. A process for the rapid accounting of all responders at the incident scene.
- C. Command and members who are assigned a supervisory responsibility that involves multiple company or crews under their command shall have an additional person (staff aide) assigned to facilitate the tracking and accountability of the assigned companies or crews.

STAGING

- A. Staging is a standard system to manage reserves of responders and other resources at or near the scene of the incident.
 - 1. Level 1 Staging – all first alarm units not pre-assigned by SOG or given an assignment by Command will stage in a direction relative to the scene, but without passing the last tactical priority (i.e., hydrant/water-supply, access point, etc.).

2. Level 2 Staging - staging procedures are used for multiple alarm incidents. When a second alarm is requested, Command should designate a Level 2 Staging location. Level 2 Staging will be assigned a separate radio channel than the incidents tactical channel. The first arriving Engine on the second alarm shall assume the role of Staging Manager if that position has not already been filled. The Staging Manager shall report to the Operations Section Chief or to Command if the Operations Section Chief position has not been filled.
- B. When emergency activities are being conducted in a location where there would be a delay in activating staged resources, Command shall establish staging areas close to the area where the need for those resources is anticipated.

INCIDENT SCENE REHABILITATION

- A. Command shall consider the circumstances of each incident and make provisions for the rest and rehabilitation of responders operating at the scene.
- B. After rehabilitation, responders shall receive a new incident assignment, return to a staging area to await an incident assignment, or be released from the incident.
- C. The incident scene rehabilitation shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1584.

COMMAND STAFF POSITIONS

- A. Command staff functions shall include those elements of the incident management system that operate in direct support of the incident commander and contribute to the overall management of the incident.
- B. Public Information Officer (PIO)
1. The Public Information Officer shall develop and release information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations.
 2. Only one Public Information Officer shall be assigned for each incident, including incidents operating under unified command and multi-jurisdiction incidents.
- C. Liaison Officer
1. The Liaison Officer shall be the contact for the personnel assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies.
- D. Incident Safety Officer (ISO)
1. The assignment of an Incident Safety Officer shall only be of an officer who has obtained the appropriate Incident Safety Officer training and certification.
 2. Upon arrival or assignment as the Safety Officer at an incident, he or she shall obtain a situation-status briefing from Command or designee that includes the verbal incident action plan.
 3. The Safety Officer shall monitor conditions, activities, and operations to determine whether they fall within the criteria as defined in the risk management plan.
 - a. At an emergency incident where activities are judged by the Safety Officer as posing an imminent threat to responder safety, the Safety Officer shall have the authority to stop, alter, or suspend those activities. The Safety Officer shall immediately inform Command of any actions taken to correct imminent hazards at the emergency scene.
 - b. At an emergency incident where a Safety Officer identifies unsafe conditions, operations, or hazards that do not present an imminent threat to responder, the Safety

Officer shall take appropriate action through Command to mitigate or eliminate the unsafe condition, operation, or hazard at the incident scene.

4. The Safety Officer and Assistant Safety Officer(s) shall be readily identifiable at the incident scene by wearing a green helmet.
5. The Safety Officer shall ensure that the incident scene rehabilitation area has been established.

GENERAL STAFF POSITIONS

- A. The incident management system shall include the general staff sections of Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.
 1. Operations section functions shall include those tactical operations of the incident management system that are within the primary mission of saving lives and property.
 2. Planning section staff functions shall include those components of the incident management system involved with information management that support Command and other levels of the incident command structure.
 3. The Logistics section shall provide services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident including facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance, fueling, feeding, communications, and medical services/responder rehabilitation.
 4. Command shall assign Finance/Administrative functions on the basis of the needs or complexity of the incident.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A. All responders who are involved in emergency operations shall be trained in the WCFCA/CAFCA Incident Management System and personnel accountability systems to the anticipated level of their involvement.
- B. WCFCA/CAFCA Automatic Aid departments shall provide refresher training at least annually.
- C. Responders who are expected to perform as incident commanders or to be assigned to supervisory levels within the command structure shall be trained in and familiar with the incident management system and the particular levels at which they are expected to perform.

References

- NFPA 1500: *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program*, 2018 Edition
- NFPA 1561: *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, 2020 Edition
- NFPA 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2020 Edition
- NFPA 1720: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2020 Edition
- Blue Card Command
- Texas Commission on Fire Protection *Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel; Chapter 435 - Fire Fighter Safety; Section 435.11 – Incident Management System (IMS)*
- Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association *Regional Procedure #06 – Incident Command System*
- Austin Fire Department *A101.4 – Fireground Operations*

- United States Department of Homeland Security – *National Incident Management System*, 3rd Edition
- National Incident Management Consortium, *Incident Command System Model Procedures Guide for Incidents Involving Structural Fire Fighting, High Rise, Multi-Casualty, Highway, and Managing Large -Scale Incidents*, 1st Edition, Fire Protection Publications