



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



#09

INCIDENT SAFETY OFFICER

Adopted
April 17, 2024

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for any officer assigned to the role of Incident Safety Officer (ISO).

BACKGROUND

The Auto Aid Partners always place firefighter safety as the number one priority on all incident scenes. Improvements in this area include; increasing staffing to comply with two-in/two-out, positioning an Outside Team Monitor (OTM), establishing a Backup Team, assigning a Rapid Intervention Company (RIC), etc. To further increase our commitment to firefighter safety during an incident and at the scene, this document serves to codify the duties and responsibilities of the ISO.

POLICY STATEMENT

- A. At all incidents, Command will assign an ISO, or will retain all the responsibilities and duties of the ISO. When assigned, the ISO will perform the duties outlined in this policy.
- B. The assignment of an ISO shall only be an officer who has obtained the appropriate ISO training and certification.
- C. When an officer is assigned as ISO they will don a green helmet to identify them as ISO. Other PPE will be donned as appropriate for the incident or as directed by Command.
- D. The ISO should disassociate from determining and implementing fireground tactics and operations. Rather, the ISO should consider the impact of those tactics and operations on fireground safety.

PROCEDURE

- A. It will be standard practice for Command to assign an ISO at any working structure fire, Special Operations rescue and hazardous materials incidents. In addition, an ISO should be assigned at any incident of special hazard presenting an unusual risk to firefighters and/or the general public.
- B. This procedure in no way diminishes the responsibility of every Auto Aid Department member's commitment to safe work behaviors and to operate within standard operating guidelines at all times. Company Officers carry an additional responsibility of ensuring all members of their crew are operating in a safe manner. Chief Officers and Division/Group Supervisors must also ensure that operations are conducted safely.

- C. Incident Command Responsibilities - At all incidents, Command will assign an ISO, or will retain all the responsibilities and duties of ISO. Command should assign an ISO as soon as possible on incident scenes. A second- or third-arriving Battalion Chief may be selected to be the ISO. The assignment of the ISO should be announced on the fireground radio channel. It will be the responsibility of Command to establish an incident action plan that includes a safety plan for the incident. This safety plan must be communicated to the ISO and other Division/Group Supervisors. Command may request the ISO develop and/or recommend an appropriate safety plan.
- D. ISO Responsibilities - Upon assignment to the ISO position, the ISO will report to the Command Post and obtain an updated safety plan from Command. This plan should include a risk evaluation based on incident priorities (saving lives, saving property, saving nothing). The assumption/ transfer of the ISO position will be announced on the fireground radio channel.
- E. The ISO is responsible for the following:
1. Ensure traffic is controlled around the incident scene.
 2. Ensure Command has accountability of all on-scene resources.
 3. If RIC is assigned, check in with RIC and verify a member of the RIC is monitoring the primary tactical channel.
 4. Ensure RIC readiness per the Regional RIC and Mayday Policy.
 5. Perform a scene assessment of all exterior areas of the incident and identify any structural or hazardous conditions.
 6. Establish/modify control zones. Use red and white chevron tape to indicate "No Entry Zone" for hazards such as downed electrical lines or collapse zones. Use yellow tape to indicate the Warm Zone where support operations take place by members in appropriate PPE and civilians are restricted from entry.
 7. Ensure all crews and personnel are operating safely and consistently within existing safety standards, including firefighter accountability and report any deficiencies to Command.
 8. Monitor the health and welfare of all personnel and ensure they are not over-extended. Determine the need for rehabilitation and recommend to Command. .
 9. Ensure utilities are controlled, if required (gas, electric, water).
 10. Ensure the scene is adequately lit, as necessary.
 11. Ensure secondary means of egress are addressed if applicable. This may include crews forcing doors and/or placing ladders as necessary.
 12. Observe fireground for SOG compliance.
 13. Provide Command progress reports on safety-related issues. Reports should focus on status of hazards and risk to members.
 14. When needed, observe interior areas of the incident, and identify any structural or hazardous conditions. Any ISO that enters an IDLH atmosphere must remain in contact with a partner.
 15. Terminate, suspend, or alter any unsafe operations or actions, and initiate Emergency Traffic, if needed.

16. On large operations, request additional Assistant Safety Officers based on the divisions designated by Command or possibly by functional areas.
 17. Coordinate the use of Fire Protection Engineers, Building Department Officials, or other technical specialists in the continual evaluation of incident risk.
 18. Update and review the on-going incident safety plan with Command.
 19. Ensure air quality monitoring is completed before companies discontinue use of SCBA or occupants are allowed to re-enter.
 20. Ensure post-decontamination at the scene is established per the Regional Structure Fire Policy.
 21. Document the scene for the Post Incident Review, if applicable. The ISO should focus on safety concerns and safety procedures (accountability, rehab, etc.).
 22. Transfer ISO duties to another ISO or back to Command.
- F. ISO Interventions - All personnel assigned to the ISO position will use interventions when interacting with other personnel on the emergency scene. There are two approaches for emergency scene interventions. First is for imminent threats – an act or condition that is judged to present a danger to persons or property that is so urgent and severe that it requires immediate corrective or preventive action; the second is for potential threats – an activity, condition or inaction that is judged to have the capability, but not the immediacy, to cause harm to persons or property and thus warrants monitoring and/or operational modification.
1. Most imminent threats require a firm intervention - a direct order to immediately stop, alter, suspend or withdraw personnel, activities and operations due to an imminent threat. The firm intervention by an ISO is an official order, with all the authority of Command to back it up. Anytime a firm intervention is used, the ISO should relay the order to Command as soon as the situation allows. Emergency Traffic should be used for any critical safety alerts on an emergency scene. This is the only time the ISO should direct fireground tactics and operations.
 2. Most potential threats can be addressed by soft interventions. A soft intervention can be defined as awareness or suggestive communications made to crews or command staff that cause them to modify their observations and activities to prevent injury from a potential threat. The intent of this intervention is to achieve positive safety changes in behaviors, operations, and actions within the framework of the Incident Management System and the Incident Action Plan. Soft interventions do not necessarily direct or order changes; they merely share observations or offer suggestions to modify activities.
- G. The ISO's role during the initial investigation of a Line-of-Duty Death (LODD) or life-threatening injury is as follows:
1. Of primary importance is that the ISO ensures physical evidence at the scene is collected and photographed. The ISO will work closely with investigators to ensure all physical evidence is documented and that the chain of evidence is established and maintained.
 2. It is vital to the investigation of a LODD or life-threatening injury that all equipment knob and control positions be noted and photographed in the same position they are found. Air mask regulator and air bottle valve knobs should not be closed until the knob and regulator control positions are noted and documented, even if PASS alarms cannot be silenced until the controls are closed. If photography is not readily available, the positions should be noted by counting the number of turns to

close valves and the remaining bottle pressure noted. Documenting bottle valve knob and regulator control positions, and closing the SCBA bottle in an expeditious manner, will also allow for bottle air to be collected. This documentation of knob and control positions should be witnessed by at least two personnel. Laboratory testing of equipment for malfunction may be greatly complicated by changing control knob positions without proper documentation.