COMMAND FUNCTION #5 – COMMUNICATIONS

Issued: August 18, 2013
Revised:
Approved: Chief Mike Kennedy

I. KEEP COMMUNICATIONS SIMPLE: USE PLAIN TEXT

We conduct incident operations using plain text communications that are directed toward the completion of the tactical priorities. The use of plain text (common English) is NIMS-compliant, as opposed to 10-code signals and other odd numbering based systems.

Where multiple agencies/disciplines operate together, the participants must all use plain text to share incident information.

II. MIX & MATCH FORMS OF COMMUNICATIONS: FACE-TO-FACE/RADIO/COMPUTERS/SOPS

Face to face communication is the most effective form of communication. It should be the preferred form of communication on the task and tactical levels of the incident site. Face to face communications should be used whenever possible in the following circumstances:

- Company officers communicating with their crew members.
- Company officers communicating with other company officers in their work area.
- Tactical level bosses communicating with units assigned to their geographic location.

The entire purpose of placing an IC in a command post is to create the best possible communication environment. In the CP, the IC can more effectively monitor and control radio communications.

All members working on the fireground will avoid distracting the IC with face to face communications. Command must be the person to initiate this form of communication and it should only be performed when the incident hazards have been controlled.

Radio communications are the way that the tactical and task levels connect with the IC working on the strategic level. While radio communication, in and of itself, does not put water on the fire, in most cases, the overall outcome of the incident is directly connected to the quality of the radio communications among the participants.

Because everyone cannot talk on the radio at once, other forms of communications must be used to reduce the overall amount of radio traffic on the hazard zone tactical channel.

III. GEAR COMMUNICATIONS TOWARD COMPLETING THE TACTICAL BENCHMARKS

Communications should focus on the completion of the tactical priorities and firefighter safety. This will help keep communications short, to the point and effective. It also leaves airtime free for important tactical messages that affect everybody working in the hazard zone.

When the IC properly assigns Engine 2 to: "Lay a supply line to the Alpha side, stretch an attack line to the interior of the Delta 1 exposure for a primary search and check for fire extension. I'm going to make you Delta", it becomes the basis for Engine 2 to structure their CAN report back to command. "Delta to Command, we have a primary all-clear in Delta 1, we have opened up the ceilings and have a working attic fire. We are applying water and opening up more ceilings. We'll need another company to assist in Delta 1 with fire control in the attic space".

IV. UPGRADE THE FAST ATTACKING COMMAND POSITION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

Most of the time, the operation will start out with the first arriving company officer on an Engine company. Initial arriving, fast attacking IC's (IC #1) have a narrow window of being able to produce clear and concise radio communications before putting themselves in the worst communications position possible, in full PPE operating in a hazard zone.

Therefore, it is very important to use the very begging of the event to transmit a complete Initial Radio Report (IRR) and Follow-Up Report before entering the hazard zone, when IC #1 is in their best communication position. These two reports tell other responding units exactly what's going on at the incident, what the first arriver is doing about it, and where they will be located on the incident site.

These two initial reports also allow a fast attacking IC to complete the first 5 functions of command before they enter the hazard zone. This frees them up to then engage the problem and command the incident using a portable radio. IC #1 from that point on the operation is in a position to quickly assign the next 2-3 responders to critical areas around the scene, but they are not in position to process lots of information or manage a large amount of resource. The entire response team must understand the communications position IC #1 is in, and support the IC by properly following all hazard zone MOP's.

In rapidly expanding incidents, command must be transferred (or moved out of the hazard zone) to a later-arriving response chief who will operate inside of a stationary, remote command post.

Staying in the command post directly connects the IC to the communications process. A picture of an effective command post IC would show a responder seated inside their response rig (command post), listening to radio traffic (preferably on headphones), talking into a microphone, maintaining a tactical worksheet, and interacting face-to-face with any designated command helpers.

V. LISTEN CRITICALLY: UNDERSTAND COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTIES FROM TOUGH OPERATING POSITIONS

We put an IC in a strategic command post (outside the hazard zone, inside a vehicle designed to be a command post) so they have an ideal position to send and receive information. Companies operating in the hazard zone are in the worst positions for effective communications.

Many hazard-zone distractions can cause communications problems. The IC needs to understand this when communicating with operating companies. Companies also must understand that their portable radios provide the only communications link to the outside world. The command system depends upon coherent communications between the IC and the operating units.

All hazard zone transmissions shall be carried out on one (1) tactical radio frequency.

Some incidents may require the use of multiple radio frequencies in order to support operations outside of the hazard zone (Level 1 & 2 staging, Rehab, Safety, Planning, Logistics, etc). Each additional channel activated for the incident must have a dedicated person assigned to manage that channel at all times. The IC must only be responsible for the operation of one (1) tactical radio frequency while an active hazard zone exists.

VI. USE THE ORGANIZATION CHART AS A COMMUNICATIONS FLOW PLAN

Dividing the incident scene into sectors/divisions (S/D) has a positive and profound effect on the communications process. When the IC assigns S/D officer responsibilities to the officers initially assigned to the different key tactical positions, it starts to manage their span of control and enhances the entire communications process.

In cases where the IC hasn't implemented/assigned SDG officers, they will have to communicate directly with each individual unit assigned to the incident scene.

Any time there are 2 or more units working in the same geographically area, Command should designate one of the units the geographic supervisor and all communications from that area will be from the tactical supervisor to the IC.

S/D officers will communicate with their assigned companies over the radio or face-to-face depending on their proximity to one another. Preferably, face to face. The S/D officer will communicate with the IC over the tactical channel.

VII. ALWAYS MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS AVAILABILITY—ANSWER ON THE FIRST CALL

The IC shouldn't be in a tough communications position when they are operating in the command position. An IC working from a command post must focus squarely on the units operating in the hazard zone. This is how we manage strategic-level safety and coordinate the work required to complete the tactical objectives.

The IC must always operate the system (build, expand, reinforce) in a way that allows them to stay connected to the companies operating in these hazardous positions.

VIII. UTILIZE THE STANDARD ORDER MODEL TO STRUCTURE COMMUNICATIONS

The Order Model outlines the communications steps we follow to ensure messages are always received and understood despite the rushed, confusing and dangerous conditions we typically face during operations. The order model also standardizes how the incident's participants will exchange two-way radio communications. The Order Model's required steps are:

1. When the sender is ready to transmit a message, they call the receiver to determine if they are ready to receive the message;
2. The receiver then acknowledges the sender;
3. When the sender receives the readiness reply, they can transmit the message;
4. The receiver then gives a brief restatement of the message to acknowledge the receipt of the message; and
5. The sender restates the message if misunderstood.

Using the order model will significantly decrease the amount of radio traffic on the emergency scene. It will also help eliminate; freelancing, order confusion and it enhances responder safety and accountability.

There are 7 basic communications we routinely perform on the fire ground. They are:

- Initial Radio Report
- Follow-Up Report
- Assigning Units
- Command Transfer
- CAN Reporting
- Roof Reporting
- Offensive to Defensive Strategic Shift

IX. BEGIN & CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS UPON ARRIVAL WITH A STANDARD INITIAL RADIO REPORT

The initial IC begins the command, control and communication process with an IRR. This report provides dispatch, as well as everyone else responding to the scene, with a size-up of conditions seen from the initial command position. It also provides an initial situation status report to those listening in, such as non-responding companies and bosses still in quarters, and staff officers.

The IRR is not an affidavit of absolute accuracy; it's just a quick snapshot of the incident that provides a "word picture" of what the IC can see from their command position when they first arrive on-scene.

The IRR must include the following reporting elements:

1. Announce your arrival on the scene
2. Building/area description
3. Describe the problem
4. Action being taken – Initial I.A.P.
5. Declaration of the Strategy
6. Resource Determination
7. Assuming and Naming of Command

1. Announce arrival: This accomplishes several things:
    - It insures that you deliver the IRR on the correct channel.
    - It notifies all other responders you are about to deliver an IRR and assume command
    - It automatically activates Level 1 Staging to go into effect.

2. Building/area description: Will be described in 3 different categories:
    - Size
    - Height
    - Occupancy type

Size: the size of the structure should be defined by the overall area of a structure under roof. We should base our size description on how it relates to the areas we can cover with a 200 ft handline and the maximum depths that we can safely achieve inside the structure. Size will fall into 4 different categories:

- Small - A 200 ft line can access 100% of the potential fire area.
- Medium – A 200 ft line can access 75% of the potential fire area.
- Large – A 200 ft line can access 50% of the potential fire area.
- Mega, Huge, Gigantic - A 200 ft line can access less than 25% of the potential fire area.

Height: Identifying the height of a structure is very important to all responders. Every floor (or story) that is added to a structure makes it a more complex problem and tactically challenging for all the incident players.

Use the number of stories above grade to describe the height of a structure.

Use the number of Sub-levels (basements, parking garages, etc.) to describe the depth below grade of a structure.

Occupancy type: will many times drive our IAP. Identifying it on the IRR paints a picture to all other responders of the type of situation they're responding into. Here are some basic, common occupancy types:

Single family residence	Multi-unit residential	Apartments	Townhomes
Row houses	Restaurant/Bar	Public assembly	Commercial
Big Box	High rise	Institutional	Strip Mall

Describing Multi-unit residential: Apartments, town houses and row houses all fall into this category. Each of these occupancy types has a distinct set of characteristics that will affect the tactics that we use when operating on multi-unit residential. Therefore it is critical for the first arriver to properly identify which category the occupancy type fits into.

Apartments must be separated into 1 of 2 categories on the initial report:

- A standalone apartment building
- Apartment complex

Apartment complexes gives us a much greater tactical challenge with arrangement as it relates to access, exposures, water supply, handline lengths, ladder access, possible standpipe issues, master stream application, etc.

Complexes must be identified in the very beginning of the event and there must be a standard response to this information:

- No other unit should enter large complexes until the exact location of the problem is located and identified to units level 1 staged.
- Placing pumper's in key tactical positions early on in the incident is critical as it relates to handline lengths and water application.
- Horizontal standpipes should be used to maximize the number of handlines off of 1 forward pumper.

Apartments have a single floor arrangement. This means that the interior of each apartment is on a single floor and does not have access to the upper or lower floors. Access must be made on the floor the problem is on.

Most apartment buildings share a common attic space. This becomes a high priority check of item for the IC and rest of the team and coordinating a working attic fire can become very difficult with large apartment buildings.

Interior and/or exterior stairway access must be identified. Interior, common hallways pose additional tactical challenges and these features must be identified and transmitted very early on in the incident.

Town houses and row houses are described as having 2 or more floors, each unit is attached to other similar units via party walls, and some units can share common attic spaces. The only way to access the upper floors of these units is to enter the involved unit on the 1st floor and use the interior staircase of that unit to access the upper floor(s) with the problem.

Well know occupancy types should be by called their most common identified name. These include:

- Witches Hat
- School Lyon High School
- MST

3. Describing the problem: For the fire service, this usually means we are describing “Fire Conditions”. The following are the only 5 terms that are to be used when describing fire conditions:

- Nothing Showing
- Light Smoke Showing
- Smoke Showing
- Working Fire
- Defensive Fire Conditions

The term “Working Fire” indicates a situation that will at least require the commitment of all responding companies. This report advises dispatch that the companies will be engaged in tactical activities and will be held at the scene for an extended period of time.

The Location of the problem must also be identified on the IRR. This includes reporting:

- What floor the problem is located on
- For longer buildings (apartments, strip malls, etc.) middle or what end (Bravo or Delta)
- For larger structures – What side of the structure is problem located on

Describing what the problem is and where it is located paints a very good picture to everybody on what the scene looks like and where the subsequent arriving units will probably fit into the IC’s IAP.

The Alpha side of the structure is "usually" the address, street side. There will be many situations where it is not clear where the Alpha side is. In situations where there is any confusion on the incidents landmarks, initial arriving IC's must make it clear where the Alpha side is located.

Exposures: We identify exposed structures to the main fire occupancy by the side they are on starting with the closest, moving to the next exposure and so on. When the IC can give the exposure number and the occupancy type/apartment number it greatly enhances our directional sense of awareness.

Floors: Are identified by stories above and below ground level. Using Divisions, the individual floor will take on the same floor number as the Division (floor 2 becomes "Division 2"). Many systems just assign the floor number as the geographic designation (floor 2 becomes "2nd Floor").

4. Initial Incident Action Plan (IAP): Incident action plans describe our operational plan for completing the tactical priorities. IAPs should be short and to the point. The initial IAP should include the following:

- The tasks of the initial arriving unit
- The location of the tasks
- The objectives of the tasks

Tasks: Some of the standard tasks that should be include in the IRR:

- Investigating (nothing showing)
- Establish a water supply
- Stretching handlines
- Operating a master stream
- Performing forcible entry (takes a while)
- Performing a physical rescue

Location of those tasks should include:

- What floor will you operating on
- What occupancy/exposure will operate in
- What side you'll make entry on
- What side will you be operating on (defensive)

The tasks objectives should center on completing the tactical priorities for the chosen strategy. They are:

- Search/Rescue = Primary and Secondary "All Clears"
- Fire Control = "Under Control"
- Loss Control = "Loss Stopped"

5. Declaration of the Incident's Strategy: Overall operational strategy is divided into only two categories: Offensive or Defensive.

- Offensive operations are conducted inside a hazard zone
- Defensive operations are conducted outside of the hazard zone - in safe locations

Declaring the incident strategy up front, as part of the initial radio report will:

- Announce to everybody the overall incident strategy.
- Eliminates any question on where we will be operating on the incident scene (inside or outside the hazard zone).

6. Resource determination: 1st arriving IC's must match the incidents problems with the resources required to solve the incidents problems. The request for the appropriate amount resource must happen at the beginning of the event, where our window of opportunity has the greatest chance for success. One of the following resource determinations must be made on the IRR:

- Cancel the original assignment
- Hold the original assignment (emergency traffic vs. normal traffic)
- Upgrade/Fill out the original assignment
- Strike additional Alarms

7. Assume and name command: The absence of an effective IC is the most common reason for ragged incident beginnings and unsafe endings. Effective (and coordinated) action is the result of beginning (and ongoing) incident operations with an in place and in charge IC.

Use location/occupancy to name command. The radio designation "COMMAND" will be used along with the major cross road, or the specific occupancy name of the incident site (i.e. "Lake Street Command", "Witch's Hat Command").

The designation of "Command" will remain with the IC throughout the duration of the entire incident.

X. FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

The initial radio report is usually performed from the front seat of an Engine Company. Once the report has been given and the alarm room acknowledges that report (using the order model) the company officer of the unit is probably out of the cab and has started to go to work.

Follow-up reports make the IRR a little shorter and they give the initial IC a little bit more time to size-up the situation. The follow-up report will probably be the last radio transmission a fast attacking IC gives before entering the hazard zone. This report gives the IC a “last chance” to give clear, concise information before they don full PPE and enter the hazard zone.

Follow-Up Reports should include the following information:

1. Result of a 360 (if performed)
2. Any changes to the initial IAP
3. Accountability location
4. Any immediate safety concerns

1. Result of a 360: 360’s should be obtained on every structure fire we respond to before making entry into the structure. But the fact is, many times, the initial arriving IC will not be able to conduct a 360. This will be the case for larger, commercial buildings or with long rows of continuous housing where travel times will prohibit the 1st arriver from performing a 360.

On critical incidents (high life safety or where a basement is suspected) where the 1st arriving unit can’t perform a 360, the assignment should be given to a subsequent arriving unit to deploy to the Charlie side to provide a 360 report.

Initial arriving IC’ s should make every attempt to perform a 360 where life safety is high priority or there is a probability of a basement present. This includes most houses and apartment buildings.

The 360 should only include any additional critical information that was not reported on the IRR.

Standard 360 reporting elements:

Life Safety: Immediate life safety issues are the primary reason we do 360's on residential occupancies. The first thing to note on the Charlie side is whether or not there are any immediate life/safety rescue concerns. If there are any rescue issues, the IC will need to announce it over the tactical channel and re-adjust their IAP to address the life safety issue(s) present.

Number of stories on the Charlie side: The number of stories from the rear will need to be announced in the follow-up report if the stories don't match up to side alpha. This does not include the basement.
Example 1: you have 1 story on the Alpha side. On the 360 you have 1 story on the Charlie side with a walk-out basement. This would still be considered a 1 story structure and should be reported as "we have a walkout basement on the Charlie side".

Example 2: you have a 1 story on the Alpha side. On the 360 you have 2 stories from the rear and a walk-out basement. This should be reported as "we have 2 stories from the Charlie side with a walk-out basement".

Basement type and conditions if known: There are several different basement types across North America, some with very colorful or odd names. Local basement type descriptions must be identified and agreed upon by the local response agencies, so when someone states on their follow-up report "we have an English basement" it means the same thing to the entire response team.

Basement conditions must be identified before entering the structure whenever possible. Conditions in the basement will need to be reported on using the 5 standard narratives to describe smoke and fire conditions.

Basement involvement must be considered whenever there are smoke/fire conditions coming from the 1st floor of a residential fire (in areas that have basements). The initial IC MUST confirm the conditions in the basement prior to making entry into the structure.

When the 360 size-up identifies/confirms basement involvement, the IAP must re-adjusted their initial IAP to make the attack directly on the basement fire. Firefighters whenever possible should NOT make entry on the first floor or use the interior staircase to access the basement when there is basement involvement and it can be controlled by other means.

2. Changes to IAP: Performing a 360 gives the initial IC a view of all sides of the fire to report on. Most of the time, the initial IAP won't change. But there are sometimes when the 360 size up will require a change in the IAP. These changes must be announced over the tactical channel in the Follow-Up report. Situations that will require changing the original IAP:

- Physical rescue not seen from the initial command position
- Basement fires

- Fire located in a different area not seen from the initial command post and entry will be made from a different location

3. Accountability Location: The initial arriving unit to a geographic location/area should become the initial accountability location for that location/area. Identifying the 1st accountability location of the incident ("E-1 will be the Alpha - side accountability location") informs the troops (esp. the BC) which side of the structure that you're making entry on (most of the time). It also identifies where later assigned units will drop off their passports if they are assigned to that location/side/area of the incident.

4. Any immediate safety concerns: This includes:
- Potential collapse area
- Hazardous roof structure
- Power lines down or arching
- Gas meter/tank exposed to fire
- Swimming pools
- Heavy roof coverings (ceramic or clay tiles)

XI. ASSIGNING UNITS

Incident operations are conducted around the completion of the tactical priorities. Incident communications should mirror this simple concept. This will help keep communications short, to the point and effective. It also maximizes the available free airtime. The IC must structure unit assignments around:
- Addressing the incident's critical factors
- The completion of the tactical priorities
- Tactical reserve (On-Deck)

When subsequent arriving units arrive to Level 1 staging locations, they will simply announce that they are Level 1 staged; "Engine 2 - Level 1 staged". Dispatch will not acknowledge any Level 1 staged units over the tactical channel. Command will then contact Level 1 staged units and assign them to the incident site based on their IAP.

Orders to Level 1 staged units should be structured in a T.L.O format:
- Tasks
- Location of the tasks
- Objectives of the tasks

Tasks: Some of the standard tasks that can be assigned:

- Establish or support a water supply
- Stretching handlines
- Operate tools or equipment
- Manpower
- Operate a master stream
- Perform forcible entry (takes a while)
- Perform a physical rescue
- Tactical reserve (On-Deck)

Location of those tasks should include:

- What floor to operating on
- What occupancy/exposure to operate in
- What side to make entry on
- What side to operating on (defensive)

When assigning a unit to deploy a handline, the IC MUST designate the following:

What the company needs to do with their apparatus:

- Lay a supply line
- Pump a supply line
- Spot your apparatus out of the way (manpower only)

Where the company will get their handline from:

- Their own company
- Another forward pumper designated by the IC

The tasks objectives should center on the completion of the tactical priorities for the chosen strategy. They are (objective = completion benchmark):

- Search/Rescue = Primary and Secondary "All Clears"
- Fire Control = "Under Control"
- Loss Control = "Loss Stopped"

When assigning companies to areas that already have units assigned, the IC must inform the unit being assigned of who they will report to/work under. The IC must also contact the area supervisor and inform them of the unit being assigned to their location.

XII. COMMAND TRANSFERS

Typically, when a fast attacking IC transfers command to a subsequent arriving command officer, they are physically located in the hazard zone, so the transfer will take place using a portable radio.

Command must be transferred in a standard manner (per SOP's). The following sequence represents a standard command transfer:

- Verify that all operating positions match the current incident conditions
- Announce your arrival to scene (Dispatch will acknowledge)
- Contact the current IC using the Order Model
- Verify, document and confirm the position and function of all resources located in the hazard zone with the current IC
- Inform the current IC that you'll be "Taking it from out here"
- Contact Dispatch
- Announce that you'll be assuming command ("BC-1 will be assuming Main St. Command")
- Re-announce the overall Incident strategy
- Make a resource determination
- Announce the CP location

One of the following resource determinations must be made when transferring command:

- Cancel the original assignment
- Hold the original assignment (Emergency traffic vs. normal traffic)
- Strike additional Alarms

The IC should designate a Level 2 Staging location when requesting greater alarms.

XIII. CAN REPORTING

CAN reporting gives the troops a regular, consistent way to report back to the IC on their progress and needs. CAN reporting keeps things simple and it delivers the IC the information needed to keep the strategy and IAP current. The CAN acronym stands for:

- Conditions
- Actions
- Needs

CAN reports should be structured around the IC's assignment and the completion of the tactical priorities. Here is a basic list to choose from when providing a CAN report to command:

Radio Discipline

When 3 to 4 units (and up) are assigned to the incident site the tactical channel can start to fill up with unnecessary radio traffic. The 2 main reasons for this are:

1. Assigned units are communicating/contacting the IC with non-essential radio traffic.
2. The IC themselves are communicating non-essential radio traffic.

The IC MUST control the radio traffic on the tactical channel or they will not be able to control the overall incident site. The following radio guidelines are to be strictly adhered to when there are units assigned in a hazard zone:

- Know exactly what you're going to say before clicking the microphone to talk.
- Only communicate information on the tactical channel that pertains to the completion of the tactical priorities and firefighter safety.
- Always let communication loops close before clicking the microphone button to talk.
- Only break into the Order Model with high priority traffic.
- Always let the IC be the one to contact you.
- Always end every CAN report with a Need assessment (or "No Needs").
- Never get on the radio to give good news (All-Clears, Under Controls, PARs) unless it is request by the IC.

Once a unit is assigned into the hazard zone, they should maintain radio silence and wait to be contacted by the IC. The following are examples of the ONLY instances where a unit can break radio silence. These transmissions should usually be structured as Priority Traffic reports (example: "Command from Delta – Priority Traffic"):

- Unable to gain access to an assigned work area
- Unable to complete an assigned task/tactical objective
- Urgent need to be reinforced/backed-up to complete an assigned task/tactical objective
- Status change from an assigned work location (moving locations, exiting the structure)
- Victims encountered
- Roof reports containing significant tactical information
- Working concealed space fires not easily controlled by the locating unit
- Sudden, significant incident events (flashover, back draft, collapse)
- Mayday (anytime a unit/member cannot safely exit the hazard zone)

- Anytime the IC directs you to contact him/her immediately after obtaining a specified piece of information

All communications that details the routine work we perform in our assigned areas should be done face to face in the work area and must not be transmitted over the tactical channel. Wait for the IC to contact you if you don’t have bad news (the above list).

XIV. ROOF REPORTS

Ladder Companies have the apparatus and equipment (ground ladders/power tools) to access and operate on the roofs of most mid-level structures. These units provide very valuable tactical information to the IC and the rest of the troops about what is going on above interior operating units.

Ladder company officer’s need to make the following assessment (size-up) of the roof and this size-up must be transmitted to the IC if there is any significant tactical information to report:

- Type of roof if not easily identified from the ground (peaked, flat, bowstrung, etc)
- Condition of roof (stable, unstable)
- Fire or smoke conditions
- Location of any firewalls
- Unusual heavy roof loads (if present)
- Conditions in the Attic (if known)
- Basic blueprint of building if unusual
- Action being taken

An important element to convey to the IC when giving your initial roof size up report to the IC is; the stability of the roof and should people be operating under it.

After ventilating a roof, the Ladder Company should give a follow-up report to the IC that includes:

- Where you cut
- The effect on the fire
- Conditions in the attic space
- Roof stability

XV. OFFENSIVE TO DEFENSIVE STRATEGIC SHIFT

When the offensive strategy is chosen on our initial arrival, most of the time, a well placed initial attack solves the incident's problem. But there are many times (for many reasons) that our initial, and sometimes re-enforced attack efforts, do not solve the incidents problems and conditions continue to deteriorate to the point where the critical factors indicate switching from an offensive to a defensive strategy.

IC's must be very pessimistic in these types of situations, especially if the structure has a primary "All Clear". Command must change strategies before the building is disassembling itself due to structural damage. When this happens, Command is very late in the strategy shift and on the receiving end of the building's decision governing the new strategy. The IC must be the single person to make the defensive decision, NOT the building coming apart.

The announcement of a change to a defensive strategy will be made as follows:

- Announce to all hazard zone units:
- Shifting to the Defensive Strategy
- All Unit's "Exit" or "Abandoned" the structure
- All Units report PAR's upon exit

"Exit the Structure" will be defined as: an orderly withdrawal where interior lines and equipment will be withdrawn and repositioned/shut down when changing to a defensive strategy.

"Abandoned the Structure" will be defined as: an emergency retreat where all hoselines and heavy equipment will be left in place and all members in the hazard zone will exit the structure as quickly and as safely as possible.

A PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) shall be obtained for all units exiting the hazard zone after any switch from an offensive to a defensive strategy.

Commands greatest priority once a strategic shift has been initiated is the safe exit of all units located in the hazard zone. Level 1 Staged units and other units working outside the hazard zone shall maintain radio silence until all PAR's have been tallied (unless they have emergency or high priority traffic).

Company officers will account for their crews and advise their S/D Officer or Command on the status of their crew upon exiting.

S/D Officers will notify Command of the status of the individual crews assigned to their S/D upon their exit.

Chief Mike Kennedy

____
Approved by

Rescinds:
Manual of Procedures, 406 Incident Command System (February 19, 2012)