COMMAND FUNCTION #6 - ORGANIZATION

Effective:	November 6, 2026
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Approved:	Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. COMMAND FUNCTION #6 – ORGANIZATION

The primary goal is balance the incident commander's span of control by developing an effective incident organization; delegate geographic and functional responsibilities.

Brunacini, Alan V., and Nick Brunacini. *Fire Command*. 3rd ed., Across the Street Productions, 2026 is the foundational resource document for this SOP.

There are three operational levels that function at the scene of every hazard zone.

Strategic Level - This organizational level is designed around the IC (and Command Team) operating in the Command position, working out of a stationary command post. The Strategic level involves coordinating the activities necessary for overall operational control, determining the incident's strategy, and developing an IAP that completes the incident's tactical objectives.

Tactical Level - The first management "subdivision" of the incident scene is done by assigning Sector/Division/Group (SDG) responsibilities. SDG Officers are responsible for the tactical deployment and supervision of all assigned resources in their assigned area. These tactical assignments are made directly by the IC to specific units.

Task Level - Is where the work is performed by assigned companies. The Strategic and Tactical levels are in place to support the task level. Task level activities are supervised by Company Officers working with the members of their companies directly in the hazard zone. The task level is the most important level on the incident site because it solves the incidents problems while taking place in an IDLH atmosphere that can kill the workers. All activities outside the hazard zone are in place to support units working on the task level.

II. SUBDIVIDING THE INCIDENT SCENE

An IC must have a system in place where the rate of assigning companies to the emergency scene does not exceed their span of control. The IC accomplishes this by forecasting and establishing geographic and functional responsibilities that divides the incident scene into smaller, more manageable tactical sub-divisions.

Division is a geographical subdivision of the incident site.

The term "sector" is used to name both geographic and functional work groups. IC's manage strategic level accountability by controlling both the position and function of all hazard zone units using a tactical worksheet.

All units assigned into the hazard zone must be assigned to a specific geographic location where they will be responsible for the completion of all tactical priorities in their assigned area.

III. ESTABLISHING GEOGRAPHIC & FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The IC must forecast where the overall event is going, subdivide the hazard zone into manageable tactical units and then assign geographic responsibilities early on in the incident in order to build an effective incident organization.

Geographic subdivisions are most effective when they are assigned in anticipation of their need, rather than in a crisis because it is very difficult to play catch-up in fast paced, escalating incidents.
Subdividing the incident site provides tactical supervision, direction and support to units assigned and operating in a hazard zone. This delegated management also helps the IC to achieve the incidents tactical objectives much more safely and effectively. Utilizing the appropriate subdivisions will:

- Reduce the IC's span of control.
- It streamlines and creates more effective incident scene communications.
- They allow the IC to focus on the Strategic elements of the incident from a stationary command post.
- Gives the IC an array of functions to choose from and match to the particular needs of each Incident.
- It greatly improves the accountability system
- It places strong tactical direction and leadership where the work is actually taking place. Improves firefighter safety by having dedicated Officers directly manage and control the position and function of the operating companies assigned to them.

Offensive fires usually do not last very long. The fire is extinguished in the limited time frame (less than 20 minutes), or the structure is exited. Building large incident organizations on offensive fires does not happen very often. But there are many situations that can facilitate long duration, over 30-minute, offensive operations. Some of these offensive situations include:

- Multi-Unit residential structures where the fire has extended into the concealed spaces or into adjoining units.
- Other highly compartmentalized structures with fire extension in concealed and common attic spaces
- Sprinkler controlled, large area cold smoke fires
- Defensive fire situations where we operate in offensive positions in the exposed structures
- Compartmentalized high-rise structures

As the resource required to bring the incident under control escalates, the strategic level (the IC) and the tactical level (tactical bosses) must also be supported. This support needs to be included in the regular dispatch system. The standard response elements of additional staff and response chiefs on greater alarms will give the IC the needed resource to implement an organization that keeps up with and outlasts the event.

IV. TACTICAL SUPERVISION – COMPANY OFFICER

Generally, in the front end of escalating or large-scale events, the IC will assign - the company officer of the first arriving unit to a work location - initial S/D Officer responsibilities. These initial S/D assignments start to subdivide the incident scene early on, and they keep the IC ahead of the deployment process.

When assigning a unit to deploy to and/or assume initial geographic or functional responsibilities, the IC needs to transmit:

- Location or function of the subdivision
- S/D appropriate name
- Tactical objectives to be addressed in the S/D

V. TACTICAL SUPERVISION – COMMAND OFFICER

When S/D supervision is transferred from a company officer to a command officer, it elevates S/D management with a true tactical level boss. This greatly facilitates the completion of the S/Ds objectives and firefighter safety. As the IC assigns subsequent arriving command officers to assume S/D responsibilities, it quickly builds and embeds powerful tactical and safety elements across the entire incident scene. This places the IC in the strongest strategic position to manage the position and function of all assigned resources.

When assigning a command officer to assume geographic or functional responsibilities, the IC needs will need to transmit:

- Location of the S/D
- S/D appropriate name
- Tactical objectives to be addressed in the S/D
- Units currently assigned to the work area
- Current S/D supervisor they will be replacing (if any)

The S/D Officer will need to position themselves just outside of the hazard zone in their S/D. Entering into the hazard zone would place the S/D Officer at the same disadvantage as interior companies working in the S/D and entry should be avoided. The best position to manage the S/D is in the warm zone of the S/D at the entry point. This location puts the S/D officer in the most ideal position to manage, coordinate, and account for all the S/D resource.

There are two main functional areas a S/D Officer must manage in their assigned S/D. They are:

1. **Tactical** level requirements to run the S/D
2. **Embedded Safety** requirements to run the S/D