COMMAND FUNCTION #1 – DEPLOYMENT

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Approved:	Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

I. COMMAND FUNCTION #1 – DEPLOYMENT

The primary goal is to provide and manage a steady, adequate, and timely stream of appropriate resources.

Brunacini, Alan V., and Nick Brunacini. *Fire Command*. 3rd ed., Across the Street Productions, 2026 is the foundational resource document for this SOP.
How responders are dispatched and put to work when they arrive on the scene is an essential component of our Incident Management System (IMS). When this front-end deployment management occurs in a regular, orderly manner, the hazard-zone workers become part of the IC's overall plan. This creates a safe and standard operational beginning.

Company officers, acting officers, and individual firefighters are accountable for the safety of themselves and other team members, but the incident commander has the ultimate responsibility. Members shall maintain a constant awareness of the position and function of all members working with them. Each level of the incident organization has its own accountability responsibility. No organizational level can manage the accountability responsibilities of another level.

The IC is the resource allocator for the incident and is responsible for managing all assigned resources work cycles on the strategic level. The standard deployment management that an IC must manage on every incident is the following items:

- Staging
- Assignments to the incident scene by the IC
- Accountability in a hazard zone
- Work/Rest Cycle
- On-Deck
- Rehabbing
- Ready for reassignment
- Placing companies back into service

This creates a resource delivery system that allows the IC to deploy resources according to their IAP and it also provides a system that allows the IC to manage accountability on the strategic level.

II. DEPLOYMENT INTO THE HAZARD ZONE

The three deep deployment model is designed to establish attack positions, reinforce those positions quickly with later-arriving resources, and sustain the operation across standard company work cycles.

This model includes.

1. Working companies – The IC companies to perform work. These IC or SOP driven assignments fall into one of two categories: initial units assigned to an attack position or units assigned to an existing position.
2. Staged companies – Staging provides the IC with resources they can deploy quickly.
3. On-deck companies – On deck means physically staging a company within an attack position's warm zone.

III. STAGING PROCEDURES

When the first arriving incident commander declares a "working fire," SOP 3.23 Working Fire Assignments shall be implemented. Responding units on a first box alarm when a "working fire" has been declared will follow the assignments outlined in SOP 3.23 Working Fire Assignments; they will not Level 1 stage.

The IC is the resource allocator for the incident and is responsible for managing all assigned resources work cycles on the strategic level.

Level 1 and 2 staging procedures place resources into positions where the IC can assign them based on his or her incident action plan.

Level 1 Staging

Companies will utilize this when the initial incident commander is in **investigative mode**. Effective utilization of the Level 1 Staging procedure will:

- Prevent excessive apparatus congestion at the scene.
- Allows time for Command to evaluate conditions prior to assigning companies.
- Places apparatus in uncommitted locations close to the immediate scene to facilitate a more effective assignment by Command.
- Reduces radio traffic during the critical initial stages of the incident.
- Facilitates fireground accountability
- Allows command to formulate and implement an IAP without undue confusion and pressure.

Level 1 staging procedures are automatically activated when the officer of the initial arriving unit clears dispatch to give their initial radio report and assumes command.

This action causes all later arriving resources to Level 1 stage in an uncommitted position one block from the scene and announces that they are Level 1 staged in a direction related to the scene over the assigned talkgroup, ("Engine 1-3 north, Ladder 1-5 south").

For engine companies this means that they do not pass their last hydrant. Ladder companies do not pass their last access point into the incident site. All Level 1 staged units must wait for an assignment from the IC before proceeding out of their Level 1 staging location.

- First engine, ladder, and chief officer respond directly to the scene.
- Immediately goes into effect with Initial Radio Report from IC #1.
- All subsequent arriving units stage 1 block away in their direction of travel while not passing their last tactical option.

At no time will a unit auto assign themselves into the hazard area without notifying the IC. That is defined as freelancing and prohibited.

Level 2 Staging

Level 2 staging procedures are used for greater alarm assignments. Level 2 staging is defined as: a centralized staging location, adjacent to the incident scene where later arriving resources will assemble. Level 2 staging should be close enough to the incident scene to provide timely access but is located in an area that is out of the way and not exposed to the incident's hazards.

When requesting a second alarm or greater, the IC will designate a Level 2 staging location and put companies responding to Level 2 on a separate InterOp.

The dispatch center will notify greater alarm units of the InterOp and location of Level 2 staging. Units dispatched to the Level 2 staging area will report in person to the Level 2 Staging Officer and will make no radio transmissions while in Level 2 staging (face to face).

In the absence of an assigned Level 2 Staging Officer, the first fire department officer to arrive at the staging area will automatically become the Level 2 staging officer and will notify command upon their arrival to the Level 2 Staging area. A mutual aid chief officer should be assigned to assume or transfer Level 2 staging duties from any company officers who are filling the role. This will allow them to be available to be assigned into a hazard zone with their unit.

The Level 2 Staging Officer will perform the following duties.

- Notify the IC upon their arrival at the staging area on the main InterOp.
- Verify the companies available at the staging location.
- Organize the apparatus so it can be easily deployed out of the staging area if necessary.
- Relay to companies the following information when they are assigned out of Level 2 staging.
    - Any tasks, the location and the objectives assigned to the unit.
    - The area where to report to, or the Sector boss to whom they are to report to.
    - Assigned InterOp.

When assigned to on-site duties, companies leaving staging will communicate directly with command or their assigned SDG officer for further instructions (if needed).

There will be incidents where the IC will need to quickly assign response chiefs hazard zone management roles. In these circumstances, the IC will need to make a determination when calling for additional resources on whether the response chiefs on greater alarms should Level 1 or Level 2 stage.

Staff officers should also leave their vehicles in the Level 2 staging in a manner that does not block access if their vehicle is not needed at the scene.

Apparatus in the Level 2 staging area must be arranged in manner that allows for easy access in and out of the staging area. Apparatus not needed at the scene site, which is left in the Level 2 staging location, should be positioned/parked in a manner that does not congest or compromise access in or out of the Level 2 staging area.

IV. IC ASSIGNING UNITS INTO A HAZARD ZONE

Incident operations are conducted around the completion of the tactical priorities. Incident communications should mirror this simple concept. When the IC assigns companies based on a well thought out IAP, everything seems to naturally fall into place and companies will base their progress reports on the original orders the IC gave them. This keeps the operation focused on what we showed up to do – make sure everyone is out and okay, elimination of the incident problem, and reducing the harm/damage/loss to the customers property.

IC's will need to use the following structure when assigning any unit into the hazard zone:

- Tasks
- Location of those tasks
- Objectives of the tasks

One of the IC's major objectives is to control both the position/location and function of all resource assigned to the hazard zone. Being very specific about the location and the objectives of the tasks that need to be performed goes a long way in helping the IC (and the rest of the team) know where everybody is and what they are doing.

V. HAZARD ZONE ACCOUNTABILITY

Each shift battalion chief has been issued and is responsible for maintaining an incident management command board with company passports containing individual name tags. Common mutual aid fire department apparatus passports are also provided.

Prior to the beginning of each shift, the on-duty battalion chief shall organize apparatus passports with assigned personnel. When daily personnel changes occur, the on-duty battalion chief shall make the necessary adjustments to reflect current assignments.

As personnel receive their apparatus assignments at the start of each shift, they will place their individual name tags on their assigned apparatus passports At the start of each shift and as personnel change throughout the shift, it is the responsibility of the company officer to ensure assigned personnel's name tags are on the passport. The name tag of the driver / operator will be "upside down" on the passport to indicate this person is the driver / operator. Based on unit assignment and arrival order, the driver / operator may or may not be present with the crew in the hazard zone.

For rescues (ambulances) each firefighter is individually responsible for placing their name tags on the passports.

At shift completion, personnel will remove their name tags. The apparatus passports will be kept near the right front seat in the cab. During a mutual aid incident, the company officer shall give their passport to the Incident Commander upon receiving an operational assignment.

For large scale incidents, the company officer shall take one of the passport collectors in the event of being assigned to a sector / division. If such assignment is received, the company officer shall provide the passport collector to the sector / division officer and re-acquire such passport collector upon being cleared of that assignment from the sector/division officer.

The prepared battalion chief passport board will be integrated into the incident command board system located in the battalion chief's vehicle.

Companies working on the task level have the greatest stake in the accountability system because they operate inside the hazard zone. No hazard zone management system can outperform unsafe behaviors on the task level.

Task level responsibilities include:

- Following all staging procedures
- Being properly assigned into the hazard zone
- Staying together as a company
- Always maintaining an adequate air supply to safely exit the hazard zone,
- No freelancing.

The following rules will be adhered to on the task level:

- The minimum number of personnel assigned to a crew or a team operating in a hazard zone shall be two firefighters with at least one portable radio.
- Crews or teams always go in and come out together.
- All personnel shall be in contact with their company officer by either:
    - Voice (radio)
    - Vision (TIC)
    - Touch (hose line)

- Company officers shall give an accountability report upon exiting the hazard zone to either the IC or their assigned SDG boss.
- Any member whose job assignment is to operate outside of the hazard area is NOT to enter the hazard area without the express permission of the member's company officer.
- NO member shall operate in the hazard zone alone. It is understood that crews may do a split search or other task where they are physically separated. However, they are still part of the one crew. This is not considered working alone.

Tactical level accountability responsibilities

- The hazard zone tactical level of the incident organization is managed by SECTOR supervisors (no groups inside the hazard zone). When the IC assigns companies to an operational area, the officer in charge of that area is responsible for managing the companies assigned to the area.
- In many cases, the initial tactical level responsibility may be assigned to the first company officer assigned to the area. As the span of control and or the risk increases, a command level officer should be used to replace the initial company officer sector supervisor.

Here is the list of the responsibilities for a sector boss:

- Sector plan matches IC plan
- Risk management in the sector
- Complete Tactical Priorities in the SECTOR
- Positions always match conditions in the SECTOR
- Implement and manage the SECTOR IAP
- Coordinate with other SECTOR's when needed
- Assist with SECTOR Air Management
- Manages Work-Rest Cycles
- Manages On-Deck crews

VI. STRATEGIC LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

The IC manages strategic level accountability by strict command and control; deploying resources to specific tasks locations and objectives; maintaining the whereabouts of all resources in the hazard zone; maintaining an accurate tactical worksheet and ensuring that frequent CAN and situational awareness reports are delivered from the key tactical areas of the operation.

The key to strategic level accountability for escalated incident operations is to build an effective incident organization. It is the IC's responsibility to account for all resources until delegated to tactical level supervisors. The IC does this by assigning SECTOR responsibilities to company officers and / or command officers. These officers physically position themselves in their assigned area and manage their piece of the incident operation.

This places strong supervision, management and leadership in forward positions where the hazards are present. Organizing in this fashion greatly enhances firefighter safety and is the most significant tool at the IC's disposal to increase his/her strategic level capability, especially for escalating incident operations.

Unit accountability must be maintained throughout the incident. The IC must be able to ascertain the accountability status; the location and the tasks being performed for each company operating in the hazard zone. This can be done by either direct contact with each individual company or by delegating these responsibilities as required to sector officers assigned around the incident site.

Incident management command boards and tactical worksheets; the best way to remember something is to write it down. The strategically placed IC (working out of command post) has a continual deployment-management challenge to somehow keep track of what is happening. As more responders show up, go to work, and the incident starts to "move fast and spread out," these dynamic conditions can quickly exceed the IC's mental capability to maintain a current awareness of "who's where, doing what." An incident management command board system is the best, basic form that the IC typically uses to record resource details and work activities.

VII. PAR'S AND ROLL-CALLS

A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) involves a roll call and confirmation that all personnel assigned to a crew, or multiple crews assigned to one (1) geographic area of the hazard zone working under the supervision of one (1) tactical boss, are accounted for and have an adequate air supply to safely exit the hazard zone.

Reports of PAR's should be conducted face-to-face within the SECTOR or company and transmitted as one entire report whenever possible.

A Roll Call is an accountability report from all company officers of an individual crew assigned to the hazard zone, or sector supervisors reporting on all personnel working in a specific geographic area of the hazard zone at one specified area in the incident.

When the IC makes a general announcement to all units on the fireground to initiate a roll call, all individuals, units, and/or sector's shall.

- Notify their company officer of their condition and location.
- Notify the supervisor of their assigned sector of their condition and location.
- Sector supervisors shall be responsible for the count and location of all personnel assigned under their command who are located in the hazard zone.
- After all companies or sectors have been accounted for, the IC shall transmit a PAR to the dispatch center for the entire incident.

The IC must drive the roll call to avoid multiple units contacting them first. Unless a Unit DOES NOT have a PAR, they should maintain radio silence until contacted by the IC to report their PAR.

A formal roll call shall be conducted when changing from an offensive to a defensive operation or when as determined by the IC.

A "NO-PAR" policy will be in effect once a Mayday has been transmitted. This means that unless an operating unit DOES NOT have a PAR, PAR information is NOT to be transmitted over the tactical channel. This policy greatly reduces the amount of radio traffic transmitted in the first few minutes of a mayday and allows the IC the airtime needed to react to the mayday traffic.

VIII. RULE OF AIR MANAGEMENT - MANAGING THE WORK / REST CYCLE

Members are totally dependent on the air that they bring with them into the hazard zone. Company officers must maintain an awareness of their crew's air levels and the decision to exit the hazard zone must be governed by maintaining an adequate enough air reserve to deal with any sudden or unplanned events while exiting.

It is critical for firefighters to understand that the last 33% of the air supply in an SCBA is the *emergency reserve*. The initial 66% of the air supply is for working and exiting. This includes gaining access, working towards the tactical objectives and leaving the Hazard Zone, otherwise known as a "round trip ticket."

The officer shall ensure members check their air levels before they enter the hazardous atmosphere. Members must have a minimum of 4050 psi in their cylinder in order to make initial entry into a hazardous atmosphere.

It is the IC's responsibility to allocate enough resource to key tactical areas early in the event to prevent companies from working past safe air reserve times. This type of proactive deployment management prevents maydays from occurring.

IC's, sector officers, and company officers must all agree to realistic SCBA work times in the hazard zone. These work times must give the workers a margin of safety in case something goes wrong while exiting. Company officers must manage this on the task level and keep the IC or sector officer informed of their air supply and projected work times.

When the first member of any crew has their 50% Heads-Up Display (HUD) light activate (one flashing amber light), the officer / sector officer shall report to the IC that the crew / group / team is at 50% air. This report should be in the CAN format. This allows the IC to pre-plan for replacing that crew in the hazardous atmosphere.

If a crew member works into their reserve air (flashing red light) and their low-air warning bell begins to ring in the hazard area, the officer / sector officer shall report over the radio to the IC their unit, their location, that a team member's low-air warning bell is ringing and an estimation of how close they are to the exit.

Sector officers assisting assigned units with their air management times in no way takes away or diminishes the company officer's responsibility for managing his / her crews' air supply.
If members hear a low air warning bell ringing in the hazardous atmosphere, and there is not an immediate radio report from the team whose bell is ringing, that bell should be considered an emergency alarm until proven otherwise.

All firefighters are expected to be out of the hazard zone before their low air alarm begins to activate. If the firefighter exits the hazard zone prior to his low air alarm activates, they may replace the SCBA bottle and return to the hazard zone, based on assignment from the IC. This creates a two-cylinder rotation for firefighters. After the second round of cylinders, all effort needs to be made for the firefighter to go to rehab.

IX. ON DECK

"On Deck" is defined as; a forward staging position located just outside the immediate hazard zone, safely distanced from the entrance of a tactical position / sector. Once a crew is assigned to an on-deck position, they are first and foremost a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) until they are given an assignment into the hazard zone. The on-deck deployment model greatly assist an IC with managing hazard zone units work/rest cycles and their air supplies. The on-deck crew may engage in activities listed under the "third arriving engine" as described in SOP 3.23 Working Fire Assignments.

On-deck crews will be supervised either by the sector officer or the company officer and they will remain on-deck until assigned by the IC or sector officer. The most likely assignments for on-deck companies are:

1. To relieve working crews
2. To reinforce a current position
3. To cover a new position
4. As a rapid intervention team (RIT)

Once the IC has deployed units to the critical sector around the incident scene, the IC must then take a proactive aggressive approach to assigning additional resources to those sectors. This is best achieved by assigning staged resources as on-deck crews to those areas as soon as they arrive in staged positions. Layering on-deck crews around the fire ground will also provide the IC with the tactical reserves to manage the standard work cycle or sudden and unexpected incident events.

On-deck crews must remain intact, in a ready state and monitor the tactical talkgroup. On-deck crews must also size up the area that they are assigned to, this size up should include:

- Locating the structures entrance/exit points in their assigned area
- Interior and exterior conditions
- Unit ID of crews operating inside the structure
- Approximate location of interior crews
- Identify which crews are operating each hose line

When an on-deck crew is used as a relief crew, the company officer should do a face to face and transfer information with the officer exiting the structure. The information transferred should include:

- Interior conditions
- Routing instructions to the work area
- Interior obstructions
- Additional tools/resources required
- Sector objectives