



Incident Command System Regional Procedure #06

Adopted by:
WCFA
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PURPOSE

Williamson County Fire Departments respond to a wide range of emergency incidents. To effectively manage personnel and resources during an incident and provide for the safety and welfare of personnel, the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFA) agree to always operate within the parameters of the Incident Command System. While each member of the WCFA has their own Standard Operating Procedures related to the Incident Command System, this Regional Procedure outlines the processes to be employed at a minimum in establishing the COMMAND components of the Incident Command System and applicable components of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) while utilizing the “Blue Card Hazard Zone Management System” in accordance with NFPA 1561. Williamson County Fire Departments shall be trained in all areas of the IMS, in accordance with the Texas Administrative Code, Rules 435.11(b)(4) and 435.13(B)(2&3).

BACKGROUND

The WCFA “Incident Command System” procedure is a cooperative effort between all members to ensure personnel and resources are effectively and efficiently managed in a like manner across Williamson County. Fire Departments must always start out all emergency responses in a standard manner, basing their actions on a standard set of critical factors, in order to achieve a standard incident outcome. Every incident is different. The things that protect firefighters from these different, every time incident elements, is the command system used to manage hazard zone operations. It must be used and applied the same way, for every incident. This prevents the incident from managing the responders. When operating within Standard Operating Procedures, responders can effectively manage the incident while protecting members operating inside the hazard zone.

DEFINITIONS

Abandon the Structure: a term used to accomplish an emergency retreat where all hose lines and equipment are left in place and all personnel in the hazard zone will exit the structure as quickly as possible and report a PAR upon exit.

COMMAND: The incident commander or the incident command function.

Companies/Crews: Groups of firefighters or other responders.

Emergency Traffic: Information that must be shared immediately (trapped/lost firefighter, change in strategy, etc.).

Evacuate the Structure: An orderly, methodical withdrawal of interior lines, equipment and personnel to establish a PAR and transition to a defensive strategy. *“All companies from COMMAND. Evacuate the structure. We will be transitioning to a defensive strategy.”*

Exit the Structure: Used when ordering crews or divisions to accomplish task at a different location. This term is not to be used when transitioning strategies or removing crews from a hazard zone. It is NOT interchangeable with “Evacuate” or “Abandon.”

Follow up report: Should be given after the completion of a 360. Report should include any changes to the IAP, and any information that differs from the initial radio report/size up. If a 360 cannot be completed due to size or access, that message must be transmitted.

Immediate Danger to Life and Health (IDLH) Atmosphere: An atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Initial Rapid Intervention Crew (IRIC): A minimum of two members to provide a rapid rescue of firefighters operating in an IDLH atmosphere in the initial stage of an incident (2-in / 2-out).

Incipient Stage Fire: A fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be controlled or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers, Class II standpipe, or small hose systems without the need for protective clothing or breathing apparatus. Any interior structure fire beyond the incipient stage is considered to be an IDLH atmosphere.

Level 1 Staging: Arriving resources to stage in an uncommitted position, staged in a direction relative to the scene, but without passing the last tactical priority (i.e., hydrant/water-supply, access point, etc.).

Level 2 Staging: A centralized staging location, adjacent to the incident scene where later arriving resources will assemble. Often a separate radio channel, and Staging Officer will be assigned.

On-Deck: A forward staging position located just outside the immediate hazard zone, safely distanced from the entrance of a tactical position/SDG.

Operation/Command Channel(s): Radio channel designated for COMMAND to communicate with greater alarm companies, staging, rehab and the fire alarm center once an additional alarm has been requested. This channel should be designated upon the request of an additional alarm or at the request of the COMMAND.

PAR: 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 SDG or company/crew and transmitted as one entire report whenever possible.

Passport Accountability System: When properly used, the passport accountability system will increase firefighter safety and provide the Initial Accountability Officer and SDG Supervisors with a means to track the location and function of all firefighters working in a hazard zone.

Priority Traffic: Information that should be shared as soon as possible (conditions, actions, needs).

Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC): A rapid intervention crew shall consist of at least two members and shall be available for rescue of a lost or trapped firefighter. Each RIC shall be fully equipped with protective clothing, protective equipment, SCBA, and any specialized rescue equipment that could be needed given the specifics of the operation underway.

Recycle: A function to rehydrate crews and replenish breathing air supplies to prepare them to return to the work cycle while maintaining accountability to their current Division/Assignment.

Rehab: An assignment to a formal rehab location (close to the emergency scene) where companies/crews/crews will be decontaminated, medically evaluated, rehydrated, and replenished. *All WCFCA members shall pass through Rehab prior to demobilization or release.*

Sector/Division/Group (SDG): A smaller, more manageable unit of incident scene organization that may be assigned by their geographic location (Division) [i.e., North, South, etc.], function (Group) [i.e., Ventilation, Fire Attack, etc.], or both (SDG).

Size up report/Initial Radio Report: Should include building size/height, occupancy type, event description (conditions), action taken, and declared strategy, as well as the assumption of Command.

Tactical Channel(s): Radio channel designated for COMMAND to communicate with Division/Assignment supervisors and for Division/Assignment 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: The incident can be handled with one or two single resources with up to six personnel, Command and General Staff positions (other than the Incident Commander) are not activated. No written Incident Action Plan (IAP) is required. The incident is contained within the first operational period and often within an hour to a few hours after resources arrive on scene.

Type 4 Incidents: Command staff and general staff functions are activated only if needed. Several resources are required to mitigate the incident, including a Task Force or Strike Team. The incident is usually limited to one operational period in the control phase. The agency administrator may have briefings and ensure the complexity analysis and delegation of authority are updated. No written Incident Action Plan (IAP) is required but a documented operational briefing will be completed for all incoming resources. The role of the agency administrator includes operational plans including objectives and priorities.

PROCEDURE

COMMAND Procedures are designed to:

- A. Place the responsibility of COMMAND on a certain individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies/crews, and COMMAND officers.
- B. Ensure that a strong, direct, and visible COMMAND will be established from the onset of the incident.
- C. Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to COMMAND and the other individuals operating within the Incident Command System.
- D. Provide a system to process information that supports incident management, planning, and decision-making.
- E. Provide a system for the orderly transfer of COMMAND to subsequent arriving officers.
- F. Ensure a seamless transition from a Type 5/4 incident to a Type 3/2/1 (NIMS) incidents.

Responsibilities of COMMAND

- A. COMMAND is responsible for the completion of the Tactical Objectives. The Tactical Objectives are:
1. **L**ife Safety
 2. **I**ncident Stabilization
 3. **P**roperty Conservation
 4. **S**ystems Restoration
- B. The Incident Command System is used to facilitate the completion of the Tactical Objectives. COMMAND is the person who drives the system towards that end. COMMAND is responsible for building a structure that matches the organizational needs of the incident to achieve the completion of the Tactical Objectives for the incident.

Functions of COMMAND

- A. Standard activities that are performed by COMMAND to achieve the Tactical Objectives include:
1. Assume and announce COMMAND and establish an effective initial COMMAND Post (CP).
 2. Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up).
 3. Initiate, maintain, and control effective incident communications.
 4. Provide and manage a steady, adequate, and timely stream of appropriate resources.
 5. Identify the incident strategy, develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP), and assign companies/crews and personnel consistent with plans and Standard Operating Procedures.
 6. Develop an effective incident organization using SDGs to decentralize and delegate geographic and functional responsibility.
 7. Review, and revise (as needed) the strategy to keep the IAP current.
 8. Provide for the continuity, transfer, and termination of COMMAND.
- B. COMMAND is responsible for all these functions. As COMMAND is transferred, so is the responsibility for these functions. The first six (6) functions must be addressed immediately from the initial assumption of COMMAND.

Establishing COMMAND

- A. The first fire department member or unit to arrive at the scene shall assume COMMAND of the incident. The initial Incident Commander shall remain in COMMAND until COMMAND is transferred, or the incident is stabilized, and COMMAND is terminated.

- B. The radio designation “COMMAND” will be used along with the occupancy or address of the incident. This designation will not change throughout the duration of the incident. The designation of “COMMAND” will remain with the officer currently in COMMAND of the incident or with the person COMMAND was transferred to throughout the event.
- C. The standard Initial Radio Report includes:
1. On-Scene Report
 - a. Clear alarm;
 - b. Unit designation/on the scene;
 - c. Building/area description;
 - d. Obvious problem/conditions;
 - e. Action taken;
 - f. Declaration of Strategy;
 - g. COMMAND confirmation with name.
 2. Follow-up Report
 - a. Any immediate safety concerns;
 - b. Accountability started (announce the initial accountability location);
 - c. Disposition of resources (hold/add/return);
 - d. Disposition of IRIC.

COMMAND Options

- A. The responsibility of the first arriving unit or member to assume COMMAND of the incident presents several options, depending on the situation. If a member or unit without tactical capabilities (i.e. staff vehicle, personal vehicle, no equipment, etc.) initiates COMMAND; the establishment of a CP should be a top priority. The following COMMAND options define the Officer’s direct involvement in tactical activities and the modes of COMMAND that may be utilized.
1. Investigative Mode (Nothing Showing);
 2. Fast Attack;
 3. COMMAND Mode – Stationary CP that may include tactical worksheet/boards.

Transfer of COMMAND

- A. COMMAND is transferred to improve the quality of the COMMAND organization. When COMMAND is transferred, it should trigger upgrades in the COMMAND structure. Using a standard routine for both establishing and transferring COMMAND creates the capability within the responding units for COMMAND to effectively and safely establish and continue COMMAND. Using a fast attack (COMMAND #1) in the initial stages of an offensive incident, and then having a subsequent arriving response (COMMAND #2) transfer, strengthens, and continues COMMAND within the IAP from an upgraded CP.
- B. In certain situations, it may be advantageous for the first arriving COMMAND (i.e. Company Officer) to transfer COMMAND to the next Company on-scene. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving Company requires a full crew (i.e., high-rise or an immediate rescue situation) and another Company or COMMAND Officer is on the scene. When a Chief Officer arrives at the scene at the same time as the initial arriving Company, the Chief Officer should assume COMMAND of the incident.
 - 1. “Passing COMMAND” to a unit that is not on the scene creates a gap in the COMMAND process and compromises incident management and safety. To prevent this “gap”, COMMAND shall not be transferred to an individual who is not on the scene.
- C. Should a situation occur where a later arriving officer cannot locate or communicate with COMMAND (after several radio attempts), they will assume and announce their assumption of COMMAND and initiate whatever actions are necessary to confirm the safety of the missing crew.
- D. COMMAND will not transfer to the IMT (Type 1/2/3) unless a formal written Delegation of Authority has been signed by both the AHJ and the IMT.
- E. The arrival of a ranking Officer on the incident scene does not mean that COMMAND has been automatically transferred to that Officer. COMMAND is only transferred when the Transfer of COMMAND process has been completed. The person being relieved of COMMAND will be assigned to the best advantage by the Officer assuming COMMAND.
- F. A ranking Officer may elect to have a subordinate continue the role of COMMAND. In cases where an individual is working effectively at an incident, and satisfactory progress is being made to bring the incident under control, it may be desirable for that person to continue in an active COMMAND role. The ranking Officer must determine that COMMAND is completely aware of the position and function of operating companies/crews and the general status of the situation. In these cases, the arriving ranking Officer may assume a supportive role in the overall COMMAND organization.
- G. The response and arrival of additional COMMAND officers strengthens the overall COMMAND organization. As the incident escalates, COMMAND should use these officers to fill SDG positions. COMMAND should consider adding a COMMAND officer to any SDG with three or more operating companies/crews.
- K. When the first arriving unit is a COMMAND Officer, efforts should be automatically directed towards establishing a CP and fulfilling the COMMAND functions. COMMAND Officers should eliminate all unnecessary radio traffic while responding, unless such communications are required to ensure that COMMAND functions are initiated and completed. This requires an initial clear radio report and updated progress reports as needed.

- L. COMMAND is responsible for managing the incident. The fire department empowers COMMAND with the authority to turn his/her decisions into actions (develop an IAP and assign companies/crews).

Company/Crew Deployment

- A. COMMAND must always provide a steady, adequate stream of resources for the required tasks based on the incident's critical factors. This model provides workers that are in the hazard zone, workers ready to go to work right outside of the hazard zone, and replacement workers waiting for an assignment in staged positions. This involves COMMAND first requesting/acquiring and then effectively and proactively assigning later arriving units to On-Deck positions while keeping a tactical reserve in staged positions.
1. First Layer - the initial arriving workers who have been assigned into and are working in the hazard zone.
 2. Second Layer - After these key tactical positions have been covered, subsequent arriving units are assigned to On-Deck positions at the entry points already utilized by initial arriving Unit's. This gives COMMAND a rapidly assignable resource and SDG support in the form of On-Deck companies/crews.
 3. Third Layer - Once all of the critical tactical areas are adequately backed up with On-Deck Units, subsequent arriving units will either Level 1 or 2 Stage. These staged Units now give COMMAND the tactical reserve needed to replace companies/crews or to back fill any companies/crews addressing a sudden incident problem.
- C. COMMAND and/or the SDG officer may lose direct accountability of these companies/crews while they are In-Transit. It is the responsibility of the company officer to monitor the tactical radio channel while In-Transit. Upon arrival to the assignment area the company officer must provide a radio announcement to COMMAND or report face to face with the SDG Officer that the company is intact and in the assigned area.

On-Deck

- A. Once COMMAND has deployed units to the critical SDGs around the incident scene, COMAMND must then take a proactive aggressive approach to assigning additional resources to those SDGs. 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 COMMAND with the tactical reserves to manage the standard work cycle or sudden and unexpected incident events.
- B. Assigning On-Deck crews is done simply by contacting a staged company and directing them to go On-Deck in a specific geographic location or SDG. A crew assigned to an On-Deck position will need to park their apparatus in a manner that doesn't block access to the scene. Crews must be intact with full PPE, forecast the need for and collect all the necessary tools/equipment and report directly to their assigned location. Upon arrival, the On-Deck company/crew must contact COMMAND or their SDG Officer and inform them that they are in position and ready to go to work.
- C. On-Deck crews must remain intact, in a ready state and monitor the tactical channel at all times.

- D. 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.

Recycling / Rehabilitation

- A. Companies/crews operating within a SDG will require the refilling of air bottles and fluid replacement in predictable time frames. At large scale incidents COMMAND will establish at least 1 Rehab SDG. Most of the time, crews that are assigned to rehab will be placed back in service after rehabbing.
- B. If conditions permit, a company/crew work cycle could be up to 2 to 3 air cylinders. To maintain a steady stream of resource in critical SDGs, crews being relieved and exiting their SDG should recycle themselves in a timely manner. Companies/crews being relieved and recycled will remain in their assigned SDG, refill their air supply, and re-hydrate then report back to their SDG officer or the IC that they are ready to go back to work.
- C. Company officers should forecast the length of time they will be working in an assigned SDG and should bring spare air cylinders if necessary. The SDG Officer may need to request additional resources to replace On-Deck crews or have recycled crews assume vacated On-Deck positions.
- D. SDG and company officers are responsible to monitor the welfare of their personnel at all times and determine if SDG recycling or a formal rehab is appropriate.
- E. Rehabilitation (Rehab) should operate on a MED channel and will inform the CP when they are close to the scene. COMMAND or LOGS will inform the rehab unit where to set up on the incident site. The Rehab officer is usually the individual who drove the rehab unit to the scene, but the Rehab officer should be upgraded as required. All necessary medical personnel shall be assigned to Rehab to monitor members' welfare.
- F. SDG officers and company/crew officers working a hazard zone are responsible to monitor the welfare of their personnel always and determine if SDG recycling or a formal rehab is appropriate. When a formal rehab is appropriate, the SDG officer or the Company officer will notify COMMAND of a status change and the re-assignment of a Unit(s) to Rehab. The COMAMND must notify the Rehab officer of all units who are re-assigned to Rehab

Level 1 Staging

- A. Level 1 Staging procedures are in effect for all units dispatched on an assignment. 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 and announces that they are Level 1 staged in a direction related to the scene over the tactical radio channel.

Level 2 Staging

- A. Level 2 staging procedures are used for greater alarm assignments.

COMMAND Structure

- A. It is the responsibility of COMMAND to develop an organizational structure, using Standard Operating Procedures, to effectively manage the incident scene. The development of the organizational structure should begin with deployment of the first arriving fire department unit and continue through a number of phases, depending on the size and complexity of the incident. The COMMAND organization must develop at a pace which stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. In order for COMMAND to manage the incident, he/she must first be able to direct, control, and track the position and function of all operating Companies/crews. Building a COMMAND organization is the best support mechanism COMMAND can utilize to achieve a balance between managing personnel and incident needs. COMMAND should have more people working than Commanding.
- B. The basic configuration of COMMAND includes three levels:
1. Strategic Level - Overall direction of the incident.
 2. Tactical Level - Objectives assigned to SDG.
 3. Task Level - Task objectives assigned to Company/Crew.

COMMAND Structure - SDG Basic Operational Approach

- A. COMMAND must develop and build an organization that matches the deployment of resources to the incident scene. The IC accomplishes this by breaking the incident scene down into manageable subunits. SDG managed by SDG Officers. As SDGs are implemented, COMMAND continues to operate at the strategic level, determining the overall strategy and Incident Action Plan to deal with the incident.
- B. When the number of SDG exceeds the span of control that COMMAND can effectively manage, the Incident Organization should be divided to Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several SDG and should be assigned a separate radio channel. Once effective SDG's have been established, the IC can concentrate on the overall strategy, IAP management, evaluation, and resource allocation. Each of the SDG officers becomes responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources assigned to his/her SDG and communicating needs and progress back to COMMAND.
- C. COMMAND should assign SDG's based on the following factors:
1. When the number of assigned and operating companies/crews threatens to overload COMMANDs span of control. Direct tactical-level control should be delegated (earlier than later) to SDG officers before the ability of COMMAND to manage is exceeded.
 2. When COMMAND forecasts that the situation will become a major operation, soon exceeding his/her span of control.
 3. When companies/crews are involved in complex operations (Large interior or geographic area, hazardous materials, technical rescues, etc.).
 4. When companies/crews are operating from tactical positions which COMMAND has little or no direct control over (i.e. out of sight).

5. When the situation presents special hazards and close control is required over operating companies/crews (i.e., unstable structural conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load, marginal offensive situations, etc.).
 6. Name the SDG according to its function or geographical location.
- D. When establishing SDG, COMMAND will assign each SDG Officer:
1. Tactical Objectives.
 2. A radio designation (i.e., Roof Division, Ventilation Group, East Sector, etc.)
 3. The identity of resources assigned to the SDG.
- E. SDG will be regulated by the following guidelines:
1. It will be the ongoing responsibility of COMMAND to assign SDGs as required for effective emergency operations; this assignment will relate to both geographic and functional SDGs.
 2. COMMAND shall advise each SDG Officer of specific Tactical Objectives. The overall strategy and plan should be provided (time permitting), so that the SDG Officer has some idea of what's going on and how his assignment fits in.
 3. The number of companies/crews assigned to a SDG will depend upon conditions within that SDG. COMMAND will maintain an awareness of the number of Companies/crews operating within a SDG and the capability of that SDG Officer to effectively direct operations. If an SDG Officer cannot control the resources within the SDG, he/she should notify COMMAND so that SDG responsibilities can be split or other corrective action taken. During offensive fires five (5) companies/crews represents a reasonable maximum span of control for a SDG Officer. During defensive fires seven (7) companies/crews represents a reasonable maximum span of control.
 4. SDGs assigned to specific operating areas will be designated by A, B, C, or D, pronounced: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta respectively. Alpha would be the front (street address side) of the building and the others would go clockwise around the building in alphabetical order. In multi-story occupancies, Divisions will usually be indicated by floor numbers. In some cases, the floor identification may be subdivided into geographic areas such as Division 15 East or Division 15 West depending on stairwell and floor access. Functional SDGs will be identified by the function (i.e., Loss Control, Safety, Ventilation, etc.). SDG Officers will use the SDG designation in radio communications (i.e. COMMAND from North Division, etc.).
- G. In many cases, the initial SDG responsibility will be given to the Company Officer who receives the initial assignment to a basic tactical position or function (north, treatment, roof, etc.). As the incident expands, COMMAND Officers will be assigned SDG responsibilities.
1. COMMAND will assign a COMMAND Officer to assume SDG responsibilities as soon as possible.

- H. Regular Transfer of COMMAND procedures will be followed in transferring SDG responsibility. In some cases, a SDG Officer may be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions and advise COMMAND of needed tasks and resources. The assigned Officer will proceed to the SDG, evaluate and report conditions to COMMAND, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.
- I. The SDG Officer must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the SDG Officer to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for his/her area of responsibility. The SDG Officer should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.
- J. SDG Officers will be responsible for the following basic functions:
1. Directly supervise work in the SDG;
 2. Monitor personnel safety, accountability, and welfare;
 3. Develop a SDG IAP that integrates into the overall IAP;
 4. Monitor work progress;
 5. Redirect activities as necessary;
 6. Coordinate actions with related activities, and adjacent SDGs;
 7. Request additional resources as needed (On-Deck crews etc.);
 8. Manage MAYDAYs within the SDG;
 9. Advise COMMAND of situation status, changing conditions, progress, completion, and exception reports;
 10. Re-allocate resources within the SDG;
 11. Provide information for both formal and informal After-Action Reviews (critiques);
 12. De-commit companies/crews as operations are completed.
- K. The primary function of a Company Officer working within a SDG is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned tasks. Company Officers will advise their SDG Officer of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a SDG must be directed to the SDG Officer. SDG Officers will communicate with COMMAND. Each SDG Officer will keep COMMAND informed of conditions and progress in the SDG through regular progress reports. The SDG Officer must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.
- L. COMMAND must be advised immediately of significant changes, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous conditions, accidents, structural collapse, etc. When a Company is assigned from Staging to an Operating SDG, the Company will be told what

SDG and which SDG Officer they will be reporting to. The SDG Officer will be informed of which particular companies/crews or units have been assigned by COMMAND.

1. It is then the responsibility of the SDG Officer to contact the assigned Company to transmit any instructions relative to the specific action requested.
 2. SDG Officers will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their SDG. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward the SDG objectives.
- M. SDG Officers will insure an orderly and thorough reassignment of crews to Rehab SDG. Crews must report to rehab intact to facilitate accountability.

COMMAND Structure - Expanding the Organization: Branch Officers

- A. The Branch level of the organization is designed to provide coordination between the SDG and COMMAND. Adding Branches to the incident organization decreases the communication load on COMMAND. Branch officers supervise and manage a number of SDG Officers, and report to COMMAND.
- B. As the incident organization grows in complexity, and the span of control with SDG is maximized, COMMAND may determine that an additional intermediate level within the organization is needed. COMMAND will be working in a stationary CP has the responsibility to decide whether or not to expand the organization to include branches.
 1. Strategic Level - COMMAND
 2. Coordination Level - Branch Officers
 3. Tactical Level - SDG Officers
 4. Task Level - Companies/crews/Crews
- C. Branch Officers should be utilized at incidents where the span of control with SDGs is maximized or incidents involving two or more distinctly different major management components (i.e. a large fire with a major evacuation, a large fire with a large number of patients). COMMAND may elect to assign Branch Officers as forward positions to coordinate the activities between SDG.
- D. The intent of the Branch Level of the COMMAND structure is to split an incident into manageable components and reduce the span of control. Branch Officers will normally be utilized at very largescale incidents that involve two or more major components. The following types of incidents are examples where Branch Officers should be utilized:
 1. A hazardous materials incident that requires a major evacuation;
 2. A large-scale incident spread over a wide geographic area;
 3. An incident with mass casualties and a significant hazard (for example: fire, Haz mat, plane crash, floods, etc.);

4. High-rise fires;
 5. Any incident where the number of SDGs exceed the span of control that can be effectively managed by COMMAND.
- E. Branch Officers manage and direct activities of SDG Officers. Branch Officers operate on the Tactical Channel when sending or receiving information from COMMAND. The radio designation of Branch Officers should reflect the function or geographic area of the Branch (for example: Fire Control Branch, Medical Branch, West Branch, etc.). When COMMAND Implements Branch Officers the IC will assign a separate radio channel (not the tactical channel) for communications within the Branch. SDG Officers should be notified by COMMAND of their new supervisor. This information should include:
1. What Branch the SDG is now assigned to;
 2. The radio channel the branch (and SDG) is operating on;
 3. Radio Communications will then be directed from the SDG Officer to the Branch Officer. SDG officers will still use the radio designation of COMMAND when contacting their Branch Officer. SDG Officers will relay Branch and radio channel information to the Companies/crews working in their SDG;
 4. When providing radio information to the companies/crews in their SDG, SDG officers should obtain a PAR and insure that all members working in the SDG are operating on the assigned radio channel.
- F. Branch Officers positions should be assigned to Chief Officers. Branch Officers operate in forward positions. They should utilize a COMMAND Officer's vehicle as a forward Branch CP (when feasible). In these situations, COMMAND must assign Officers in the CP to monitor each Branch radio channel.
- G. Branch Officers are not limited to Operations. Any of the Section Officers may implement Branches within their individual sections as needed.

COMMAND Structure - Expanding the Organization: Section Chiefs

- A. As a small incident escalates into a major incident, additional organizational support will be required. As additional ranking Officers arrive on the scene, the CP organization may be expanded through the involvement of COMMAND Officers and staff personnel to fill section positions. Section Chiefs assist the COMMAND Staff with the long-term management of the incident and operate at the Strategic Level. COMMAND implements Sections as needed, depending on the situation, and priority of needs. These Sections are known as the General Staff.
- B. Where the communications system permits, Section Chiefs should operate on separate radio channels and utilize the radio designation that identifies their section (PLANS, LOGS, etc.). During the initial phases of the incident COMMAND and his/her staff normally carry out these five section functions. The Fire Department's involvement and needs at the incident scene can be divided into five sections. They are:

1. **Logistics (LOGS) Section:** The support mechanism for the organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. COMMAND may assign LOGS its own radio channel. The LOGS Chief may establish SDGs or branches for his/her section as needed.
2. **Planning (PLANS) Section:** Responsible for gathering, assimilating, analyzing, and processing information needed for effective decision-making. Information management is a full-time task at large and complex incidents. The Planning Section serves as COMMAND's "clearing house" for information. This allows COMMAND to have a single person provide him/her with information instead of having to deal with dozens of information sources.
3. **Operations (OPS) Section:** Responsible for the tactical priorities, accountability, safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Officer uses the tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to SDG Officers and/or Branch Officers.
4. **Finance/Administration (FIN/ADM) Section:** Evaluates and manages the risk and financial requirements for the Fire Department's involvement in the incident potential cost recovery efforts, or litigation, including criminal charges.
5. **Safety (SAFETY) Section:** Evaluates and manages the emergency scene risk requirements which may include accountability, safety action plan, and monitoring the health and welfare of all personnel.