

<b>Franklin County Fire Chiefs Standard Operating Guideline</b>		
<b>Effective Date:</b> <b>January 1, 2015</b>	SOG Category & Identification Number: <b>Command - 001</b>	Revision:
<b>SOG Title:</b> <b>Assumption Transfer, Designation and the Responsibilities of Command</b>		
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**PURPOSE:**

To specifically identify who will be in charge at the scene of an emergency and to insure that unity of command is maintained at all emergency scenes.

To fix responsibility for command on a certain individual through a standard identification system.

To ensure that a strong, direct and visible command is established as early as possible in fire department operations.

To provide a system for the orderly transfer of command at emergency scenes.

To outline the responsibilities of an Incident Commander.

To comply with the mandated use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**SCOPE:**

This procedure will apply to all department members and will be used at all emergencies to which Franklin County Fire Departments respond. Specifically the use of NIMS will be the foundation for operations involving multiple unit and multiple community responses.

In order to clarify terms in this procedure the following definitions have been included:

COMBATIVE COMMAND - An option available to the first arriving officer or senior firefighter who is initially in command of the emergency. This individual will take an active role while carrying out required tactical operations. Decisions will be based upon the individual's evaluation of incident needs and available resources. The individual should be prepared to give a synopsis of actions and conditions via radio or face to face upon arrival of a chief officer and the establishment of formal command.

FORMAL COMMAND - An option available to the first arriving officer/crewmember and required of all officers assuming command from the first arriving officer or senior firefighter. The officer or senior firefighter will take a command position which is fixed with good visibility of the incident. The officer or senior firefighter will not involve himself/herself in tactical operations at the scene.

COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Take an effective command position
- Assess incident priorities
- Determine strategic goal(s) and tactical operations to support
- Develop or approve and implement the action plan
- Develop command structure appropriate for the incident (divisions, groups, branches, etc.)
- Assign appropriate divisions, groups, and command staff as required
- Assess resource needs
- Order, deploy, reinforce, relieve and release resources
- Coordinate all emergency activities
- Serve as ultimate incident safety officer
- Coordinate activities of outside agencies
- Authorize information releases to the media
- Transfer command when incident is de-escalating
- Terminate command
- Complete and submit NFIRS fire reports

\*Multi-company response - if first arriving officer sends companies back before arrival of a higher-ranking officer on the assignment, the first arriving officer will be responsible for the report. If command is transferred to the chief officer on the assignment, Chief Officer or senior firefighter will be responsible for the fire report.

**Note: Command is responsible for transitioning from Simulcast 1 to a regional command channel to facilitate appropriate on scene communications and free up Simulcast 1 for Dispatch radio traffic.**

**PROCEDURES:**

SINGLE COMPANY RESPONSE:

Whenever a single company responds to an incident, the company officer or senior crewmember of the responding company will be in command of the incident and will assume full authority and responsibility for all actions conducted at the scene until command is properly transferred.

When operating at the scene the radio designation of the command officer/crewmember will be the call number of the apparatus. Radio communication example: "Shelburne Control - Deerfield Engine 3" (wait response from Shelburne Control) "please contact Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WEMCO) and have them respond to the scene".

If after arrival at the scene, the officer/crewmember requests additional fire department apparatus and personnel, the procedures for the assumption of command as outlined in multi-company response will be followed.

MULTI-COMPANY RESPONSE - ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND

Whenever multiple companies are dispatched to an incident the first arriving officer/crewmember will automatically assume command. The assumption of command will occur in the following way:

The officer/crewmember will announce arrival on the scene and report information based upon size-up, observed conditions and fireground actions that will be taken.

If the officer/crewmember is assuming the combative command role no radio communication designating combative command is required. The officer will use the call numbers of the company in all radio transmissions.

For example: "Shelburne Control - Deerfield Engine 3 (wait response from Shelburne Control) Deerfield Engine 3 is on the scene at 228 Main Street, I have a two story wood residential dwelling with fire showing from two windows on the first floor. Engine 3 will be stretching a line through the front door. Ladder 2 will ventilate on side C of the building". "Engine 3 is assuming command".

In this example, The Engine 3 officer/crewmember is in command and taking a combative command role.

If the first arriving officer/crewmember is assuming a formal command role, the officer/crewmember will announce this over the radio by designating himself as command and naming the command. All formal commands will be designated using the town name or the street name that the incident is on.

For Example: "Shelburne Control from Deerfield Engine 3 (wait response from Shelburne Control) Deerfield Engine 3 is on the scene at 228 Main Street, I have a two story wood frame residential dwelling with fire showing from two windows on the first floor. Engine 3 has Main Street Command".

In this example, Engine 3 officer/crewmember is in command and taking a formal command role.

The first arriving officer/crewmember at the emergency shall have the authority to terminate the response of any additional responding units if after an appropriate assessment the officer/crewmember determines that the on scene resources are sufficient. The chief officer on the initial assignment, at his discretion, shall have the authority to continue his/her response. All other units are to follow the instruction of the first arriving officer/crewmember.

#### TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Command will automatically be transferred from the first arriving officer/crewmember to the first arriving senior-ranking officer assigned to the incident.

Once command is transferred from the first arriving officer/crewmember command will be Formal and will be designated by the town or the street that the incident is on.

For example: Using the incident on Main Street and there is an officer in charge on the assignment: "Deerfield Engine 3 has Main Street Command".

Once formal command has been established, all radio communications to or from the incident commander will be made using the command name.

Once formal command has been established, all command transfers will be made using **face to face** communications.

For Example: As Deerfield C-1 responds to the incident on Main Street. "Shelburne Control – Deerfield C1" (wait response from Shelburne Control) "C-1 is on scene". Command may be transferred to the Chief, after the following procedure is completed:

The Chief Officer contacts the present Incident Commander using **face to face** communications

Incident Commander being relieved will provide a briefing which includes:

1. Situation Status
2. Deployment and assignment of resources
3. Tactical Needs

The officer assuming command will then assign the relieved officer to a position or function as required.

As command is transferred, the officer who is taking command will announce the transfer over the radio. For example: "Shelburne Control – Deerfield C1" (wait response from Shelburne Control) "Command has been transferred, Deerfield C1 has Main Street Command".

Any requests or notifications to Main Street Command will now be answered by the Chief instead of Engine 3.

When the incident is no longer escalating and command officers will be leaving the incident, command will be transferred back to the initial officer/crewmember on the assignment or the senior officer on the assignment. Command will be transferred by a **face to face** notification and notification of the transfer will be made via the radio.

When an incident that required a formal command is over, the incident commander will terminate command and return on the appropriate signal.

For example: The incident on Main Street is over and command will be releasing all companies. "Shelburne Control from Main Street Command", (wait for a response from Shelburne Control) "Main Street Command is terminated, all mutual aid has been released, Deerfield Engine 3 and Engine 4 will be returning out of service".