

# ESTABLISHING COMMAND

## Establishing Command:

The Incident Commander (IC) has overall authority. The IC is responsible for incident operations and the management at an incident. Clearly establish command by announcing the entity and individual assuming command and identify the location of the Incident Command Post. When multiple agencies or jurisdictions share authority, a Unified Command may be used and announced.

## Single Command:

The agency with primary jurisdictional authority over the incident designates the IC. He or she is the sole individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics as well as the ordering and the release of resources.

## Unified Command:

Unified Command is a management method used for multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency events. It provides an understanding of other agencies legal requirements, plans, priorities and restrictions.

## Unified Command Features:

- A single integrated incident organization
- Co-located (shared) facilities
- A single, coordinated Incident Action Plan is developed to manage the incident
- Shared operations, planning, logistical, and finance/administration functions
- A coordinated process for resource ordering

## Incident Commander Responsibilities:

- Assess situation and/or obtain a briefing from the previous Incident Commander
- Establish immediate priorities, determine incident objectives and strategy
- Establish an Incident Command Post
- Establish and monitor incident organization
- Ensure adequate safety measures are in place
- Schedule planning meetings as required
- Approve and authorize Incident Action Plan implementation
- Coordinate activity for all command and general staff
- Coordinate with key off-incident personnel (e.g. community leaders, elected officials)
- Approve requests for additional resources or release of resources
- Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel
- Authorize release of information to news media
- Order the demobilization of incident when appropriate

## TRANSFER OF COMMAND

The most qualified individual at the scene that has jurisdiction for the incident initially establishes command. Transfer of command may take place for the following reasons:

- A more qualified person assumes command
- The incident situation changes over time
- A jurisdictional or agency change in command is legally required
- A turnover of personnel normally occurs on long or extended incidents

## Briefing Checklist for Transfer of Command:

- Current status of the incident
- Safety considerations and concerns
- Incident objectives and strategies
- Site organization
- Deployment and assignment of operating units and personnel
- Need for additional resources
- Potential for incident expansion
- Current organization chart