

INCIDENT COMMANDER

7753

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There is always an assigned incident commander for every emergency incident and fire from first attack until it is extinguished. The assigned person may change as the situation changes. Every incident commander will take whatever aggressive action is deemed necessary and expedient, given the values threatened and difficulty of control, to control the fire. Emergency incident activities operated under unified command may have more than one incident commander; however, a single set of objectives will maintain unity of command.

The identity of the incident commander will be clearly known at all times, both to the unit ECC and to the subordinate officers on the fire.

Until someone arrives at the scene, the ECC will fill the role of incident commander. After the arrival of an on-scene incident commander, there must never be any doubt concerning who is in charge of the emergency. If there is, the ECC is responsible for clearing up that doubt by questioning the last known incident commander.

The ECC may designate air attack (if on the scene) as incident commander until a qualified person arrives on the ground. The ECC must consider the qualifications of the person on the ground and his/her knowledge of the emergency situation based upon information they have received. For example, an inexperienced engineer may not be able to provide effective command at a fire scene in some situations. A more experienced engineer or fire captain might qualify as initial attack incident commander.

When the first person who should become incident commander arrives on the fire, the ECC will advise that person of his/her designation. All other committed attack units will be notified of that fact by broadcasting an announcement. Each time the command changes within the life of an emergency, the ECC will broadcast the change to all attack units on the emergency.

The arrival at the scene of an officer of superior rank to the incident commander does not automatically signify a change of command. There can only be one CAL FIRE incident commander on any one emergency at any one time. A transfer of command responsibility by a superior at any level must be clearly indicated and made known.

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