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Snapshot Size-Up #130

Managing the Incident

A fire department response could be broken down into two categories – The "routine" alarm, (which includes fire alarms, carbon monoxide investigations, water leaks, etc.) and the "complex" emergency, (which includes structural fires, special operations, technical rescues, etc.) Regardless of which category the response falls under, every incident needs to be managed.

A good incident commander (IC) will establish an action plan that includes incident priorities and realistic goals and objectives. The IC will then see to it that this plan is executed properly through effective incident management. Below are some valuable tips on how to better manage your incident.



- Upon arrival, conduct a thorough size up and be aware of the incident and situation at hand. Don't misjudge, overplay or down play.
- Take charge. Be clear and concise with your orders and instruction.
- Be sure that the job(s) that you assign are understood and can be carried out by competent firefighters.
- Assign a command staff that can get the job done. Utilize the talents, skills and abilities of those around you. If you are surrounded by smart and knowledgeable officers who have poise, discipline and awareness... use them.
- Track the resources that are assigned to the incident and know what resources are available. If more are needed, call for them early. If you are unsure, stage them. You can always send them back if they are not needed.
- Account for your personnel! The whereabouts and safety of your firefighters is the most important thing.
- Request progress reports often. In order to effectively manage an incident, you need to know the conditions, progress and challenges of all crews working at the incident.
- Know your running schedule and your mutual/automatic aid plan. If you transmit a second alarm, you need to be sure that the response will fulfill the need.

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