



Illinois Fire Service Institute Leadership Development and Decision Making Program

Fireground Communication and Terminology

COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

- The company or dispatch you are calling first, then your designee number or “Hey You It’s Me” method. Pause to ensure the correct receiver is listening.
 - “Engine 2 from Command” pause to ensure listener is ready.
 - Any task or assignment given should be repeated back to sender in an abbreviated form.
- All communication should include who you are talking to, from who you are.

INITIAL RADIO REPORT:

- The part of an initial radio report designed to capture key elements of the critical fireground factors. The acronym SHOPS may be used to assist in remembering these key elements in an easy to follow flow.
 - **S.H.O.P.S** (Size, Height, Occupancy, Problem, Strategy & Supplemental Information)
 - **Size**
 - Dimensions
 - **Height**
 - Number of stories.
 - **Occupancy**
 - Residential or Single Family: Ranch, split level, frame
 - Multi-Family: Apartments, Condos, Townhomes
 - Commercial: Stand-alone single occupancy
 - Strip Mall: Multiple occupancies under a single roof
 - Industrial, Taxpayer, Big Box, School, Other: Call it what it is
 - **Problem**
 - SHOWING: **NOTHING, SMOKE, WORKING FIRE, DEFENSIVE** Fire Conditions
 - Best practice is to indicate the LOCATION OF THE PROBLEM AT THIS TIME
 - “ALPHA DIV., 2nd Floor, Center Unit, THROUGH THE ROOF”
 - **Strategy and Supplemental Information***
 - Investigating or Offensive or Defensive (**I.A.P.** – Incident Action Plan)?
 - Command or Fast Attack Mode
 - Location / Direction of Travel



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360/FOLLOW UP REPORT:

- The visualization of all sides of the structure with emphasis on the rear (CHARLIE Division) conditions. This should be performed by the Initial I/C (first-in officer) if logistically possible. Consider this an essential safety and survival action that identifies:
 - Is there a basement (walkout, English style, other)?
 - Are there any indications of lightweight or poor building construction or areas where firefighter escape could be compromised due to bars, obstructions or non-existent exits.
 - Are there any fire behavior conditions on the B/C/D Division of the building that differ from the Alpha Division.
 - Victims/Hazards?
 - Does this change your initial strategy/I.A.P. (Incident Action Plan)?
 - Any additional pertinent traffic needed or missed in Initial Report.
- Note: If unable to complete a 360 prior to initiate fire attack it must be announced and made a priority to complete.

TACTICAL BENCHMARKS:

- Indicators of specific strategic and task level progress which help determine the on-going assessment of risk.
 - ALL I.A.P.'s should be directly related to accomplishing these tasks!
- All Clear- SEARCH classification that distinguishes the completion of a Primary and Secondary Search.
 - After PRIMARY SEARCH ALL CLEAR, I/C should determine if continued interior operations are warranted and safe for crews (no life hazard = no hazard to FF)
 - Searches should include
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Final
- Fire control- FIRE controlled in the main area. (Check for attic extension!)
- Loss Stopped- SALVAGE & OVERHAUL operations and property conservation.
- Customer Stable- Occupant services are addressed, relocation of occupants, Red Cross.



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ON SCENE:

- “On Scene” is used for all apparatus that respond to a given incident. The Still Alarm includes two engines, two trucks, a Chief Officer, and an ambulance.
 - The first engine pulls past the building. Pulling past the building allows a three-sided view of the building. This also allows the first due truck to position in front of the building.
 - The first truck pulls in behind the engine (same direction) and positions in front of the building finding the best advantage for ladders and aerial.
 - The second engine backs down to rear of the truck.
 - The second truck announces on scene and is assigned by Command.
 - The Chief Officer or Officer that will/is be the stationary Incident Commander (IC2) also announces On Scene. He/She must confirm all positions on scene before assuming command from IC1. Predetermined assignments of apparatus/manpower may be made per AHJ, but normally the initial IC will assign companies. When assigning all orders, TLOs need to be used when assigning.
 - WAIT for orders – do not self-deploy.

Notes:

Departments may vary their given apparatus response.

Some departments or AHJ have their Still Alarm response predetermined with apparatus position and assignments, these are per their SOPs.

STAGING for Box Alarm and Higher:

- Set a minimum of two blocks from the incident and is implemented for Box Alarm, or greater. (Mutual Aid) – One central collection point, usually managed by a staging officer.

REHAB:

- Allows crews to receive medical monitoring, hydration and nourishment. Is considered as a move to another division and units MAY be reassigned out of Rehab if they become available.



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DIVISIONS & GROUPS (D/G):

- Classifies the area in which crews are working (Ex.: 1st floor, Roof, Alpha, Charlie, Interior, etc.) This helps the Incident Commander to track their working crews as well as assigning other companies to work under only one D/G officer. Thus, it will reduce radio communication so only one boss is communicating from that division. Other communication within that division between units is usually face to face (or voice/visual/radio).
- SIDES – Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta:
 - Sides of the building are known as DIVISIONS Clockwise from Front: (A - ALPHA) to left (B - BRAVO) to rear (C - CHARLIE) to right (D - DELTA)
 - Normally the Address side is ALPHA (or as defined)
- FLOORS- Use floor numbers to create divisions (Floor 1, 2, etc. or Basement, Roof)

EXPOSURE:

- Structures or Units directly next to & away from the Main Fire area (i.e. – Exposure Delta 1, Delta 2 or Exposure Bravo 1, Bravo 2, Etc.)

TASK / LOCATION / OBJECTIVE (T/L/O)

- This is a general communication principle used to improve the process of making assignments to individual companies. It will always begin by identifying the unit, then pausing to wait for acknowledgment
 - Task - What is your assignment?
 - Get hose from..., etc.
 - Location- Where is this task to be performed?
 - Where is your crew advancing to?
 - Objective- What is your primary function based on TACTICAL BENCHMARK?
 - (All Clear, Fire Control, Loss Stopped, Roof report/Ventilation type, etc.)

PROGRESS / C.A.N. REPORT

- Conditions, Actions, Needs. A format for a brief progress or action report from a task level or S/D/G officer.
 - Conditions- Smoke, Fire, Heat conditions, building conditions, etc.
 - Actions- Updates command of working companies' assignments & Tactical Benchmarks completed.
 - Needs- Prompts command to send additional resources/assign companies if needed.



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TRANSFER OF COMMAND

- Formal transfer of “COMMAND” from First Arriving Officer (IC #1) to next arriving Chief (IC #2), IF NECESSARY. Should be made only after assigned units are accounted for.

TACTICAL WORKSHEETS

- Should always be completed to assist the 2nd I.C. to track resources locations, actions, & needs as well as reminder prompts for Tactical Benchmarks, etc. These can also be used for After Action Reviews & could become part of the Fire Report supplement notes.

P.A.R.- PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

- Updates Command that each member of your crew is present/accounted for.
- PAR's occur after each C.A.N. report, assignment change, change of Strategy or MAYDAY.
- PAR's are especially important for all companies operating in the Hot Zone area and then working outward to companies in staging last.
- A final PAR will take place at the termination of the incident accounting for all crews assigned.

BACK OUT/CHANGE STRATEGY:

- Crews and equipment quickly back out of the building (Change in Strategy from Offensive to Defensive) advising Command of PAR when out of structure.

EVACUATE/ABANDON- Imminent DANGER.

- Leave your equipment and use closest means of egress IMMEDIATELY advising Command of PAR when out of structure. Use of ALERT tones by Dispatch &/or Command unit. This should also be transmitted on all channels starting with the fireground channel in use.

PASSPORTS:

- Accountability tags for crews (1 for each member on each apparatus). Company, Division or Group Officer tracks companies/personnel assigned.

OPERATIONS ON LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION:

- Roofs & Floors use extreme caution– open up the gable end if necessary or off of a platform/main ladder.



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OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS:

- Entry into a structure is possible and necessary due to high probability that lives can be saved and damage to property reduced by placing members into the hazard zone. Entry is allowed only after a proper size-up, risk assessment, and an evaluation of the available and necessary resources have been made. A stand-by rescue team must be available any time entry is considered. Conditions must be survivable for occupant and tenable for members.

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS:

- Not Survivable, Property Not Savable, Exposure protection, Collapse Zones and Exclusion Zones Established with proper apparatus placement.



BIG BOX TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Number of Stories**
 - One Story – Usual Tall
- **Construction**
 - Wide Span
 - Mansards, Canopies
 - Modern – Tilt Slab, Wide Span Parallel Trusses
 - Metal Roof
- **Building Arrangement**
 - Size
 - Objects on Roof
 - Fire Protection System
 - Firewalls
 - 1 Walmart = 66 Houses
- **Occupancy**
 - Predict being Occupied 8am to 6pm
 - Mercantile, Manufacturing, Storage, Retail
 - Large Amount of Contents = Heavy Fire Load
- **Fire Size, Extent, & Location / BAG Report**
 - Where's the Fire **BEEN**?
 - Where's it **AT**?
 - Where's it **GOING**?
 - Fire Involvement and Time for Contents/Building
 - Initial Attack Seat of Fire, 2nd Line Backs Up 1st Line
 - Roof Report, Vertical Ventilation
 - All Clears After Fire Control
- **Firefighter safety in large structure**
 - Task Math
 - BC's in Sectors
 - Air Management
 - Distance into Building = 200' Maximum
 - Cold Smoke
 - Shelving = Cantilevered and Box Frame
 - 3 Deep Model
 - **Access**
 - Best Entry: Alpha and Charlie / Distance from the street
 - Charlie – Difficult access, Must Gain Access – Rollup Door





COMMERCIAL TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Number of Stories**
 - One to Three Stories
- **Construction**
 - Older – Conventional Construction
 - Modern – Tilt Slab, Metal Studs
 - Lightweight Trusses
 - Mansards, Canopies
- **Building Arrangement**
 - Size
 - Objects on Roof
 - Fire Protection System
- **Occupancy/Time of Day**
 - Predict Being Occupied 8am to 6pm – Life Safety
 - Large Range of Occupancy: Bakery to Hazard Materials
 - Large Amount of Contents = Heavy Fire Load
 - Stairwells – Fire vs Rescue (use)
- **Fire Size, Extent, & Location / BAG Report**
 - Where's the fire **BEEN**?
 - Where's it **AT**?
 - Where's it **GOING**?
 - Water on Fire Help Rescues
 - Shelter in Place – if needed
 - Fire Involvement and Time for Contents/Building
 - Initial Attack to Seat of Fire, 2nd Line Backs Up 1st Line
 - Roof Report, Vertical Ventilation
- **Firefighter Safety Large Structure**
 - Task Math
 - BC's in Sectors
 - Air Management
 - Cold Smoke
 - 3 Deep Model
- **Access**
 - Shape of Building and Access Vary / Distance from the street
 - Charlie – Difficult access – Must Gain Access





MULTI-UNIT RESIDENTIAL TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Number of Stories**
 - One to Four Stories
- **Construction**
 - Older – Conventional Construction
 - Modern – Lightweight
- **Building Arrangement**
 - Size
 - Complex or Stand Alone
 - Firewalls
 - Livable Areas are Below Grade and Above Grade
 - Fire Protection System
 - Security
 - Access to Building with Apparatus
- **Time of Day**
 - Likelihood of Being Occupied 24/7 – Life Safety
 - Likelihood of Occupants Sleeping
 - Stairwells – Fire vs Rescue (use)
- **Shared Throughout Building**
 - Walls
 - Attic Space (Major **RED** Flag)
 - Concealed Spaces
 - Hallways
 - Utility Chases
- **Fire Size, Extent, & Location / BAG Report**
 - Where's the Fire **BEEN**?
 - Where's it **AT**?
 - Where's it **GOING**?
 - Water on Fire Makes Rescues Go Better
- **Exposures**
 - Proximity of other Structures and Potential Spread
 - Other Units within the Building





RESIDENTIAL TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Number of Stories**
 - One to Two Stories
 - Livable floors below and above grade
- **Construction**
 - Balloon Frame
 - Older – Conventional Construction
 - Modern – Lightweight
 - Additions / Modifications
- **Roof**
 - Condition
 - Pitch
 - Material
- **Time of Day**
 - Likelihood of Being Occupied – Life Safety
 - Likelihood of Occupants Sleeping
- **Layout / Floor plan / Location of Bedrooms**
 - Floor Plan Usually the Same on Each Floor
- **Basements**
 - Access to Lower Levels Inside vs. Outside
 - Walk-out
 - Walk-up
 - Look-out
- **Fire Size, Extent, & Location / BAG Report**
 - Where's the Fire **BEEN**?
 - Where's it **AT**?
 - Where's it **GOING**?
 - Water on Fire Makes Rescues Go Better
- **Exposures**
 - Proximity of other Structures and Potential Spread





STRIP MALL TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Number of Stories**
 - One to Two Stories
- **Construction**
 - Older – conventional construction
 - Modern – Tilt Slab, Metal Studs,
 - Lightweight Trusses
 - Mansards, Canopies
- **Building Arrangement**
 - Size
 - Occupancy – Wide Range of Types
 - Firewalls
 - Fire Protection System
 - Exterior Access to Each Occupancy
 - Common Attic Space (Major **RED** Flag)
- **Time of Day**
 - Occupied 8am to 6pm (normally)
 - 99% time Firefighters Only Life Hazard
- **Fire Size, Extent, & Location / BAG Report**
 - Where's the Fire **BEEN**?
 - Where's it **AT**?
 - Where's it **GOING**?
 - Initial Attack at Seat of Fire, Backup Lines to Bravo and Delta
 - Roof Report for Extension Cutoff of Fire
- **Access**
 - Alpha – Easy Access
 - Charlie – Difficult Access – Must Gain Access
 - Distance from Street

