Strategy & Incident Action Plan
Fifth Function of Command – 1st Edition 2009

Las Vegas Fire & Rescue
Incident Command Training

Command Function #5

Major Goal

“THE IC WILL USE A SYSTEMATIC METHOD TO MAKE BASIC STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND TO DEVELOP A TACTICAL INCIDENT ACTION PLAN.”

Objectives

- Demonstrate the process for identifying incident strategy
- Define offensive, defensive, and combination strategies
- Identify the process in determining offensive, defensive, and combination strategies
- Describe marginal situations
- Describe the functions in decision making and evaluation in regards to strategy selection
- Describe how the IC can support incident safety
- Identify some of the procedures in daily operations that enhance personnel safety
- Demonstrate the ability to complete an Incident Action Plan
- Identify the strategic benchmarks used in the communication and command process
- Explain the process used in a Incident Action Plan evaluation and revision

Competencies

**NFPA 472**
7-1.2.2(1) Analyze a hazardous materials incident to determine the magnitude of the problem in terms of outcome by completing the following tasks:
(a) Collect and interpret hazard and response information from printed sources, technical resources, and monitoring equipment.
(b) Estimate the potential outcomes within the endangered area at a hazardous materials incident.
7-1.2.2(2) Plan response operations within the capabilities and competencies of available personnel, personal protective equipment, and control equipment by completing the following tasks:
- identify the response objectives for hazardous materials incidents
- identify the potential action options (defensive, offensive, and nonintervention) available by response objective.
- approve the level of personal protective equipment required for a given action option
• develop a plan of action, including safety considerations consistent with local emergency response plan and the organization's standard operating guidelines, and within the capability of available personnel, personal protective equipment, and control equipment.

7-1.2.2(3) Implement a response to favorably change the outcome consistent with the local emergency response plan and organization's standard operating guidelines by completing the following task:
• implement an incident management system, including the specified procedures for notification and utilization of non-local resources (e.g. private, state, and federal government personnel)
• direct resource with expected task assignments and on-scene activities and provide management overview review, and logistical support to private and government sector personnel.
• provide a focal point for information transfer to media and local elected officials through the incident management system structure.

7-1.2.2(4) Evaluate the progress of the planned response to ensure the response objectives are being met safely, effectively, and efficiently and adjust the plan of action accordingly by evaluating the effectiveness of the control functions.

7-3.4.1 The incident commander shall identify the steps for developing a plan of action.

7 -3.4.2 The incident commander shall identify the factors to be evaluated in selecting public protective actions including evacuation and sheltering in place.

7-3.4.3 The incident commander shall identify the process for determining the effectiveness of an action option on the potential outcomes.

7-3.4.4 The incident commander shall identify the safe operating practices/procedures that are required to be followed at a hazardous materials incident.

**NFPA 1500:**

6-1.5(e) Develop an overall strategy and an incident action plan, and assign companies and members consistent with the standard operating guidelines.

6-3.3 The incident commander shall be responsible for overall personnel accountability for the incident. The incident commander shall initiate an accountability and inventory worksheet at the very beginning of operations and shall maintain that system throughout operations.

**NFPA 1561:**

4-1.6 The incident commander shall make assignments and provide direction, as demanded by the nature and circumstances of the incident, in order to manage the activities of all personnel and other resources at the incident scene.

**NFPA 1600:**

3-2.1 A mitigation plan should be developed and implemented.
Overview

- **Strategy vs. Incident Action Plan** – The strategy is the overall operational approach to the incident. It determines where and how personnel will be operating in relation to the hazard zone. In fire situations, it determines whether offensive, defensive, or combination operations will be conducted. The Incident Action Plan describes the tactical details that address and solve the incident problem.

- **Systematic strategy decision and Incident Action Plan development** – The Incident Command System depends on the IC to evaluate the situation, use the Risk Management Plan, and forecast incident conditions in order to produce the overall incident strategy. This strategy decision determines the basic operating position of the hazard zone workers and the overall operational objective of the entire incident response. The strategy decision also becomes the basis for the Incident Action Plan. The basic order of development is strategy first and Incident Action Plan second. The Incident Action Plan must be a reflection of the operational strategy; not the other way around. Overall operational strategy is divided into three basic modes: Offensive, Defensive and Combination. Offensive operations are conducted inside the hazard area. Defensive operations stay outside of the hazard area. Combination operations have both offensive and defensive operations in separate fire compartments at the same time.

- **Apply standard actions to standard conditions to produce standard outcomes** – Fire operations have many similarities that we should use to our advantage. For example, an offensive attack on a room and contents fire requires ventilation to support the interior crews applying water on the fire and conducting a primary search. The IC should also plan on establishing a water supply, securing utilities, assigning a backup line, RIT, and EMS/Medical groups. For every room and contents fire in a home, this should be a standard action for success. By realizing standard conditions, we can create a more efficient standard action. If our situation evaluation is correct, our standard action should produce a standard outcome. If it does not, then a revision of the plan is necessary.

- **Evaluation and Incident Action Planning continues until we clear** – As operations continue, the IC must always compare what is occurring against the current strategy. The IC must be certain that firefighters are in a safe operating position. When conditions change, the IC must consider changing the overall strategy and the Incident Action Plan.

- **Important Goal** – An important goal of strategic management is to mitigate the incident in a safe manner while minimizing damage and keeping firefighters safe.
Function #5

Identify Strategy/Develop Incident Action Plan

Major Goal

“THE IC WILL USE A SYSTEMATIC METHOD TO MAKE BASIC STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND TO DEVELOP A TACTICAL INCIDENT ACTION PLAN.”

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Apply the standard Risk Management Plan throughout the incident

☐ Decide on overall offensive/defensive/combination strategy based on critical factors

☐ Declare the strategy as a part of the initial radio report

☐ Manage and control operations within the basic strategy

☐ Use critical factors to develop the Incident Action Plan

☐ Include strategy, location, function, and objectives in the Incident Action Plan

☐ Use strategic benchmarks as the action planning roadmap

☐ Do not combine offensive/defensive operations in the same fire compartment

☐ Use incident organization and communications to connect and act out strategy/plan
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Apply the standard Risk Management Plan throughout the incident

We cannot begin to talk about making strategy decisions and developing Incident Action Plans without first emphasizing the importance of the continuous application of the basic safety system and the risk management procedure.

The IC must continuously apply the risk management evaluation to the strategy decision and the development of the Incident Action Plan. The Incident Commander is responsible to provide for the safety, accountability, and welfare of personnel throughout the incident. This is accomplished by the continuous application of the department’s basic safety system and the constant evaluation of risk versus benefit.

Basic safety system components

- **Functions of Command** – Consistently having an IC, who is performing the eight Command Functions, serves as the basic foundation of how we manage both the life and property interest of our customer, and the safety of our responders.

- **Risk Management** – It is critical that our department decides when we will accept certain levels of personal risk. This plan becomes our organizational philosophy on how we will actually manage the connection between risk and benefit. Our risk management philosophy is as follows:

  We are committed to providing the safest possible work environment for our members. It is important that all members operating at incidents operate in a safe manner. Each person must be responsible for their own safety, as well as to minimize risk to others. Towards that goal, all members are expected to operate under the following risk management profile:

  - Risk a lot for savable lives
  - Risk a little for savable property
  - Risk nothing for lives or property that are already lost

This risk management profile will be applied to all emergency incidents and will be continuously reassessed throughout the incident operation.
• **Fit for duty firefighters** – Effective incident operations require well trained members who understand the Incident Command System and are safety conscious. They must have the personal aptitude and basic skills to do the mental, physical, and emotional part of their job. They must also understand how the other personnel on the strategic, tactical, and task levels connect to form an integrated team.

• **Personal protective equipment** – It is critical that the strategic, tactical, and task levels operate with a realistic understanding of how PPE performs under actual incident conditions. A part of the offensive/defensive decision must be based on the IC evaluating the incident hazard level and deciding his strategy based on his knowledge of PPE ability.

• **Safety SOG** – Our SOG’s primary focus is the safety of our personnel. The level of discipline that personnel perform to these standards directly affects the safety of all involved. The IC must operate with the assumption that everyone is following the standard safety procedures. He must be confident that every firefighter is properly protected and operating under control.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- **Decide on overall offensive/defensive/combination strategy based on critical factors**

  • **Identifying the Strategy** - The IC identifies the strategy as offensive, defensive, or combination through the analysis of standard critical factors and the constant application of the Risk Management Plan. While it is the responsibility for the IC to decide on the strategy, the entire response team must be able to identify the basic characteristics of the incident conditions that produce the overall strategic decision. They must know the basic objective of each strategy and what constitutes offensive, defensive, and combination operations. Every member of the team must be aware of the strategic and tactical game plan.

  The IC should keep strategy management simple: offensive, defensive, or combination. Search and rescue operations, with a high degree of certainty that there are savable lives, are the only reason that we should ever be operating inside of a marginal situation.

  • **Situation Evaluation** – is the process utilized to determine a strategy. Continuous application of the Risk Management Plan and evaluation of the eight critical factors (building, fire, occupancy, life hazard, arrangement, resources, action, and special circumstances) will be used to choose a strategy.
**Fire Scene Risk Benefit Tool**

The Incident Commander will utilize the LVFR three-step risk/benefit tool of Value, Time, and Size to determine a strategy on fire scenes.

- **Value** – Is there anything of value to save?
- **Time** – Do we have enough time to conduct interior efforts before conditions deteriorate beyond acceptable risk?
- **Size** – How big is the fire? Do we have enough resources available to meet the tactical objectives and create the required fire flow?

- **Offensive Operations** – Offensive operations are conducted where incident conditions will allow responders to make an interior attack inside the hazard zone. In structural fire situations, handlines are extended into the fire area to support the primary search and control the fire. This is in coordination with ventilation, forcible entry, and RIT.

A safe offensive position means that our safety systems can protect our hazard zone personnel from the interior conditions. Whenever our basic safety system will protect our firefighters, the IC should order a strong, well supported interior attack and a primary search. If defensive conditions present themselves, we can always withdraw personnel and change to a defensive strategy.

**Marginal Situations** - Marginal situations are where our Risk Management Plan indicates that it is acceptable to take a big risk, in a highly calculated manner, to protect a savable life. A difficult situation occurs when rescue operations are not complete and conditions are beginning to look like the start of a defensive operation. “Marginal” means that the inside crews are quickly trying to complete rescue functions. As soon as the “all clear” is given, the IC will decide to keep crews working offensively or withdraw and go defensive. We must operate with an ongoing awareness that “marginal” is a situation and not another strategic mode.

- **Defensive Operations** – When conditions go beyond the interior operational capability, the IC must conduct defensive operations from outside the hazard area. During defensive fire operations, large exterior fire streams will be placed between the fire and the exposures to prevent fire extension. Perimeter control becomes critical since firefighters should not enter the fire area. The IC concedes property to the fire and decides where the cutoff will take place. In these cases, the IC must conduct defensive operations outside the collapse zone.

Defensive means that the hazard level of interior conditions exceeds the capability of the standard safety system we use to effectively protect our personnel. Defensive operations represent a standard organizational response to situations that cannot be managed offensively because conditions are too dangerous and there are no savable lives or property.
Combination Operations- Combination operations occur when we have both offensive and defensive operations happening in different fire compartments at the same time. For example, we may have a defensive operation going on in one store of a strip mall that is fully involved and we may be conducting offensive operations inside adjoining stores at the same time. Another example would be conducting defensive operations in the warehouse portion of a business and conducting offensive operations in the office portion at the same time.

The key is to keep in mind that we do not want both operations happening at the same time in the same fire compartment.

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Declare the strategy as a part of the initial radio report

Declaring the strategy, as part of the Brief Initial Report, puts everyone on the same page. The strategy is what drives the tactics. If the initial IC declares an offensive strategy, all incoming units will know that they are setting up to go inside to conduct a search and fight the fire. Other officers and crews can begin to prepare for offensive type assignments: fire attack, search, forcible entry, ventilation, securing utilities, backup lines, and RIT. If a defensive strategy is announced, units enroute can begin thinking about additional water supply and cut-off points.

Sets/Reps
Offensive, Defensive, Combination Strategy Declaration
1. Identify Critical Factors
2. Apply Risk Management Plan (RMP)
3. Identify strategy

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Manage and control operations within the basic strategy

The strategy defines the positions from which the crews will be operating. This is one of the key ways the IC manages safety on the strategic level and completes the tactical objectives. The IC uses the strategy to get everyone moving in the right direction to solve the incident problem. Effective management of the overall strategy by the IC provides the following benefits:

• Structures decision making and evaluation – The IC begins to manage the incident by making the initial decision to conduct an offensive, defensive, or combination attack. The IC must then continue to manage the strategy by keeping the Incident Action Plan current. As conditions change, the IC must be prepared to adjust the Incident Action Plan and possibly change the strategy.
• **Standardizes understanding and communications** – Developing a common understanding how incident operations will be conducted ahead of the incident facilitates quick communications and effective actions. When the IC says, “All units withdraw from the structure, we are going defensive,” the action must be swift. There is no time for detailed instructions. If everyone understands the mode, the IC can quickly achieve a standard response.

• **Provides operational control** – The essence of fireground control by the IC simply involves the ongoing ability to direct where the hazard zone workers are located and what they are doing. If the IC can initially place crews and then move them based on changing incident conditions, the IC has maintained operational control. If the IC is not able to change the location and function of his resources, the operation is essentially out of control. Developing, announcing, and managing a common strategy is a major way the IC can accomplish this control. This creates a consistent reaction where everyone assumes standard positions and works to achieve the same strategic objective. This operational control emerges out of strong SOGs and training.

• **Improves overall effectiveness** – Deciding on and then managing the strategy has more opportunity for determining operational success than any other function. The objective of each strategy is simple and easy to understand:
  
  • Offensive– Go interior to control the incident problem
  • Defensive– Exterior attack from outside the hazard area to limit loss and stop the spread of the incident problem
  • Combination- Defensive on a well involved compartment of a structure and offensive in a different fire compartment at the same time

Keep it simple. The point of the strategy management routine is to prevent firefighters from being in offensive positions under defensive conditions. The IC must continually ask and answer the basic strategic control questions:

  • Have I effectively evaluated the incident conditions?
  • Have I completed a risk management evaluation?
  • Have I made a conscious, offensive/defensive/combination decision?
  • Have I placed the crews into their positions through IC orders and SOGs, or have they freelanced into those positions?
  • Am I in a position to observe and listen to progress/exception/completion reports in order to effectively evaluate changing conditions?
  • Have I forecasted what will happen in the future 5/10/15 minutes from now?
  • Do I know if my crews are safe?
  • Can I move the crews if conditions change?

• **Supports Incident Safety** – Based on the go/no go approach, the decision to operate either offensively or defensively serves as the primary tool for firefighter safety.
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Use critical factors to develop the Incident Action Plan

Not only is the Risk Management Plan and the eight critical factors used to choose a strategy, this same information must be utilized to form the Incident Action Plan. The IC must become skillful in understanding how these factors can identify specific tactical needs. Once those needs are identified, the IC can include them in their plan and assign units to address them.

• Standard approach to Incident Action Plan development - There is a natural inclination to think of every situation as being different. The IC should use past experiences to assist him in his decision-making on future incidents.

Realistically, the IC is usually confronted with standard incident factors and uses a standard inventory of resources for incident operations. Effective ICs discover that fires, EMS situations, and special operations events are similar. If the IC can develop a standard approach and customize the Incident Action Plan to fit each situation, he will begin to develop an ongoing plan that is built upon experience.

• Single or multiple Incident Action Plan - An Incident Action Plan should be developed whenever command is established. It should be evaluated, reviewed, and refined throughout the incident. In the majority of incidents, a single Incident Action Plan is all that is needed. In more complex incidents, a series of connected/progressive Incident Action Plans may be needed. The plan should be reviewed and updated after each strategic benchmark, particularly when a “Primary All Clear” has been completed.

• Basic Steps to Incident Action Plan - When an Incident Action Plan is developed by the IC, the following steps are required to start, conduct, revise, and conclude incident operations:

1. Incident Action Plan evaluation – The Incident Action Plan supports the strategy decision and the same information is used to develop the plan. Risk management and the eight critical factors produces the elements needed in your plan.

For example: A room and contents fire occurs in a residential home at 2:00 a.m., with two cars in the driveway. As we go through our evaluation, we will identify a strategy and the tactical priorities that should be addressed in our Incident Action Plan. The BUILDING is a single story tract home. We know that it is lightweight construction, compartmentalized, with a truss roof and an open attic. The FIRE is currently fully involving one bedroom. We know that a bedroom in a typical 3-bedroom tract home is about 150 square feet. Our fire flow formula has taught us that we will only need about 50gpm to control this fire. Our OCCUPANCY is an occupied residence. There should be typical class “A” combustibles. The LIFE HAZARD is probably very high if the home owner is not present upon arrival, informing you that everyone is out of the house. The ARRANGEMENT is typical of a suburban neighborhood. The primary exposures
currently are the interior portions of the house that are not burning. The RESOURCEs available are a first alarm assignment: 3 engines, 1 truck, 1 rescue, 1 HR or CBRNE, 1 BC. Your ACTION is completing your initial size up and setting up for fire attack. No other SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES are apparent.

From all this information, you have determined that there is high VALUE, possibly life and the majority of the structure. You should have TIME to perform ventilation and fire attack to support the primary search. You haveadequate resources in both personnel and water supply to extinguish this SIZE of fire. You can also support personnel safety with the proper use of equipment, PPE, tactics, and command supervision. The strategy should be offensive.

Once the strategy is decided and announced, the IC develops the Incident Action Plan by identifying the tactical needs. The Incident Action Plan supports the strategy. Once the Incident Action Plan is complete, the IC canbegin assigning crews to fill the different tactical needs. PPV should be in place to support the attack team. A crew will need to advance an attack line into the structure, check for extension in the attic, and complete a primary search. The utilities should be secured, RIT established, a back-up line pulled, and a medical/EMS group assigned.

2. Incident Action Plan (plan A) – This is the original Incident Action Plan developed from the evaluation process. As shown in the example above, it provides a simple description of the basic tactical approach. The IC should be able to express in simple terms the initial action that will solve the incident problems within the overall strategy.

Examples:

“This will be an offensive attack, in coordination with ventilation. Confine the fire to the room of origin, conduct a primary search, and check for fire extension. Salvage as needed.”

“This will be defensive operation with master streams and 2 ½” handlines. Confine the fire to the building of origin and protect the exposures to the Bravo and Delta side. All members will operate outside of the collapse zone.”

3. Tactical needs – The IC must identify the major tactical needs that should be completed. These needs become the basis for assigning specific tasks to companies.

Examples:

Offensive – ventilate, interior attack, check attic, search, secure utilities, overhaul, and initiate required salvage
Defensive – Master stream attack, protect exposures Bravo and Delta, knock down main body of fire, handlines inside exposures Bravo and Delta, collapse zone control

4. **Available resources and assignments** – The MCT and run sheet should provide the IC with an inventory of responding units. This information should be transferred to the tactical worksheet as soon as possible. The IC should keep track of units that have arrived and staged. Ideally, the IC should give assignments to arriving companies after they have reported their Level I staged position. Staging procedures are designed to put companies to work in an orderly manner. Units should not go directly to the command post unless requested. Staged units should remain in an uncommitted position until the IC is ready to assign them. “Uncommitted” means they have not passed the last water supply or have not passed the last access point to any side of the incident.

The IC must match task assignments with the capabilities of each unit. Everyone can perform search, rescue, and evacuation. Engines supply, manage, and apply water; trucks force entry and ventilate, and medics provide emergency care.

5. **IAP evaluation and revision (plan B, C, and D...)** – The IC combines the situation evaluation, previous experiences, and the application of standard procedures to develop and execute the most effective initial Incident Action Plan (plan A). As assignments are made and plan A is underway, the IC should be considering plan B. The IC must assess the effectiveness of plan A. The majority of times, the plan quickly solves the problem. Other times, the IC must modify the plan in some way that reinforces and expands plan A. For example, adding a back-up line, assigning a company to assist, providing more ventilation, or calling for additional resources can mitigate the situation without changing the Incident Action Plan. However, every plan has a limit to which it can be expanded and modified. The IC does not want to give up on a plan that can be saved, but also, does not want to continue with an ineffective operation. Situation evaluation and reports from operating crews becomes the basis of going from Plan A to Plan B.

**Sets/Reps Incident Action Plans**
- Utilize critical factors and the Risk Management Plan to identify the correct strategy and tactical needs.
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Include strategy, location, function, and objectives in the IAP

Incident Action Plans describe our operational plan for completing the strategic and tactical objectives. Incident Action Plans should be short and to the point. Beginning with the strategy defines the overall approach of the operation. The location identifies the tactical positions where operations will be initiated. This process requires the IC to prioritize areas that must be addressed. Operational functions define the tactics to be used in these locations. Functions include search/rescue, fire control, ventilation, roof operations, salvage, and overhaul. Objectives translate into orders the IC uses to get units into action. For example, “Keep the fire from extending to the Bravo Exposure and get a “Primary All Clear.”

- **Division/Groups** - Group Supervisors are assigned a specific function to accomplish within the Incident Action Plan. If there are other tactical objectives that the IC wants the group to accomplish, he must be clear. Division assignments are made to cover a specific area of the emergency scene. The Division Supervisor is responsible for all tactical objectives in that area. If there are other specific actions that need to be covered, the IC must convey that information to the Division Supervisor. Division/Group Supervisors must ensure that their actions are in line with the overall strategy and the Incident Action Plan.

- **Companies** – When companies are assigned to complete certain tasks within the Incident Action Plan, the IC must brief the officer on the overall strategy, the location where he wants the task accomplished, the actual function, and the objective. Example: “E8 from Command, we are conducting defensive operations. Set up a master stream on the Alpha side of the structure.”

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Use Strategic Benchmarks as the action planning roadmap

- **Incident Priorities = Strategic Benchmarks** - Our emergency scene incident priorities become our strategic benchmarks. The Incident Action Plan is based on the standard incident priorities. When translated to fireground priorities, we identify the five separate functions that must be completed in order:

  1. Firefighter Safety
  2. Rescue
  3. Fire Control
  4. Property Conservation
  5. Customer Stabilization (Red Cross, TIPS, emotional support)
• **Strategic sequence** - The strategic benchmarks are interrelated, but must be dealt with in sequence. The IC cannot proceed to the next priority before assigning sufficient resources to reach the objective of the current priority.

Activities may have to be combined to achieve the objective of the current priority. As an example, many times, we must begin to control the problem, while we attempt to make the rescue. These control efforts serve to protect the crews performing a primary search. Sometimes, when having to combine priority activities, we might get a “knockdown” before we receive a “primary all clear”. When this happens, the IC must continue to do whatever is required to complete the Primary Search.

• **Strategic Objective Approach** – The IC is generally trying to achieve the same basic objectives from one incident to the next. With this standard approach, the IC can manage the basic work sequence at every incident in the same manner. This creates a consistency the crews can understand. The IC lines up rescue, fire control, property conservation, and customer stabilization as standard performance targets.

• **Strategic Benchmarks** - Benchmarks are established to track the progression of the Incident Action Plan and time stamp events. The strategic benchmarks indicate when the incident priorities have been met: “Primary and Secondary All Clear” = Life Safety, “Knockdown” = Incident Stabilization, “Loss Stopped” = Property Conservation. Both Command and dispatch should be informed of these benchmarks. The Officer completing the benchmark will report it to Command.

After receiving a Strategic Benchmark completion, especially a primary all clear, the IC must reevaluate the current strategy and Incident Action Plan against the Risk Management Procedure. The IC must verify that the current risk still matches the benefit. Should we still be in an offensive position? If our basic safety system can still protect hazard workers, then the answer is “yes”. If it cannot, we should adjust the Incident Action Plan and strategy.

• **Priorities Offensive Strategy**
  
  • Firefighter safety
  • Rescue (life safety)
  • Fire Control (incident stabilization)
  • Property conservation
  • Customer Stabilization

• **Priorities Defensive Strategy**

  • Firefighter Safety
  • Exposures
    1. Prevent Extension
    2. Obtain “Secondary all clears”
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Do not combine offensive/defensive operations in the same fire compartment

Strategy confusion can lead to firefighter injury or death. The IC must have the patience and discipline to carry out and manage the current strategy. He must then review the current conditions and revise the strategy if the operational action is not effective. All personnel on the fireground should be aware of the current strategy that is in place. There should never be both strategies conducted in the same compartment.

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Use incident organization and communications to connect and act out strategy/plan

The IC stays in control when everyone operates within the confines of a well managed system. The radio is the tool the IC uses to manage the incident operations. The strategy, Incident Action Plan, and subsequent assignments are shared and acted out when the IC verbalizes them over the tactical channel.

The IC improves his control of the operation when he decentralizes management of the hazard zone by assigning Division/Group Supervisors. These officers operate in forward positions, manage personnel, evaluate conditions, complete assigned objectives, and report back to command. This provides command with real time information to assess the success of the current Incident Action Plan.