Guidelines for Effective Utilization of Unified Command

The purpose of this notice is to provide members with guidelines on the utilization of Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command. ICS is a standardized approach to managing on-scene incidents, ensuring effective coordination and control of personnel from various organizations within a common hierarchy. Unified Command enhances collaboration by facilitating the management of incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies. Specific scenarios where a Unified Command is appropriate include but are not limited to:

- Major or critical incidents involving multiple jurisdictions
- Major or critical incidents within a single jurisdiction but involving multiple agencies
- Major or critical incidents involving both multiple jurisdictions and multiple agencies

As part of commitment to comprehensive training, the department has introduced a series of courses via PowerDMS on the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). These following core courses provide fundamental knowledge, covering the history, principles, and organizational structure of ICS, as well as their relationship with NIMS.

- **IS-700.B:** An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
- **ICS 100:** Introduction to the Incident Command System
- **ICS 200:** Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response

To enhance operational effectiveness during major or critical incidents, incident commanders are encouraged to take the following advanced courses:

- ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff

For more information and enrollment details of above listed courses, please visit PowerDMS or contact the Professional Development Unit at ███████████████.

Refer to the attached reference guide for major or critical incidents involving both the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD).

WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief of Police

Per DN 23-152, all sworn & non-sworn members shall electronically acknowledge this Department document in PowerDMS within (30) thirty calendar days of issuance. Members whose duties are relevant to this document shall be held responsible for compliance. Any questions regarding this policy should be sent to sfpd.writtendirectives@sfgov.org who will provide additional information.

SFPD and SFFD Unified Command Guidelines

Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to establish comprehensive procedures for the Incident Command System (ICS) that enable the Police and Fire Departments to collaboratively develop objectives, strategies, and tactics for effectively managing critical incidents. Utilizing a ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Plan ensures a coordinated response, optimizing resource use and operational efficiency. When conducting drills or exercises, it is crucial to meticulously plan and map out the command process for both police and fire services to enhance readiness and interagency cooperation.

Incident Response Phases

Crisis Phase: This phase begins with the initial 9-1-1 call and is marked by chaos and confusion. Emergency responders arrive on the scene, often with conflicting information, and the threat may still be active.
- Law Enforcement Incident: Police respond to resolve the incident and restore public safety while fire services stage in the Cold Zone. This phase ends once the scene is declared safe.
- Fire Incident: Fire services address and stabilize the danger. If a criminal element is identified, command may transfer to law enforcement.
- Incident Command Post (ICP): The lead agency establishes an ICP for coordination with other responding agencies.

Stabilization Phase: Begins after public safety is restored and the scene is declared safe. The focus shifts to follow-up needs, such as patient treatment, evidence preservation, and perimeter control.
- Unified Command: A Unified Command may be established at a single location to manage ongoing operations.
- SFPD and SFPD may maintain command and control of the scene through a Unified Command process.
- This phase ends with the last victim's transport to medical care and the setup of a Support Unified Command Post (UCP) if needed.

Recovery Phase: ICP leads this phase until normal operations resume.
- Focuses on securing the site, processing the crime scene, family reunification, witness interviews, structure stabilization, and communication with residents and media.
- Duration: Can last from several hours to several weeks depending on the incident's scale and impact.

Incident Support UCP Sections
- Incident Commander (IC): Leads the incident, sets objectives and strategies, and oversees all positions unless delegated.
- Operations Section: Determines response needs and assigns resources.
- Planning Section: Documents plans and tracks progress.
- Logistics Section: Orders and manages equipment and supplies.
- Safety Officer: Ensures adherence to safety protocols and risk management.

- Public Information Officers (PIOs): advise the Incident Commander, Unified Command, and EOC director on public information matters, handle media inquiries, and provide emergency public information and warnings.

Operations Process

During the Critical Phase, the Incident Commander (IC) establishes a command post and makes the location known. The IC should recognize the need for support from partner agencies and make the request through their respective dispatch channels. Once the police and fire departments create a unified command, a joint coordination tactical channel may be requested as needed. Both fire and police ICs need to operate close to each other and establish an effective means of communication. Utilize Radio Special Event Channel 6, which is encrypted (PD-B6 and FD-E6).

- Critical Tasks
  - Address immediate threats and restore public safety
  - Assess the situation and establish danger zones
  - Set up perimeters and staging areas.
  - Request additional resources and ensure accountability

Support UCP

The UCP may be established in the Stabilization Phase in developing incidents as needed. The UCP may include the IC or the agency may assign a liaison in Unified Command that coordinates with the IC in the field depending on the needs of the incident.

- Law Enforcement Responsibilities:
  - Designates operational zones and assigns personnel
  - Determines security needs and requests additional resources
- Fire Responsibilities:
  - Designates operational zones and assigns personnel
  - Communicates with the IC and requests additional resources
- Combined Responsibilities for Law Enforcement and Fire:
  - Receive and compare intel to avoid misinformation
  - Develop strategy and determine coverage areas
  - Establish media areas and identify additional agency reps.
  - Transfer unified command to another agency when stabilized
- External Assistance
  - Support Agencies: Assist with information requests, considering the incident phase and sensitivity of information.

This reference guide for Unified Command serves as a general framework and does not encompass every possible scenario; on-scene leadership should exercise flexibility and discretion based on situational demands.