LAKEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SOG NUMBER: 300.01	EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
DATE IMPLEMENTED: MAY 8, 2017 DATE REVISED:	TITLE: OPERATIONAL (TACTICAL) STRATEGY

PURPOSE:

This provision shall regulate the management of all emergency incidents to which the Department responds. It was promulgated to establish rules and procedures to manage fire control and rescue activities and to produce standard and predictable fire control and rescue results.

SCOPE:

Incident Commander, Safety Officers, Chief Officers, Line Officers and Senior Firefighters.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

There are three (3) separate priorities that must be considered in order to stabilize emergency situations and establish the order that basic operational functions must be performed. They must be regarded as separate, yet interrelated activities that must be considered in order. The Incident Commander (IC) cannot proceed on to the next priority until the objective of the previous function has been satisfied. These three (3) priorities must be addressed at every incident to which the Department responds. The basic strategic priorities are as follows:

- Life Safety/Rescue – activities required to protect occupants and treat the injured.
  - Removing victims from the threat
  - Removing the threat from the victims
  - Defending in place, to buy time
- Fire Control/Extinguishment – activities required to stop the forward progress of fire, bring the fire under control and complete extinguishment.
- Property Conservation – activities required to stop or reduce additional loss to property.

While the IC should satisfy the objectives in its priority order, in many cases he or she may overlap and mix the activities of each to achieve completion. An example may be the need to achieve interior tenability with active/extensive fire control efforts before initiating a primary search.

<u>Life Safety</u>

A primary and secondary search shall be conducted in all involved and dangerously exposed areas that can be entered in accordance with the Two-in & Two-out Rule.

- Primary Search means personnel have quickly gone through all occupiable areas and verify the removal and/or safety of the occupants. The IC should structure initial operations around the completion of the primary search. Time is the critical factor in the primary search process and successful primary search operations must be extended quickly and during initial fire stages to be regarded as primary.
- The life safety functions that follow lengthy fire control activities are regarded as

representing a secondary search. A secondary search means that fire companies thoroughly search the interior of the fire area after fire control and ventilation activities have been completed. Preferably, different companies than those involved in primary search activities should be used to conduct the secondary search. Thoroughness, rather than time, is the critical factor in a secondary search.

The stage of the fire becomes a critical factor that affects the life safety approach developed by the IC. The following items outline the basic approach of the IC to standard fire stages:

- Nothing Showing – situations, or in very minor fire cases that clearly pose no life hazard, the officer in charge must organize and direct a rapid interior search and those carrying out that task must promptly report their findings. In such cases, the interior search for victims will also verify no fire.
- Smoke Showing - fire control efforts must be extended simultaneously with rescue operations to gain entry and to control interior access to complete the primary search. In such cases, the IC and all operating companies must be aware that the operation is in a rescue mode until primary search is complete, regardless of the fire control required. In working fire situations, primary search must be followed by a secondary search.
- Fully Involved - immediate entry (and primary search activities) become impossible and survival of the occupants improbable, the Incident Commander must initially report fully involved conditions and that a primary search is not possible. As quickly as fire control is achieved, the IC must then structure what is in effect a secondary search for victims.

The IC must consider the following factors in developing a basic life safety size-up:

- Number, location and condition of victims.
- Effect the fire has on the victims.
- Capability of the fire-rescue forces to enter the building, remove and protect the victims and control the fire.

The most urgent reason for the special calling of additional units is for the purpose of covering life safety. It is the responsibility of the IC to develop a realistic rescue size up as early as possible. The IC must make one of these three basic life safety decisions.

- Do we remove victims from the threat?
- Do we remove the threat from the victims?
- Do we buy time until more resources are available?

In some cases, occupants may be safer in their rooms than moving through contaminated hallways and interior areas. Also, such movement may impede interior firefighting. In still other cases the fire-rescue personnel may have no choice in the matter; some occupants will insist in evacuation while others will refuse to leave the relative safety of their rooms. Life Safety efforts should be extended in the following order:

- Most severely threatened.
- The largest number (groups).
- People in the remainder of the fire area. People in the exposed areas.

All initial attack forces must be directed toward supporting rescue efforts and hose lines must be placed in a manner to control interior access, confine the fire, and protect avenues of escape. Hose line placement becomes a critical factor in these cases and all operating companies must realize that the operation is in a Life Safety (rescue) Mode and, if necessary, operate in a manner that writes off the structure in order to buy rescue time.

Normal means of interior access (stairs, halls, interior public areas, etc.) should be utilized to remove victims whenever possible. Secondary means of rescue (ladders, fire escapes, and the like), should be utilized only in their order of effectiveness.

It shall be the responsibility of the IC to structure the treatment of victims after removal. Multiple victims should be removed to the same location for more effective treatment. The IC should direct and coordinate the "EMS" structure whenever possible.

Fire Control

It shall be the standard operating procedure to attempt to stabilize fire conditions by extending wherever possible an aggressive well-placed and adequate interior fire attack effort and to support that attack with whatever resource and action is required to reduce fire extension and to bring the fire under control. IC's must develop a fire control plan of attack that first stops the forward progress of the fire and then brings the fire under control. In most cases, the first arriving company will not *immediately* have adequate resources to accomplish all of the attack needs that may be faced. The initial IC must prioritize attack efforts, act as a resource allocator and determine the resources the fire will eventually require. Accurate forecasting of conditions by the IC becomes critical during this initial evaluation process.

Fires should be fought from the unburned side. Attack from the burned side generally will drive the fire, smoke and heat into uninvolved portions of the building and the interior control forces out of the building.

Fires should be fought from the interior. The fastest place to put water on the fire is generally from the outside at the point where the fire is burning out of the building; however, most of the time this is the worst application point.

The IC must consider the most dangerous path of travel and avenue of fire extension, particularly as it affects rescue activities, confinement efforts, and exposure protection. Resources must then be allocated based upon this fire growth prediction.

Initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting primary search. The first attack line must go between the victims and the fire and protect avenues of escape. As much as it is possible, first arriving units must determine the fire location and the extent of the fire before starting fire operations. All such beginning operations must be communicated.

Put water on fire: The rescue, exposure protection, confinement, extinguishment, overhaul, ventilation & salvage problem is solved in the majority of cases by a fast, strong, well-placed attack.

The IC must consider seven (7) sides (or sectors) of the fire: front, back, sides, top, bottom and interior.

The IC must develop a conscious time decision with regard to both the size of the attack and the position of the attack. The bigger the attack, the longer it takes to get it going; the more the interior attack is repositioned, the longer it will take to complete the task. *"Where the fire is going to be?"* after set up is completed, is an important question that must be answered.

Lacking direction, when fire is showing, companies will many times lay hose and put water on the fire utilizing the fastest, shortest, most direct route. This process has been identified in some fire service texts as the "candle-moth syndrome"; everyone wants to go to the flames. It is the responsibility of the IC to ensure that all operations are "directed" activities.

When the fire is coming out of a burning building and not affecting exposures, **let it vent.** Launch an interior attack from the unburned side. It is generally venting in the proper direction. Placing a hose stream in the ventilation opening is dangerous, careless and reckless. It requires discipline on the part of the fire fighters and fire officers not to do so, and not submit to "candle-moth" temptations.

The IC must develop critical decisions that relate to cut-off points and must approach fire spread determinations with pessimism. It takes a certain amount of time to "get water" and the fire continues to burn while the attack gets set up. The IC must consider where the fire will be when attack efforts are ready to actually go into operation; if the IC misjudges, the fire may burn past the planned attack/cut-off position.

Don't put water into burned-out property, particularly where there is unburned property elsewhere left to burn. It is generally improper to operate fire streams into property that is already lost, many times such activity is done at the expense of exposed unburned property, and wastes valuable extinguishment efforts. Write-Off property that is already lost and go on to protect exposed property based on the most dangerous direction of spread. Do not continue to operate in positions that are essentially lost.

<u>Property Conservation</u>

It shall be standard operating procedure to commit whatever fireground resource is required to reduce property loss to an absolute minimum. **It must be stressed that; the age-old practice of taking chances with fire fighter lives for vacant and derelict buildings is no longer acceptable!** The IC must weigh the risk versus the benefit, at all operations. The activities that relate to effective property conservation require the same early and on-going command functions and aggressive action as both rescue and fire control. All personnel are expected to perform in a manner that continually reduces loss during fire operations.

When the fire is out - shut down fire streams. Early recognition that the forward progress of the fire has been stopped is an important element in reducing loss. The earlier the salvage operations begin, the smaller the loss.

When basic fire control has been achieved, the IC must commit and direct companies into "stop loss" activities; such activities generally include:

- Evaluating damage to overall fire area.
- Evaluating the salvage value of various areas.
- Evaluate resources that will be required.
- Committing the necessary personnel to salvage functions.
- Reducing hose lines from fire control functions to salvage functions.
- Additional rotation of personnel due to fatigue.

In cases where there is an overlapping need for both fire control and salvage to be performed simultaneously and where initial arriving companies are involved in firefighting and salvage remains undone, it shall be considered reasonable to special call additional resources to perform salvage functions.

Be aware that personnel involved in rescue and fire control operations are generally fatigued and have reached a state of reduced efficiency by the time property conservation functions must be completed - this can result in a high potential for injury. The IC must evaluate personnel conditions and replace with fresh or additional personnel, if needed.

<u>Assumption of Command</u>

The first arriving unit or officer is responsible for initially assuming command. This individual (Officer or Senior Firefighter in charge of the unit) retains command responsibilities until command is transferred to a higher-ranking officer or until the incident is terminated. This assumption of command by the first unit is **mandatory.**

As the identity of the IC changes through the formal command transfer process, the responsibility for command functions also changes. (Note: The IC is responsible for all Command functions, all of the time during the incident) The term INCIDENT COMMANDER refers jointly to the person, the functions, and the location of whoever is in charge, and provides a standard identification tag for the **single** person in charge. With this system, it should be all but impossible for more than one officer to act as an IC at any one time on any one incident scene.

Incident Commander Modes - When the first unit arrives, quick decisions must be made as to which of the following commitments the unit will make:

NOTHING SHOWING MODE - Generally requires investigation by the first arriving unit while others remain in a stand-by position. Usually, the officer on the first unit will go with the investigating company while using the portable radio to continue the command function. In effect, this creates a "mobile command"; a condition that is otherwise undesirable.

FAST ATTACK MODE - Requires immediate action to stabilize (e.g., a working, interior fire in a residence, apartment or small commercial occupancy). For an offensive fast attack, the choice may be to lead the attack while utilizing the portable radio to continue command. This fast attack mode should be concluded rapidly with one of the following outcomes:

- Situation stabilized by the offensive attack.
- Command transferred to the first arriving chief officer.
- Situation not stabilized; member in charge of the first arriving unit moves to an exterior (stationary) command position.

The Fast Attack Mode will most likely be the mode most officers will utilize in the beginning, at the majority of fires.

COMMAND MODE - Because of the size of the fire, complexity of the occupancy, or the possibility of extension, some situations will demand strong direct command from the outset. In these cases, the first arriving unit will maintain at an exterior command position and remain there until relieved of command.

Chief Officers arriving upon the scene of an incident not yet declared under control may "take" Command by a formal process. The actual command transfer is regulated by a very simple, straightforward procedure that includes: Contacting the IC directly. Face to face is always preferable, however, transfer of command by radio can be accomplished during fairly simple incidents when the responding officer has copied all Command activity made before arrival. Standard communications must be followed.

The officer being relieved will provide a briefing that includes:

- Initial Situation - "What was it like when you arrived?"
- Deployment & Assignment - "What you are doing?"
- Strategic and Tactical Plan - "What would you do if I wasn't here?"
- Safety Considerations- "Are there any unusual safety problems that you know of?

This briefing concludes with a confirmation of command transfer. It should be a short, straight to the point exchange!

The Dispatch Center shall be advised what unit identifies the IC. Transfer of Command takes place on the scene only. Only the IC shall do radio communications from the scene to the dispatch center.