



Title: Incident Safety Officer Responsibilities

Effective Date: February 2008

Policy No. P – 6040

Revised: January 2019

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Review Date: February 2020

POLICY STATEMENT:

Safety of SFD staff and the public is the first priority of the SFD. Standardized procedures for the establishing the safety officer and outlining the duties of the Safety Officer.

PURPOSE:

This Policy will define the assignment, roles and responsibilities of the Safety Officer at an incident.

DEFINITIONS:

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE:

The Incident Commander (IC) shall assign a Safety Officer at any confirmed first alarm or multiple alarm incident, special operations rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, and/or first alarm hazardous materials incidents. In addition, a Safety Officer will be assigned at any incident of special hazard which presents an unusual risk to fire fighters, emergency responders, or the general public.

For Saskatoon Fire Department, this responsibility would initially fall onto the third due engine Company Officer on all first alarm assignments. This engine company will also assume the role of Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) and complete the duties as assigned in Policy No. P-2659, Rapid Intervention. This role is transferred to a Rescue Truck upon its arrival.

For incidents that are of elevated risk or multiple alarm incidents, the Assistant Chief of Staff Development and Safety (SD&S) or a callback Battalion Chief will be designated as the Safety Officer.

This policy in no way diminishes the responsibility of each member's commitment to safe work habits and to operate within standard operating procedures at all times. Company Officers carry an additional responsibility of ensuring that all members of their crew are operating in a safe manner. Chief Officers and Sector Officers must also ensure that overall operations are conducted safely.

The Assistant Chief, SD&S Division, will be called to respond to high risk or complex incidents such as multiple alarms fires, technical rescues, or HazMat Level 2a incidents. Command may utilize a Fire Service Instructor with respect to specialty designation from the Staff Development and Safety to assist the Safety Officer in a specialty type of response (e.g. Hazmat FSI at a Dangerous Goods Incident, EMS FSI at a Mass Casualty Incident).

It will be the IC's responsibility to establish a strategy/action plan that includes a safety plan for the incident. The Safety Officer must remain a part of the ongoing planning process with the IC until released from the incident.

THE SAFETY OFFICER IS ASSIGNED UPON HIS/HER ARRIVAL AT THE INCIDENT FOLLOWING THE APPROPRIATE COMMAND PROCEDURES AND A BRIEFING WITH COMMAND. THE SAFETY OFFICER REPORTS DIRECTLY TO COMMAND AND HAS FULL AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE, SUSPEND, OR ALTER ANY LIFE THREATENING CONDITION OR ACTION.

The Safety Officer's intervention at scene operations involves three approaches: The **first** is for life threatening situations; the second is for non-life-threatening situations; the third occurs in the ongoing incident planning process. Any life-threatening conditions must be corrected immediately and directly. Command must be notified and corrective action will be initiated by Command. In obvious life-threatening situations that do not allow



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time for Command's intervention, the Safety Officer may immediately stop any action under these circumstances by DIRECT and IMMEDIATE intervention. Such action may be taken with the understanding that the Safety Officer works under the IC and is accountable to Command for actions taken. IC must be immediately advised of any direct intervention by the Safety Officer. A change of strategy and/or tactics by IC or Sector Officers may be required as a result of the Safety Officer's actions. Sector Officers may have to be notified of hazards, required safety corrections, or updated on the strategic plan, tactics, and objectives.

"EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" SHOULD BE USED FOR ANY CRITICAL EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS/ALERTS REQUIRED AT THE INCIDENT SCENE. MAYDAY WILL STILL BE TRANSMITTED BY THOSE IN LIFE THREATENING POSITION.

The **second** approach is for non-life-threatening situations and involves a more "one-on-one" correction of safety issues with individual fire fighters (i.e. require SCBA, correct ladder position) and often does not affect incident strategy. This approach is the most frequent type of interaction. Where corrective action does not affect Command's strategy, Command may not need to be notified. Corrected items should, however, be noted for discussion at a critique of the incident.

The **third** approach occurs in the ongoing incident planning process. Upon the implementation of the Safety Officer, Command must provide the Safety Officer with an overview of the incident action plan and specific details of the safety plan. The Safety Officer, upon his/her arrival, will confirm that a safety plan is in effect, review it, and provide recommendations as needed. IC may request that the Safety Officer develop a proposed safety plan and recommendations for Command.

Command must be kept aware of any adjustments that affect overall site operations and the strategic plan via frequent and timely progress reports.

The Chief Officer, assuming Safety Officer responsibilities, may utilize any previous Safety Officer to his/her best advantage as Assistant Safety Officers to coordinate resources and incident assignments as approved by Command.

SAFETY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Safety Officer announces his/her arrival on scene via radio and has a face-to-face with Incident Command.
2. After confirming a safety plan with Command, the Safety Officer will assume the Safety Officer duties.
3. The Safety Officer will don appropriate full-protective clothing and begin to observe all exterior areas of the incident and identify any structural or hazardous conditions. He/she will then give a report of these conditions to Command.
4. Ensure that RITs are properly positioned and that all personnel are wearing proper protective clothing and equipment.
5. Ensure that all crews and personnel are operating safely and consistently within existing safety and training standards.
6. The Safety Officer may be required to terminate or suspend any life threatening operation or action. He/she can initiate emergency traffic if needed.
7. When assigned this function by Command, the Safety Officer may coordinate the use of other technical specialists in the continual evaluation of incident risk and provide the information to Command as needed.
8. The Rehab Sector should be a component of the Safety Officer's responsibilities.
9. On large operations, Command may establish a Safety Branch or multiple safety sectors such as North, South, and possibly roof-top or geographically functional areas.



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10. The Safety Officer will maintain communication with Command to update and review the ongoing incident safety plan.
11. Review and address accountability and rehab.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Incident Command
The assigned Safety Officer

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

APPROVAL

Signature: *Norga Hall*
Fire Chief

Date: January 29, 2019