

FIREHOUSE®

Weekly Drill

DRILL #80: INCIDENT ACTION PLANS: PART 1

Introduction

The funny thing about the fire service is that no two fires are the same. For this reason, anyone who faces taking command needs to have a plan of action. The Incident Action Plan (IAP) allows the Incident Command (IC) a method for putting in place a step-by-step method for controlling the incident.

CHAOS does not have to stand for Chief Has Arrived On Scene! Having an IAP will assist the IC with decision making and identifying the problems. Once this information has been gathered, we can then start to solve those problems using our strategies, tactics and implementing the tasks.

In general, fire departments use standard operating guidelines (SOGs) for responses to the vast incidents called upon. The SOGs are the cornerstone component of the IAP. They identify which apparatus will respond, their speed, routes of travel, and the like. Upon arrival, the SOGs detail the type of size-up that will be conducted and what to do with the information gathered. As accountability of firefighters and their safety is the most important function of any IC, an Incident Safety Officer (ISO) should be assigned.

I'm often asked, "Does the IAP always have to be written?" No, in fact in most incidents, the IAP will be completed in the IC's head. This is primarily due to the fact that the incidents are more habitual and are easily managed in this fashion; however, for those that are not so routine, a written plan needs to be implemented.

Written Plans

What are the components of the Written Incident Action Plan?

- **A Site Safety Plan** – This plan should be prepared by the ISO and identify any safety concerns found in the IAP. This plan should list the current, imminent and potential hazards for the incident.
- **A Communications Plan** – This will identify the radio frequencies. At special operations events it will designate which channels these teams will use.
- **A Medical Plan** – Generally, this plan is used more for mass-casualty incidents and special operations incidents.



The plan will look at the potential injuries and provide insight on the location of first-aid requirements, rehabilitation areas and hospitals. Depending on the incident, hospitals can be specifically identified for trauma and burns.

- **A Demobilization Plan** – This plan is used to put in place an organized means for releasing units.

There are, in addition to the above, other components that are not as noticeable, but are just as important. The Command Post (CP), a vitally important component, is where the majority of incident decisions will be made. A command sequence is used to help the IC with decisions that need to be made. A typical sequence has five different levels and has a recognizable flow.

- 1) Incident Priorities
- 2) Size-up
- 3) Strategies
- 4) Tactics
- 5) Tasks

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