



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Hierarchy of Command and Control

Version: 4.1
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IMS 2.1

1. PURPOSE

- (a) To outline the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) requirements for establishing command and control at an emergency response incident.

2. APPLICATION

- (a) Applies to fire officers and volunteers responding to emergency incidents and the establishment of command and control.
- (b) Scientific officers are designated “authorised fire officers” under the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* and are identified by a rank. Scientific officers provide expert advice to the Incident Controller and the Incident Management Team during fires and emergency incidents; however the QFRS hierarchy of command does not apply to scientific officers. Where multiple scientific officers are on scene, the highest ranking scientific officer may take command of other scientific officers within the context of the incident management structure.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

- (a) The Commissioner requires that all QFRS resources be utilised effectively, regardless of whether an emergency incident is located within an urban response boundary or a rural fire brigade boundary or otherwise.
- (b) For the purposes of this document an urban incident includes all structural fires, rescues, hazardous material incidents and any other emergency incident other than wildfire; and a rural incident includes wildfire incidents and other support at emergency incidents.

3.1 Relationship Between Urban and Rural Services

- (a) The Incident Controller will determine who is responsible for specific functional roles required in the application of the QFRS Incident Management System.
- (b) The Incident Controller will have due regard and mutual respect for rank, experience, specialist expertise and other useful qualities for incident management such as local knowledge.
- (c) The rural service response capability is principally based upon volunteers operating within a structured hierarchy of command. First officers of rural fire brigades and such other officers of the rural fire brigades as may be appointed under Section 81 of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*, to exercise the powers of an authorised fire officer, as specified in Section 53 of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*.
- (d) With the exception of specific approved service delivery models, the urban service response capability is based upon permanent and auxiliary fire officers operating within a structured hierarchy of command. All urban fire officers are delegated the powers of authorised officers for the purposes of being able to take control of emergency incidents.

- (e) Coverage provided by the urban stations (permanent and auxiliary) is concentrated upon areas where the urban fire levy applies and where there is no urban fire levy, rural fire brigades respond to incidents in designated rural fire brigade areas.
- (f) During a classified Level 2 or Level 3 incident all regional resources (urban and rural) will come under the direct control of the regional Assistant Commissioner.
- (g) Section 82 of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*, defines the primary function of rural fire brigades as firefighting and fire prevention. Rural fire brigades may perform other functions as directed by the Commissioner, and it follows that rural fire brigades may have the following additional functions providing the brigade is appropriately trained and equipped in the function:
 - Defensive structural firefighting where all operations are to be in accordance with QFRS standards for structural firefighting;
 - Road crash rescue support; and
 - Other fire and emergency support.

4. RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

- (a) The Commissioner requires that officers of urban permanent, urban auxiliary, rural operations and rural fire brigades are tasked to provide a timely and effective response to emergencies by:
 - Having only one person in control of an incident and ensuring that control and handover of control is clearly communicated to all personnel at an emergency by the Incident Controller;
 - Ensuring that decisions made in regards to incident response and management are responsible, justifiable and proportionate to the current and potential size of the incident;
 - Ensuring that sufficient and appropriate resources are mobilised to every emergency for the protection of the public, property, environment and the management of firefighter safety;
 - Providing effective emergency response arrangements that disregard boundaries in identifying the appropriate resources required for any existing or potential emergency situation;
 - Ensuring all personnel are aware that units are not to self respond to incidents, or sites within on-going emergency incidents, without the approval/request of the Incident Controller for that incident or the relevant senior officer;
 - Actively being involved with cooperative planning between urban and rural operations to enhance effectiveness, ensuring that the nearest/most appropriate and timely resources are available and utilised where necessary, regardless of boundaries or whether the resources are permanent, auxiliary or volunteer;
 - Conducting joint urban and rural operational exercises to test communications, incident management system protocols, equipment compatibility, response procedures etc, for use at emergency incidents; and
 - Ensuring the skills, competencies, qualifications and experience of all personnel involved with the incident are recognised and utilised in the total management of the incident.

4.1 Exercising the Powers of Authorised Fire Officers

- (a) The powers of authorised fire officers are specified in Part VI and Section 53 of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*. Fire officers authorised by the Commissioner as authorised fire officers, are to exercise those powers with constraint consistent with the effective performance of their duties and subject to any directions or orders issued by the Commissioner.

5. HIERARCHY OF COMMAND AT FIRES AND EMERGENCIES

- (a) Within QFRS, both urban and rural fire officers and volunteers are to observe directions given to them relating to the exercise of those powers and operate within a structured hierarchy of command set out in the table below:

QFRS COMMISSIONER	
QFRS DEPUTY COMMISSIONER	
URBAN OPERATIONS	RURAL OPERATIONS
Assistant Commissioner (Region)	Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations
Chief Superintendent	Chief Superintendent
Superintendent	Superintendent
Inspector	Inspector
Station Officer 3	Area Training Support Officer
Station Officer 2	Brigade Training Support Officer (Pay Point 3)
Station Officer 1	First Officer (Rural Fire Brigade)
Leading Firefighter	
Senior Firefighter	
Captain	
Lieutenant	
<p>Note 1: At incidents where the Incident Controller holds an “acting rank”, substantive officers at that level (or higher) may assume control. Reasons not to assume control may include the supervised professional development of individuals in an “acting” capacity. Officers who elect not to assume control are not absolved of their accountability for safe and efficient fireground operations.</p> <p>Note 2: This table does not apply to Scientific Officers.</p> <p>Note 3: During a classified Level 2 or Level 3 incident all regional resources (urban and rural) will come under the direct control of the regional Assistant Commissioner.</p>	

5.1 Urban Officers Operating in Urban Levied Areas or at Urban Incidents in Rural Fire Brigade Areas

- (a) The hierarchy of command for urban operations applies for any emergency incident involving the attendance of urban fire officers in an area covered by the urban fire levy.
- (b) The hierarchy of command for urban operations applies for urban incidents occurring outside of the urban fire levy area.

5.2 Rural Officers (Rural Operations Officers and Brigade First Officers) Operating in Rural Fire Brigade Areas

- (a) The hierarchy of command for rural operations applies for emergency incidents involving the attendance of rural fire officers in a rural area.

5.3 Urban Permanent Officers Operating as Members of an Auxiliary Brigade

- (a) Where an urban permanent senior firefighter or above elects to be a member of an auxiliary brigade the hierarchy of command for urban operations applies for the command of fire and emergency incidents.
- (b) In this situation, the urban permanent officer will wear a helmet identifying their substantive rank (colour and banding).

5.4 Rural Permanent Officers Operating as Members of an Auxiliary Brigade

- (a) Where a rural operations officer (Brigade Training Support Officer pay point 3 or above) elects to be a member of an auxiliary brigade, the hierarchy of command for rural operations applies for the command of wildfire within a rural fire brigade area.
- (b) For an urban operational incident, where a rural operations officer (Brigade Training Support Officer pay point 3 or above) elects to be a member of an auxiliary brigade, the hierarchy of command for urban operations applies.

5.5 Joint Service Operations - the Interface Zone (iZone) (Urban, Rural, Other Agencies)

- (a) An Incident Management Team in an iZone should comprise a balance of rural and urban skilled personnel wherever possible, and will incorporate appropriately skilled personnel from other agencies and community sectors as necessary.
- (b) Personnel are to be appointed on the predominant risk and the following principles apply:
 - The first attending and most senior officer present at the emergency incident, being an urban officer for emergencies in an urban area, or a rural officer for emergencies in a rural area, will assume the role of Incident Controller and all the functions that it entails;
 - In such cases the officer to be appointed or assuming control will be the most senior unless that authority has been delegated to another person who can appropriately manage the incident;
 - This person will clearly assume and announce control ensuring that it is clearly logged with the respective Fire Communications Centre; and
 - Should the incident escalate, an Incident Management Team, at the appropriate level, may be established to assist with the management of the incident.
- (c) Local and regional pre-incident planning should identify appropriate persons to assume the function of Incident Controller in designated iZones and it is highly desirable for one of these persons to take control of the initial run of any escalating fire. However in the absence of one of these persons, the most senior urban officer in attendance will assume control of the incident, advise the respective Fire Communication Centre and assign resources to priority tasks.

5.6 On-Call Arrangements

- (a) QFRS has well established systems for providing appropriate incident management team support. Notification and response of senior and other officers to support an incident will be in accordance with the Greater Alarm Response System (refer Incident Directive 9.2) and regional response requirements.
- (b) It is recognised that Incident Management Teams may require additional support from rural operations (for urban incidents) and urban operations (for wildfire incidents), external agencies and support staff. The Incident Management Team must be structured on the principle that appointments of personnel to functional positions within the Incident Management Team be based on competence and experience.

- (c) Rural senior officers who have recognised and maintained urban qualifications, skills and experience may attend urban incidents (through the on-call roster) in any appropriate capacity, including the Incident Management Team functional lead roles of:
- Incident Controller
 - Planning Officer
 - Operations Officer (or any subordinate role under the Operations Officer)
 - Logistics Officer
- (d) Rural senior officers who do not have recognised urban qualification, skills and experience may still be called to attend urban incidents in an appropriate *support* role.

5.7 General

- (a) Notwithstanding any other directions contained in this document, the Commissioner and/or Deputy Commissioner may direct any QFRS officer, to assume control of a fire or emergency in any part of Queensland for which the Commissioner is responsible (Section 8D of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*).

6. QFRS RELEVANCY

IMS 2.1	URBAN		RURAL OPERATIONS	RURAL FIRE BRIGADES				
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Special	iZone	Village	Rural	Primary Producer
Applicable	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Not Applicable								
May Apply *								✓

* This document may apply to some Rural brigades. Check with your Senior Officer for additional information.

REFERENCES

The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
 Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990
 QFRS Training Material
 QFRS Operational Guides
 Code of Practice 1001.0 - 'Powers and Responsibilities of Officers at Fires and Other Emergencies'


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Commissioner
