

STEP-BY-STEP COMMAND DELEGATION

Stop managing tasks. Start managing the incident.

Command questions

If you answer yes to several of these questions, it's likely time to expand your command structure:

- Am I communicating directly with six or more companies?
- Have operations expanded into multiple geographic areas?
- Are multiple tactical objectives occurring simultaneously?
- Do crews need more immediate supervision than I can provide?
- Am I spending most of my radio traffic directing companies instead of managing strategy?

When you're ready to expand your command structure, ask: **Who can help?**

1

Build your command structure

As incident complexity increases, expand your command organization to improve supervision, communication and situational awareness.

Create divisions when:

- Geographic areas of the incident need dedicated supervision.
- Crews are operating on multiple sides, floors or exposure buildings.
- Conditions differ significantly across the incident.

Examples:
Alpha Division,
Roof Division,
Division 2

Create groups when:

- Functional assignments require focused coordination.
- Multiple companies are performing the same tactical objective.

Examples:
Vent Group,
RIT Group,
Medical Group

Add command helpers as needed:

- Safety officer
- Accountability officer
- Staging manager
- Command aide/assistant

2

Delegate with purpose

When assigning a division or group supervisor, clearly communicate:

- Assignment and tactical objective
- Geographic or functional responsibility
- Companies assigned
- Reporting location
- Communications channel
- Immediate priorities
- Expected benchmarks or completion reports

Tip: Effective delegation depends on a shared playbook. Ensure everyone is working from the same incident objectives, tactical priorities, terminology and operational procedures.

3

Expect regular updates

Request concise CAN reports:

- Conditions: What is happening?
- Actions: What are you doing?
- Needs: What additional resources or support are required?

Frequent reports help maintain situational awareness without requiring the IC to micromanage operations.

Practice radio discipline

Follow these smart radio practices:

- Communicate through division or group supervisors whenever possible.
- Avoid directing individual companies once supervisors are assigned.
- Keep transmissions brief and actionable.
- Reserve command channel traffic for information that affects incident strategy, firefighter safety or resource needs.

4**5**

Stay focused on command

Once you've delegated, keep your attention on:

- Overall strategy
- Resource management
- Incident stabilization
- Firefighter accountability
- Risk management
- Planning for the next operational period
- Anticipating the next problem before it develops

Avoid getting pulled back into:

- Individual company assignments
- Tactical problem-solving already delegated
- Repeating radio traffic that supervisors should handle
- Freelancing operational decisions

Remember: Delegation doesn't mean giving up control. It creates the structure that allows you to maintain it.

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