

An **AAR** for **ICs**

Most after-action reviews cover what the crews did. This one covers what command saw, decided and did with it. Use it alone after an incident, or as a script for a debrief with your crew.

Before you start

- Judge each decision by what you knew at the time, not what you know now.
- Review soon, while the details are fresh.
- Stay focused on decisions and systems, not on people.
- Check the boxes that apply or just reflect on the incident.

1 What did I know?

Where did my picture of the incident come from?

- ☐ Dispatch
- ☐ Preplan
- ☐ My own size-up
- ☐ Company reports
- ☐ Occupants or bystanders
- ☐ Other

What information shaped my initial strategy?

What was missing, late or wrong?

What cues was I responding to at the time? What did I expect to see, and did I see it?

Hindsight check: If you only recognize a cue because you know how the incident ended, record it as a lesson, not a mistake.

2 What did I decide?

What were my initial objectives?

What did I prioritize, and what did I let wait?

What was my most consequential decision, and what drove it?

What risk did I accept, and did what I knew justify it?

What made me reassess?

- ☐ Fire or smoke conditions
- ☐ Life hazard
- ☐ Structural conditions
- ☐ Water supply
- ☐ Staffing or resources
- ☐ Mayday or accountability
- ☐ Weather or exposures
- ☐ Other

When I changed strategy or tactics, was it early enough?

3 How did I organize?

Did standard company assignments work?

Where did conditions force a deviation, and did everyone know?

When did I expand command, and which divisions, groups or helpers did I use?

Did span of control become a problem?

- ☐ I was talking directly with 6 or more companies
- ☐ Crews were working in multiple areas at once
- ☐ Most of my radio traffic was directing companies
- ☐ None of these

Did arriving chiefs support the command system?

- ☐ Added situational awareness
- ☐ Spotted gaps or emerging problems
- ☐ Worked through the established IC
- ☐ Created overlapping or competing direction

Command check: Once you delegate tactical supervision, stay on strategy, resources, accountability, risk and the next problem.

4 How did I communicate?

Did my size-up and initial strategy reach arriving companies clearly?

Which radio traffic helped?

Which radio traffic created noise?

- ☐ Directing individual companies after supervisors were assigned
- ☐ Repeating what supervisors had already said
- ☐ Long or unclear transmissions
- ☐ Traffic that didn't affect strategy, safety or resources

Were strategy changes and benchmarks clearly communicated?

Did I get the updates I needed (conditions, actions, needs) without having to ask repeatedly?

Learn from the incident

- Identify the command practices that worked and should be repeated.
- Determine what needs to change.
- Identify your next drill or command simulation and who else needs the lesson.

- ☐ Training
- ☐ SOP/SOG review
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Staffing/resources
- ☐ Preplan update
- ☐ Mutual aid
- ☐ Other

Remember.

- Review your decisions.
- Fix the problems.
- Practice the lessons.

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