

<p style="text-align: center;">TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 2: SUGGESTED OPERATING GUIDELINES</p>
<p>Part 3: I.C.S. - Command Function Subject: Information Officer Page 1 of 4 Effective Date: 07-01-95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Section: 2-3-2 Revised Date:</p>

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- 2.01 Purpose. To define the basic functions and activity of the Information staff position.
- 2.02 Goal. To provide public information by establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with the news media.
- 2.03 Responsibility. Command is responsible for public information at a fire department operation. Command can delegate management of this information to a person who will serve as incident Information Officer.
- 2.04 When to activate position. The Information Officer is assigned when the size or complexity of the incident prevents Command from personally supervising the function. Assigning an information officer will relieve Command of dealing directly with the media during critical stages of the incident. This function is expanded, when needed, by adding personnel who will report to the Information Officer.
- 2.05 Guideline.
- A) The Information Officer will select a position that is visible and accessible to arriving media representatives. This position will serve as the place where the media can meet to receive incident information. The position should provide the Information Officer ready access to the Command Post without disrupting Command Post activity.
- B) The person assigned as Information Officer will use a media worksheet to gather basic incident information.
- C) If possible, add anything to the basic information that will enhance the story of the situation. This information should include a description of hazards encountered. Another example is an exceptional effort made by an individual or group of members. The goal is to provide a clear, concise story for the public.
- D) Do not be afraid to talk to reporters. They will report the facts as you give them. Tell them everything you can, but be sure everything you tell them is correct.

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- E) If possible, a personal interview with Command is encouraged. Grouping media representatives for a briefing will permit Command to best use the available time.
 - F) While information is collected, reporters may request information. Give them what is available, but emphasize that this information is tentative. If these requests hinder the gathering of information, consider these alternatives:
 - 1) Tell reporters to gather in one place. State that you will return shortly with more information.
 - 2) Request additional manpower from Command and stay with the reporters.
 - 3) Tell the reporters to get pictures and video footage without interfering with operations while you gather information. Be sure to point out hazardous areas. Arrange to meet them shortly at a designated location for your briefing.
 - 4) If reporters have deadlines to meet, get their telephone numbers, and telephone the facts to them as soon as possible.
 - G) **Names of persons injured or deceased are not released until the next of kin are notified.** Notifications are usually handled by Law Enforcement.
 - H) The Information Officer or other staff may provide an orientation tour for media representatives. These tours are approved by Command and coordinated with the Operations Officer. The Information Officer is responsible for requiring media personnel to wear proper protective clothing when in hazardous areas.
 - I) If media personnel create a safety problem, or hinder operations, they should be requested to move in a positive manner. **AVOID CONFRONTATIONS.** The policy of the Department is to cooperate with the media.
- 2.06 Media Deadlines. It is important to consider media deadlines. Newsrooms should be given information before deadlines whenever possible.

2.07 Media Worksheet.

- A) Media worksheets are found in Command Post.
- B) The media is interested in the number of units that respond to the emergency, not the unit designations. They are also interested in total firefighter figures.

Example: 4 Engines + 1 Rescue = 5 units and 20 firefighters.
- C) Tell the media what the first unit found on arrival, and the action taken.

Example: "Engine 21 arrived on the scene and found the house well involved with fire. Engine 21 directed a quick attack to the interior and ordered firefighters to conduct search and rescue."
- D) If there are injuries, compile the full name, age, extent of injuries and where taken for treatment. If there is a fatality, omit the extent of injury.
In all cases -- do not release names until the next of kin have been notified.
- E) Note specific hazards.
- F) Note specific accomplishments, such as rescues, good salvage work, etc.
- G) Note information concerning private protection.

Examples: "Fire was controlled by the sprinkler system." "A smoke detector would have provided earlier warning."
- H) Use word descriptions for damage -- not dollar figures.

Examples: "Minor fire damage." "Moderate smoke damage."

MEDIA WORKSHEET

- 1) Time of Alarm.....and.....Total time on scene.
- 2) Location
- 3) Owner/Occupant/Business
- 4) Description of Incident
- 5) Number of Units and Members On-Scene
- 6) Injuries or Casualties
(Name -- Address -- Age -- Disposition)
(Do not release names.)
- 7) Damage Description
(Major/Minor Fire Damage)
(Major/Minor Smoke Damage)
(Major/Minor Fire Control Damage)
(Description of Property Conservation Action Taken)
- 8) Special Circumstances
(Rescue -- Need for Smoke Detector -- etc.)

2.08 Public Information Officer. Refer to Section 1-3-9 for additional job description information.