

FIRELINE HANDBOOK

**CHAPTER 7—COMMON
RESPONSIBILITIES**

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**INITIAL OUT OF UNIT ASSIGNMENT
INFORMATION (OBTAIN BEFORE
LEAVING HOME UNIT)**

Fire personnel will be notified of an out-of-unit assignment by their respective agency. The following minimum information should be obtained before departing:

Fire name and number

- Fire job assignment
- Reporting location
- Specific location of the fire
- Location of the check-in point
- Reporting time
- Any special communications instructions
- Resource Order number and request number (if applicable)
- Travel instructions/chief of party
- Unit designator (if applicable)

Mobilization

- Obtain the Resource Order and request number from the dispatching office. If possible, obtain a copy of the Resource Order.

- Each individual or Chief of Party must ensure that all personnel comply with weight limitations (45 lbs. for personal gear in a soft frameless pack and 20 lbs. for web gear or briefcase, total weight not to exceed 65 lbs. per individual).
- Ensure manifest is complete and accurate with personnel and baggage weights entered separately.
- Check in. Each individual should ensure that all information needed to complete the Check-in List (ICS Form 211) is provided. Resource Order and request numbers, manifest information, home base, departure point, method of travel, and other qualification blocks are especially important.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES AT INCIDENT

There may be several locations for incident check-in. Check-in officially logs you in at the incident and provides important release and demobilization information. You only check in once. **CHECK-IN RECORDERS MAY BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:**

- Incident Command Post
- Base or Camp
- Staging Area
- Helibase

- If you are instructed to report directly to a line assignment, you should check-in with the Division/Group Supervisor or other line Supervisor.

OBTAIN BRIEFING AND BRIEF SUBORDINATES

After check-in, locate your incident supervisor and obtain your initial briefing. The items you receive in your briefing, in addition to functional objectives, will also be needed by your subordinates in their briefing. The items include:

- Identification of specific job responsibilities expected of you for satisfactory performance.
- Identification of co-workers within your job function.
- Definition of functional work area.
- Identification of eating and sleeping arrangements.
- Procedural instructions for obtaining additional supplies, services, and personnel.
- Identification of operational period work shifts.
- Clarification of any important points pertaining to assignments that may be questionable.
- Provisions for specific debriefing at the end of an operational period.
- A copy of the current Incident Action Plan.

- Use available "waiting time" to refresh training, improve organization and communications, and check equipment.

COMMUNICATIONS DISCIPLINE

It is extremely important that all incident personnel observe strict radio/telephone procedures and discipline in the use of all communication equipment. Radio codes should not be used in transmissions when more than one agency is involved. Use Clear Text.

FORMS AND RECORD KEEPING

Most fires, especially large fires, managed under ICS rely heavily on the use of ICS forms to manage information and resources. Detailed information concerning forms will be found in Incident Command System Forms Manual (ICS 230-2). Some general instructions with regard to initiation and completion of forms are listed below:

- It is important to have legible forms. Print or type all entries on the form.
- When entering dates, use a month/day/year format such as March 15, 2004 or 3/15/04.
- Use military 24-hour clock time when entering times.
- In most cases, times must be associated with dates to avoid any possible confusion. Enter date and time on all forms and notes.

- Fill in all blanks on the form. If information is not available or not applicable, enter N/A to let the recipient know that the information was not overlooked.

UNIT LOG (ICS FORM 214)

All Command Staff, Section Chiefs, Branch Directors, Division/Group Supervisors, Unit Leaders, and Strike Team/Task Force Leaders are required to complete a Unit Log for each operational period on large fires under ICS management. A copy of this log must be filed with the Documentation Unit at the end of each operational period. The Unit Log contains facts relative to your activities on the incident. It is a good idea for supervisors to review their employee's unit log each day.

DEMOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES

Preparation for demobilization begins with mobilization. Each individual or Chief of Party mobilized to an incident has responsibilities in the demobilization process. The following checklist identifies some of the key responsibilities:

Demobilization

- Verify demobilization schedule with supervisor.
- Ensure that your base/camp sleeping area is clean.
- Clean and ready gear for another assignment and travel.

- File required forms and reports with the Documentation Unit and/or Finance/Administration Section.
- Return incident issued communications equipment to the Communications Unit.
- Return incident-issued work materials to the Supply Unit.
- Follow approved check-out procedures (ICS Form 221).
- Report to departure points ahead of schedule.
- Stay with your group until you arrive at your final destination.
- Evaluate performance of subordinates prior to release from the incident.
- Get feedback on overhead performance suggestions for improvement.
- Demobilization is an important function of each Command and General Staff position.

Demobilization must be given adequate attention such as:

- Actively participate in the planning, development, and implementation of the demobilization plan and schedule.
- Provide for a minimum advance notice of 24 hours when identifying resources that will be available for demobilization.

- Ensure that there is no room for interpretation in identifying actual versus tentative demobilization information.

RECOMMENDED FIRE ASSIGNMENT PERSONAL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

On fire suppression assignments, individuals should be reminded that weight and bulk of personal gear is restrictive in transportation, handling, and storage.

- Generally the total weight limit per individual is 65 lbs. (45 lbs. for personal equipment and 20 lbs. for web gear or briefcase).
- Tags or markings are recommended for identifying personal gear.
- External frame packs shall not be used.

Individuals should be prepared to function for at least seven days with the personal equipment on hand. Incidental purchases while en route, on approved Rest and Recuperation (R&R), and on return, will require cash or credit card. Always carry a photo identification card. Commercial airlines require photo ID to get a boarding pass.

ALSO, BE AWARE OF AND COMPLY WITH AIRPORT SECURITY POLICIES.

Recommended Minimum Items

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required by your agency (fire shelter, flame resistant clothing, hard hat with chin strap, goggles, and headlight clips).

- Red Card or other documentation of ICS qualifications
- Small packsack and other web gear if you will be working on the fireline.
- Work gloves (leather)
- Leather boots, lace-up, heavy duty, non-slip sole, at least 8" high
- Jackets, 1 heavy, 1 light, of cotton, wool, or flame-resistant material
- Agency-approved fire shirts and trousers
- Underclothes, non-synthetic fabric
- Handkerchiefs
- Personal toilet gear
- Watch
- Optional items may include sunglasses, writing paper, envelopes, stamps, notepad, pens, and tobacco. Cameras are not recommended for fireline forces.
- Rain gear

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

It is extremely important that inappropriate behavior be recognized and dealt with promptly. Inappropriate behavior is all forms of harassment including sexual and racial harassment and shall not be tolerated. When you observe or hear of inappropriate behavior you should:

- Inform and educate subordinates of their rights and responsibilities.
- Provide support to the victim.
- Develop appropriate corrective measures.
- Report the incident to your supervisor or other appropriate authority, if the behavior continues. Disciplinary action may be necessary.
- Document inappropriate behavior and report it to the employee's home agency.
- While working in and around private property, must recognize and respect all private property.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Non-prescription, unlawful drugs and alcohol are not permitted at the incident. Possession or use of these substances will result in disciplinary action.

- During off-incident Rest & Recuperation periods, personnel are responsible for proper conduct and maintenance of fitness for duty. Drug or alcohol abuse resulting in unfitness for duty will normally result in disciplinary action.
- Be a positive role model. Do not be involved with drug or alcohol abuse.
- Report any observed drug or alcohol abuse to your supervisor.

UNIT LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

In ICS, a number of the Unit Leader's responsibilities are common to all units in all parts of the organization. Common responsibilities of Unit Leaders are listed below.

- Participate in planning meetings, as required.
- Determine and monitor current status of unit activities.
- Confirm dispatch and estimated time of arrival of staff, equipment, and supplies.
- Assign specific duties to staff and supervise their performance.
- Develop and implement accountability, safety, and security measures for personnel and resources.
- Supervise demobilization of unit personnel, equipment, and supplies.

- Provide Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished.
- Maintain unit records, including Unit Log (ICS Form 214).

Fireline Leadership

Fireline leadership is the process of influencing firefighters to accomplish their mission by providing them with purpose, direction, and motivation.

Purpose: The fireline leader must establish priorities, explain the importance of the mission, and focus the firefighters on the task so they will function safely and efficiently.

Direction: The fireline leader must give clear instructions on the tasks to be accomplished.

Motivation: The fireline leader must give firefighters the drive and desire to do everything they are capable of doing to accomplish the mission.

Common Responsibilities of the Fireline Leader

- Know yourself and seek improvement.
- Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.
- Make sound and timely decisions.

- Set a good example.
- Know your firefighters and take care of them.
- Develop a sense of responsibility in your subordinates.
- Ensure the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished.
- Build your firefighters into a team.
- Keep your firefighters informed.
- Use your firefighters in accordance with their level of training and experience.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

- Prepare. Know the facts. Develop 2-3 key messages and deliver them. Prepare responses to potential tough questions. If possible, talk to reporter beforehand to get an idea of subjects, direction, and slant of the interview.
- Be concise. Give 10-20 second, simple answers, and when you're done, be quiet. If you botch the answer, simply ask to start again.
- Be honest, personable, professional, presentable (remove sunglasses and hats).
- Look at the reporter, not the camera.
- Ensure media are escorted and wearing PPE when going to the fireline or hazardous sites.

- Ensure local Public Affairs office is aware of media visits.
- NEVER talk “off the record,” exaggerate, or try to be cute or funny.
- DON’T guess or speculate or say “no comment.” Either explain why you can’t answer the question or offer to track down the answer.
- DON’T disagree with the reporter. Instead, tactfully and immediately clarify and correct the information.
- DON’T speak for other agencies or offices; or use jargon or acronyms.

