



# THE FIRST THREE STEPS OF GOOD FIREGROUND MANAGEMENT



## 1. RESPOND

### 1.1 Respond appliance

Responding appliances should advise FireCom of their callsign, crew strength, OIC and their intentions or confirm details of the call. e.g. responding to house alight in Malvern Road. Any additional appliances or support vehicles should proceed to the incident unless there is an explicit instruction to respond given by the IC, District/Team/Zone Manager or other person with delegated authority.

### 1.2 Brief crew en-route

Each OIC should brief their crew using the SMEACS briefing sequence. The OIC of the first arriving appliance will assume control and will become the IC and will set the foundation for the fireground organisation. The immediate consideration once on scene is to determine minimum decisive force required to combat the incident, based on the initial size-up – so scale up early with the rapid deployment of sufficient additional resources.

### 1.3 On scene

The first arriving appliance is to provide an accurate initial SitRep on arrival including callsign, priority code (red, blue), give or confirm location, give or confirm map name and grid reference, give or confirm type of incident (bush, grass, structure, AFA, MVA, false alarm, etc) other agencies in attendance and advise investigating, commencing attack, standing by, etc.

## 2. TAKE COMMAND

### 2.1 Assume control of the incident

The OIC of the first arriving appliance will assume control and will become the IC and should not get involved in direct firefighting unless initial resources are so short. For a small incident, up to 5 appliances with up to 20 personnel, the IC carries out the function of the Operations Officer, Planning Officer, Logistics Officer, Safety Advisor and Liaison Officer with other agencies. The IC must take the initiative, set clear priorities, establish span of control, match objectives to available resources, coordinate arriving resources, coordinate attack and communicate all relevant information to the appropriate personnel whilst complying with all Service Standard Operating Procedures.

### 2.2 Gather intelligence

Gathering intelligence should include initial size-up of the incident and consider safety of the crew/s, LACES, hazards, identification of greatest threat to life, property or the environment, who and what is threatened, available timeframe, rate of spread, fuel, terrain, access, road closures, diversions, evacuation, livestock and pets, etc. This will determine the resource requirements and initial strategies and tactics.

### 2.3 Issue orders and deploy resources

As more resources and equipment arrive, initial strategies and tactics may need to be adapted once intelligence is gathered. At this stage a simple Incident Action Plan should be developed and documented based on your chosen course of action.

## 3. MANAGE THE FIREGROUND

### 3.1 Staging areas

A staging area type 1 should be established within striking distance of the incident to ensure that appliances do not simply drive onto the fireground unless they have been allocated a task. All later arriving units are to report to the staging area and communicate with the IC on approach for a briefing and the allocation of tasks. As soon as time and intelligence permits, a further SitRep should be given to FireCom including any injuries, fatalities, persons trapped, persons missing or assets under longer term threat (give timeframe), fire behaviour, objectives, strategies and tactics, additional firefighting or logistics resources required, any specialists or other services required (rescue, HAZMAT, Police, Ambulance, electricity authority, heavy plant, aircraft, etc), any hazard or safety warnings, weather observations or any suspicious circumstances.

### 3.2 Sectorise

The IC should set up field command and start to sectorise the fireground and appoint Sector Commanders (SC) to ensure the effective use of resources. This may be a section of a fire trail, a street, one or more buildings, the front or rear of a building, a floor of a building, the water supply, etc. As the sectors and other functions on the fireground are allocated it is essential, to assist with the management of the fireground, that each key position is clearly identified with a tabard such as Fireground Incident Controller, Fireground Operations Officer, Sector Commander, Safety Advisor, Breathing Apparatus Control Officer (BACO), Staging Area Coordinator, etc.

### 3.3 Hand over to more senior officer as incident escalates

As the incident escalates, the IC may need to hand over command to a more senior officer, such as a Captain, to whom the IC will provide a full briefing.