

Sector commander

New policy number: **433**
 Old instruction number: **OPS:A090:a3**
 Issue date: **10 May 2006**
 Reviewed as current: **25 October 2012**
 Owner: **Head of Incident Command Policy and Operations Review Team**
 Responsible work team: **Incident Command Policy and Operations Review Team**

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Appointment.....	2
3	Role.....	2
4	Responsibilities.....	2
5	Communications.....	3
6	Identification.....	3
	Appendix 1 – Detailing of the responsibilities of the Sector Commander.....	4
	Appendix 2 - Considerations for the role of Sector Commander.....	5
	Appendix 3 – 5 Pump Incident.....	6
	Document History.....	7

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy details the role and responsibilities of sector commanders at operational incidents. It should be read in conjunction with the [Policy number 434](#) - 'Sectorisation at incidents.'
- 1.2 A sector commander is an officer nominated to take command of a sector, whether it is an operational sector, responsible for a physical area of the incident ground or a functional sector responsible for a support function such as the water sector.
- 1.3 Sector commanders form part of the incident command team.

2 Appointment

- 2.1 In order to maintain the span of control at very large and /or complex incidents and a greater level of command is required, the incident commander (IC) may delegate responsibility and devolve authority for some operations. One method to achieve this is for the IC to sectorise the incident. Sectors can only be created when an individual who is proficient in the role is available to assume responsibility for the task.
- 2.2 The appointment of sector commander is one of the main additional control measures available to the IC.

3 Role

- 3.1 The role of the sector commander is specific to the requirements of the incident.
- 3.2 When designating sectors, the incident commander must clearly identify their boundaries. These boundaries may be defined according to the purpose of the sector.
 - Operational sector – an area of responsibility defined by a physical area of the incident ground, where possible, clearly identifiable boundaries such as floors or walls should be used.
 - Functional sector – an area of responsibility defined by a support role and the resources it commands.

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The detailed responsibilities of the sector commander must be given by the IC. These should be given in a briefing based on the decision-making model ([Policy number 341](#)). An example of the type of information this may include is detailed in the appendices to this note that may be used as an aide-memoire for incidents. These are available on the Command Units.
- 4.2 The sector commander must establish control over their defined area of responsibility and provide direct and visible leadership for their designated sector.
- 4.3 A sector commander is responsible for management of resources within their sector. The complexity of the tasks within the sector is determined by their managerial level
- 4.4 A sector commander principally focuses on command and control, deployment of resources, tactical planning, BA search co-ordination, and health and safety of crews.
- 4.5 Sector commanders should continually monitor conditions and operational priorities in their sector and ensure that the prevailing tactical mode continues to be appropriate.
- 4.6 In the event of the sector commander considering it appropriate to change the tactical mode of the sector, they must seek the permission of the incident commander prior to doing so.

- 4.7 Sector commanders must immediately react to adverse changes, withdrawing personnel from risk areas without delay if necessary advising the IC of the change in conditions as soon as practical.
- 4.8 The sector commander is to remain in their designated sector until relieved of their responsibilities by someone of appropriate competence and authority, in order to maintain continuity of command, supervision of safety etc.
- 4.9 When command of an incident changes it must be done formally. In the same way there must be a proper recognition of the change of a sector commander. The sector commander must be formally briefed on their duties by the incident commander and on the status of operations in progress by the outgoing sector commander. This briefing should be based on the decision-making model.

5 Communications

- 5.1 A sector commander of an operational sector will report directly to the IC or the operations commander, as appropriate.
- 5.2 Functional sectors must report to the IC using a reporting structure appropriate to the incident requirements. This preserves the span of control. At major fires and incidents, a senior manager will co-ordinate all the functional sectors.

6 Identification

- 6.1 Sector commanders will be identified by a yellow tabard with red shoulders.
- 6.2 A functional sector will be named according to its role such as water sector, or salvage sector.
- 6.3 A manager assigned as sector commander should assume the sector name as the incident ground radio call sign. This is extended to managers with functional command. For example, the commander for sector 2 would be 'sector commander two' and the functional sector commander controlling water supplies would be 'sector commander water'.
- 6.4 All personnel should be aware that at major Incidents, where inter-agency communication is necessary, the gold, silver and bronze structure will apply, as detailed in LESLP and the major incident procedure. Sector commanders operate at the Bronze level, with the incident commander at the silver level supported by the operations commander(s).

Bibliography and further reading

- Fire Service Manual, Volume 2, Fire Service Operations. Incident Command.
- [Policy number 434](#) – Sectorisation at Incidents.
- [Policy number 342](#) – Dynamic risk assessment.
- [Policy number 341](#) - Decision making model.
- [Policy number 435](#) – Tactical mode procedure.
- Major Incident Procedure.
- [Policy number 432](#) - Operations commander.
- London Emergency Services Liaison Plan (LESLP).

Appendix 1 – Detailing of the responsibilities of the sector commander

A sector commander is an officer nominated to take command of a sector, whether it is an operational sector, responsible for a physical area of the incident ground or a functional sector responsible for a support function such as the water sector. Sector commanders are part of the incident command team and as such are appointed by the incident commander.

The incident commander is responsible for detailing the responsibilities of the sector commander. These should be given in a briefing based on the decision making model and my include:-

Information about task or event- as much information as possible to sector commander for them to perform their role. This should include:

- Life involvement;
- extent of their responsibilities;
- environmental information.

Information about resources- specifying the resources the sector commander has available to them and the system for requesting additional resources including those of other agencies.

Information about risk and benefit- the sector commander should be made aware of the hazards within their area of responsibilities and the risks they present.

Objectives- the incident commander's overall objectives and the objectives specific to the sector commanders area of responsibilities should be detailed.

Plan- the incident commander's plan should be detailed. This should include detail of the command structure and communication systems.

Communicating- the method of communication between the sector commander and the incident commander, or the operations commander, where appropriate, and in the case of functional sector commanders the appropriate reporting structure should be detailed. The relevant call sign should also be detailed.

Controlling- the sector commanders responsibilities and the physical boundaries of their area of control.

Information on progress- the sector commander must provide the incident commander or the operations commander with regular updates on the progress of operations. The frequency and method of providing these updates should be detailed during the briefing.

Appendix 2 - Considerations for the role of sector commander

A sector commander should ensure the following:

Information about task/event. Establish and maintain information regarding

- The number of casualties involved within their sector.
- The tactical mode of their sector and neighbouring sectors.
- The development and progress of operational tactics.
- The effect of the incident and of fire service operations to the surrounding environment.

Information about resources. Liaise with the personnel within their sector and establish -

- The turn-over of resources in the sector.
- Surplus resources available can be re-deployed or released.
- The long term resource requirements of the sector.

Information about risk/benefit -

- That the risk assessment process is followed within the sector and that a review of risk assessment is completed.
- That the appropriate tactical mode is declared for the sector and that any changes to the mode are authorised by the incident commander.

Objectives -

- That all personnel are aware of the objectives for their sector and for the overall incident.

Plan -

- That personnel are aware of the overall incident plan and their role within that plan.

Communicating, establish and maintain communication between -

- The incident commander/operations commander.
- Other personnel that are within the sector commanders span of control. This may include non-Brigade personnel.

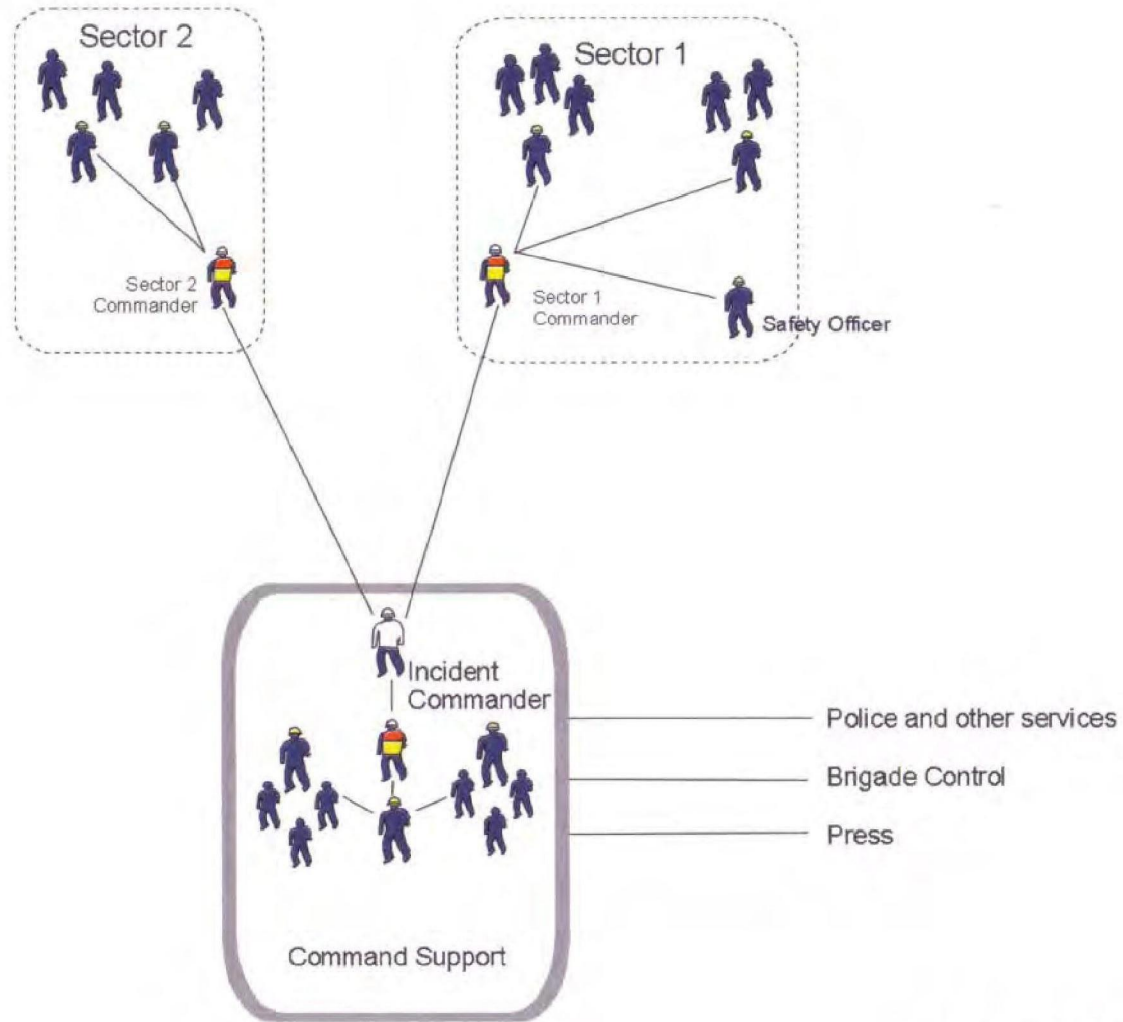
Controlling -

- Maintain their span of control as detailed by the incident commander. The incident commander must agree any changes to their span of control.

Information on progress -

- That they receive regular updates on progress from personnel within their sector.
- Provide the incident commander/operations commander with regular updates on the progress of operations.
- The frequency and method of providing these updates should be as agreed in the briefing given by the incident commander/operations commander.

Appendix 3 – 5 pump incident



5 Pump Incident

Document History

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	22/03/2011	SDIA	22/03/2011	HSWIA		RA	17/03/2011
-----	------------	------	------------	-------	--	----	------------

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
	Reviewed as current and new review date added. No amendments made.	03/11/2009
Throughout	Minor corrections have been made to this policy please read to familiarise yourself.	25/10/2012
Page 7	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	27/01/2015

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Functional sector	Incident command
Incident management	Operational roles
Operational sector	Sectorisation

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification