

Revalidation of incident command

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The ability to lead and resolve operational incidents forms a key unit of role maps for individuals who are charged with incident command responsibilities.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the framework of how command competency is approached within the Brigade for these staff.
- 1.3 Incident commanders are expected to work in challenging and highly pressurised situations. It is therefore important to ensure that incident commanders have the opportunity to develop and maintain incident command skills. Staff also have a responsibility towards their own continuous professional development (CPD).
- 1.4 LFB acknowledge the importance of ensuring incident commanders have the time and opportunity to engage in incident command 'practice and development'.
- 1.5 The process of incident command revalidation will:
- Ensure that consistent standards for maintenance of competence are applied to incident commanders across the Brigade.
 - Provide assurance that officers are performing incident command to the required level.
 - Provide an auditable record of incident command skills and development.
 - Ensure continuous improvement through the uptake of professional development opportunities.
- 1.6 The process of revalidation will be undertaken by all staff who have incident command responsibilities (i.e. Leading Firefighter (LFF), Sub Officer (Sub.O), Station Officer (Stn.O), Station Commander (SC), Group Commander (GC), Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC), and Assistant Commissioner (AC). It will also apply to those firefighters and officers that have been formally assessed to perform a higher role.
- 1.7 Incident commanders will be revalidated against the level at which they are operating in a command capacity, in accordance with National Joint Council (NJC) for local authority fire and rescue services role maps as shown in (Table 1):

Incident commanders role	Incident command level
FF+/FF ¹	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
LFF	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
Sub.O	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
Stn.O	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
SC	EFSM 2 (level 2 incident command)
GC	EFSM 2 (level 2 incident command)
DAC	EFSM 2 (level 3 incident command) Strategic command (level 4 incident command)
AC	EFSM 1 (level 3 incident command) Strategic command (level 4 incident command)

Table 1: Incident command levels

¹ FF+ and ^ schemes will be phased out.

- 1.8 In order to effectively revalidate incident command competence several key component areas will be examined in the process as shown in (Table 2):

Revalidation Areas	Method of Assessment	Frequency of assessment
Technical and procedural knowledge	Knowledge test	24 months
Application of command skills	Incident command exercise	24 months
Evidence of application of knowledge and skills in the workplace	Minimum command hour requirement and Incident command logs (ICL)	12 months

Table 2: Areas of incident command revalidation

2 Incident command development panel

- 2.1 An incident command development panel (ICDP) will consist of representatives from ORT, Training and Professional Development and Central Operations. This panel will be chaired by a representative from OPA.
- 2.2 The role of the panel is to provide an additional level of support in assisting individuals to reach the required standard. The panel may also consider a review of any IMP data held against an individual which may include positive or development points when considering an individuals command competency.
- 2.3 There are a range of interventions which are available to the panel to consider, including:
- (a) Incident command courses.
 - (b) Development plans.
 - (c) Operational monitoring options.
 - (d) Operational shadowing options.
- 2.4 Individuals whose performance is deemed such that they present a serious safety risk may be removed from operational duties. This decision would be referred to a deputy commissioner or their nominated deputy as soon as practical, following the recommendation of the panel.

3 Technical and procedural knowledge

- 3.1 The knowledge test provides confirmation that incident commanders technical and procedural knowledge is at a level that is appropriate to their role.
- 3.2 The knowledge test will be undertaken every two years by all level 1, 2 and 3 officers as part of the incident command maintenance course appropriate to role, delivered by Babcock.
- 3.3 The knowledge tests will be based on policy notes and other guidance associated with incident command.
- 3.4 The successful knowledge test pass mark is set at 75%.

- 3.5 Incident commanders who score between 50-74% will be set a 30 day development period followed by a retest in the same format. Line managers will assist this process by producing appropriate development plans.
- 3.6 Incident commanders who score under 50% will be referred to the incident command development panel (ICDP) for additional support, outlined in Section 2.
- 3.7 Retests will be facilitated at a suitable location.
- 3.8 Failure to meet the 75% pass mark in a retest will result in referral to the ICDP.
- 3.9 For all levels of command, line managers can seek guidance from the ICDP chair on what action may be required prior to the referral to the ICDP.

4 Application of command skills

- 4.1 The test of technical knowledge will be supported by a formal assessment of command skills every two years. This will be in the form of an incident command exercise (appropriate to their operational role at the time). In alternate years incident commanders will attend an incident command maintenance course.
- 4.2 There may be variation to the two yearly assessment timescale in response to the following:
 - Safety events where a failure of/ineffective command was a contributory factor.
 - Significant procedural change.
 - Following a prolonged period of absence from operational duties.
 - As deemed necessary by the ICDP or deputy commissioner.
 - Following serious concerns about the competence of an officer being recorded by a monitoring officer and/or an ORT officer at an incident or training event for which, it is felt, the risk is so great that resolution falls outside the normal line management performance improvement responsibility.
 - Upon request of an individual who lacks confidence or has not been in charge of an incident for a significant period of time.

Level 1 incident commanders

- 4.3 For Level 1 commanders, Babcock trainers will provide an 'assessment feedback' document on completion of the course which will go to the delegates line manager.
- 4.4 Where there is an identified requirement for improvement (Incident commanders who score between 50-74%), a personal development plan (PDP) will be produced by the line manager and the appropriate skills will be required to be demonstrated within 30 working days (timescale can be extended to take account of leave or sickness). This can either be by attending another incident command maintenance course, or via local action by satisfying action plans as deemed appropriate by line managers. The area DAC will ensure calibration of PDP's.
- 4.5 Incident commanders who score under 50% or do not meet the PDP requirements stated in paragraph 4.4 will be referred to the ICDP for additional support.

	<i>Technical and procedural knowledge test</i>	<i>Incident command assessment</i>
<i>Frequency</i>	24 Months	24 Months

Method	<i>Carried out on Babcock delivered course</i>	
Pass mark	<i>75%</i>	<i>75%</i>
Development needed	<i>50%-74% will result in 30 day improvement plan then retest</i>	<i>30 day improvement plan/TNA then retest</i>
Further action required	<i>Below 50% or failure of retest results in referral to ICDP</i>	<i>Failure of retest, results in referral to ICDP</i>

Table 3: Summary of incident command revalidation standards for Level 1.

Level 2 and 3 incidents commanders

- 4.6 For Level 2 and 3 commanders assessment of incident command exercise, will be undertaken by LFB officers.
- 4.7 The successful incident command exercise pass mark is set at 75%.
- 4.8 For those incident commanders who score between 50-74%, development plans will be produced and the appropriate skills will be required to be demonstrated within 30 working days (timescale can be extended to take account of leave or sickness). This can either be by attending another² incident command maintenance course, or via local action by satisfying a training needs analysis (TNA) that has been agreed with the incident commanders line manager. The candidate will be retested following development.
- 4.9 Incident commanders who score under 50% will be referred to the ICDP for additional support.
- 4.10 Failure to meet the 75% pass mark in a retest will result in referral to the ICDP.
- 4.11 For all levels of command, managers can seek guidance from the ICDP chair on what action may be required prior to the referral to the ICDP.
- 4.12 For further information and advice on how to conduct a TNA, please refer to 'Return to operational duties' – follow link on hotwire - [Training Needs Analysis](#)
- 4.13 To assist any line manager in creating this TNA, feedback will be provided on an 'Revalidation of incident command assessment feedback sheet'. This will be issued to each Level 1, 2 and 3 incident commander and line manager up to 30 days after their assessment.

	Technical and procedural knowledge test	Incident command assessment	Command hours
Frequency	<i>24 Months</i>	<i>24 Months</i>	<i>12 Months</i>
Method	<i>Delivered by Babcock results provided to Line Manager</i>	<i>Delivered by Babcock with LFB officers assessors</i>	<i>Line manager assessment</i>
Pass mark	<i>75%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>100% of requirement</i>

² Senior officer training to be established within DAMOP and will provide additional alternatives.

Development needed	<i>50%-74% will result in 30 day improvement plan then retest</i>	<i>50%-74% will result in 30 day improvement plan/TNA then retest</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Further action required	<i>Below 50% or failure of retest referral to ICDP</i>	<i>Below 50% or failure of retest, referral to ICDP</i>	<i>Failure to reach annual hours, referral to ICDP</i>

Table 4: Summary of incident command revalidation standards for Level 2 and Level 3

Incident command logs (ICL)

- 4.14 Incident commanders will maintain records of both incident command experience and development activity. Incidents attended will be automatically updated onto the ICL.
- 4.15 ICL will enable the individuals to accurately evidence their operational experience and development. This may inform future training and development opportunities, or be used to support post-incident investigations.
- 4.16 The ICL will also allow for reflective learning following an incident or training event.
- 4.17 Example activities to be logged will include:
 - Operational incidents attended, including details of the incident, role & activities undertaken. For unusual or high impact incidents, this process could include contemporaneous notes that would support future investigations.
 - Incident command simulation, such as attendance at exercises.
 - Incident command development activities, including tactical decision exercises, policy notes reviewed, CBT packages reviewed.
 - Attendance at incident command seminars.
- 4.18 The ICL is not to be used as a way of appeal if the required standard on other parts of the revalidation process are not met.
- 4.19 ICL will be recorded in business apps, located via 'start' on computer or via this link <https://icl/#/portfolio>

Minimum command hours

- 4.20 Annual targets for time spent performing incident command ensure adequate exposure to maintain currency of skills. Target hours also ensure that a corporately agreed volume of opportunities have been provided to prepare individual commanders.
- 4.21 They will only apply to incident commanders at level 2 and level 3. They will not apply to watch based level 1 incident commanders.
- 4.22 Hours included will be those undertaken as an incident commander and operations commander only.
- 4.23 In addition to incidents, time spent in charge of practical and simulated incident command exercises are also valid.
- 4.24 The targets for overall command hours will be reviewed annually by Revalidation Governance Group (see Section 6) and set by the Deputy Commissioner, Operations.
- 4.25 Each incident or simulation will count for a maximum of 2 hours towards the annual target (for level 2), and 5 hours (for level 3).
- 4.26 Incident commanders will record hours using ICL. Each entry will include the name of the relevant monitoring officer.

5 Achieving incident command revalidation

- 5.1 All three areas of the incident command revalidation process must be passed in order to maintain command competence. The scoring criteria are summarised above in (Table 3) for Level 1 commanders and (Table 4) for Levels 2 and Level 3 commanders.
- 5.2 The process will be owned by the individual and overseen by their line manager.

6 Revalidation governance group

- 6.1 The revalidation of incident command governance group will oversee and monitor the incident command revalidation process.
- 6.2 The group will consist of representatives of training and professional development, central operations, and operational policy and assurance.
- 6.3 Key responsibilities will include:
- Compiling an annual schedule of CPD activities for senior officers, including a schedule of incident command seminars and tactical decision exercises.
 - Maintaining a database of tactical decision exercises (TDEs).
 - Governance of incident command knowledge question sets.
 - Monitoring the consistency of assessors engaged in the revalidation process.
 - Monitoring the consistency of local action taken where a retest was not deemed necessary.
 - Reviewing the target for annual command hours for Level 2 and Level 3 incident commanders.

7 Bibliography

- 7.1 Operational policies including reference to incident command and revalidation:
- [Policy number 408](#) - Incident command
 - [Policy number 427](#) - Development and maintenance of operational professionalism
 - [Policy number 431](#) - Incident commander and monitoring officer
 - [Policy number 825](#) - Dynamic and intelligent operational training (DIOT)

Document history

Assessments

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

EIA	28/02/2019	SDIA	28/02/2018	HSWIA	16/07/2018	RA	17/08/2016
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Audit trail

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

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 7, para 7.1	Link to policy number 431 amended.	31/10/2019

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

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