Policy | Procedure

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LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Revalidation of Incident Command

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Contents

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Introduction

1.1 The ability to lead and resolve operational incidents safely forms a key element 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 maintained within the Brigade for these staff.

1.3 Incident Commanders are expected to work in challenging and highly pressured 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 development.

1.4 LFB acknowledge the importance of ensuring 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 of maintenance of competence are applied to incident commanders across the Brigade
- Provide assurance that officers are performing incident command at the required level
- Provide an auditable trail of incident command skills and development
- Encourage 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 that are competent in role (CM, WM, SM, GM, DAC, AC, Directors, Commissioner). It will also apply to those firefighters who are have been assessed to perform the role of FF+/FF^.

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^	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
CM	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
WM	WM 7 (level 1 incident command)
SM	EFSM 2 (level 2 incident command)
GM	EFSM 2 (level 2 incident command)
DAC	EFSM 2 (level 3 incident command) Strategic Command (level 4 incident command)
AC	EFSM 2 (level 3 incident command) Strategic Command (level 4 incident command)
Directors	Strategic Command (level 4 incident command)
Commissioner	Strategic Command (level 4 incident command)

Table 1: Incident Command Levels.

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	Biennial
Application of Command skills	Incident Command Exercise	Biennial
Evidence of Application of Knowledge and Skills in the Workplace	Minimum command hour requirement and CPD logs	Continuous

Table 2: Areas of Incident Command Revalidation

2 Technical and procedural knowledge

2.1 The technical knowledge confirmation check provides confirmation that incident commander's technical and procedural knowledge is at a level that is appropriate to their role.

2.2 The check will be undertaken biennially as part of the Revalidation exercise appropriate to role.

2.3 Checks will be based on policy notes and other guidance associated with incident command. A link to the full bibliography for each role can be accessed here *(to be added)*.

2.4 The knowledge confirmation check will identify knowledge areas of strength and areas for improvement. These areas should be discussed during a Career Development discussion and should inform training and development activities during the period of revalidation. Activities should be recorded via Incident Command Development logs (see paragraphs 3.8 to 3.12).

2.5 Where significant concerns in relation to an individual's technical knowledge following Career Development discussions and additional activities, referrals should be made to the Incident Command Development panel for additional support.

3 Application of Command skills

3.1 The technical knowledge check will be supported by confirmation of command skills. This will be in the form of an incident command exercise as part of the Incident Command Maintenance course, appropriate to role.

3.2 Incident commanders will attend Incident Command Maintenance courses annually, but will only be formally assessed in an incident command exercise every two years.

3.3 There may be variation to the biennial assessment timescale in response to the following:

- Safety events where a failure of/ineffective command was a contributory factor;

- Individual underperformance evidenced by operational assurance measures such as a PRC or direct observation by either a monitoring officer or ORT member;
- Significant procedural change;
- Following a prolonged period of absence from operational duties;
- As deemed necessary by the Incident Command Development Panel or appropriate Director;
- 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

3.4 For Level 1 commanders a 'confirmation of skills' document will be provided on completion of the course to delegates line managers.

3.5 The 'confirmation of skills' document will identify knowledge areas of strength and areas for improvement . These areas should be discussed during a Career Development discussion and should inform training and development activities during the period of revalidation. Activities should be recorded via Incident Command Development logs. Where significant concerns in relation to an individual's command skills remain following Career Development discussions and additional activity, referrals can be made to the Incident Command Development panel for additional support.

Level 2-4 Incident Commanders

3.6 For Level 2, 3 and 4 commanders confirmation of skills will be undertaken by LFB officers.

3.7 The exercise will identify knowledge areas of strength and areas for improvement . These areas should be discussed during a Career Development discussion and should inform training and development activities during the period of revalidation. Activities should be recorded via Incident Command Development logs. Where significant concerns in relation to an individual's technical knowledge remain following Career Development discussions and additional activity, referrals can be made to the Incident Command Development panel for additional support.

Incident Command Development Logs

3.8 Incident commanders will maintain records of both incident command experience and development activity.

3.9 Incident Command Development logs will enable individuals to accurately evidence their experience and development. This may inform future training and development opportunities, or be used to support commanders involved in post-incident investigations.

3.10 The logs will also allow for reflective learning following an incident or training event.

3.11 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.
- Areas of strength and areas of improvement identified though confirmation of knowledge and confirmation of command skills checks.
- Activity undertaken in relation to areas of improvement
- Attendance at Incident Command Seminars.

3.12 Logs will be recorded in the following system (TBC)

Minimum Command Hours

3.13 Annual targets for time spent practising 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.

3.14 They will apply to all incident commanders from levels 2-4. They will not apply to watch based incident commanders.

3.15 Hours included will be those undertaken as an incident commander, those in a IC support roles such as Sector Commander and carried out in tactical advisory roles.

3.16 In addition to incidents time spent in charge of practical and simulated incident command exercises is also valid.

3.17 The targets for overall command hours and the proportion to be achieved in each type of role described in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.14 will be reviewed annually by Revalidation Governance Group (see Section 7) and set by the Director Of Operations.

3.18 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).

3.19 Incident commanders will record hours using Command Development logs. Each entry will include the name of the relevant monitoring officer (or IC if submitted when in a support role).

4 Achieving Incident Command Revalidation

4.1 All three areas of the incident command revalidation process must be passed in order to maintain command competence. The scoring criteria are summarised in Table 3 for Level 1 commanders and Table 4 for Levels 2-4.

4.2 The process will be owned by the individual and overseen by their line manager.

	Technical and procedural knowledge test	Incident command assessment	Command hours (Levels 2-4 only)
Frequency	*24 Monthly*	*24 Monthly*	*Continuous*
Delivery	*Carried out on a training course*		Continuous Development Discussion with line manager
Method	*Confirmation of skills*		*Record via Command Development Log*
Areas of focus	Address during Continuous Development Discussion		
Further action required	*Below 50% or failure of retest results in referral to Incident Command Development panel.* *Failure of retest results in referral to Incident Command Development panel*		

Table 3. Incident Command Revalidation Standards Level 1

Table 3. Incident Command Revalidation Standards Levels 2-4

5 Operational Assessment for Promotion

5.1 Both the technical and procedural knowledge check and incident command confirmation of skills will be used to allow commanders to demonstrate their competence in a higher command role. Demonstrating this will allow individuals to be eligible for temporary operational duties at the role above and for access to relevant assessment and development centre (ADC).

5.2 Incident commanders wishing to progress will be able to access the relevant incident command development programme of the next role.

5.3 Level 1 commanders at WM level will need to pass a level 2 Incident Command knowledge check and confirmation of skills incident command exercise.

5.4 Level 2 commanders at GM level will need to pass a Level 3 Incident Command knowledge check and confirmation of skills incident command exercise.

5.5 There is a knowledge check for each level of Command (Levels 1 to 4). Each level of command covers two roles (e.g. Level 1 is applicable to CM and WM, Level 2 for SM and GM etc.). Therefore for progression to the next role that fall within levels of incident command (i.e. CM to WM, SM to GM, DAC to AC), the knowledge check is the same.

5.6 For promotion within Levels of command, the biennial scheduled incident command confirmation of skills exercise at that level can be requested at 'stretch' level. Although this will be at the same level of command, the stretch exercise will be appropriate to the expectations of the role. Commanders who achieve this will be deemed as risk assessed to access temporary operational duties for the role above.

5.7 Where the confirmation of skills and knowledge is successfully achieved at the level above, individuals will not be required to undertake an additional assessment at their current level.

5.8 Detail of this process for each role is in Table 5.

Current Role	Aspiring role	Level of knowledge test	Incident Command Assessment
CM	WM	Based on CM/WM knowledge profile	Confirmation of knowledge and skills during Incident Command Revalidation exercise, with stretch ICE requested
WM	SM	Based on SM/GM knowledge profile	Access DAC Incident Command Revalidation exercise
SM	GM	Based on SM/GM knowledge profile	Confirmation of knowledge and skills during Incident Command Revalidation

			exercise, with stretch ICE requested
GM	DAC	Based on AC/DAC knowledge profile	Access DAC Incident Command Revalidation exercise
DAC	AC	Based on AC/DAC knowledge profile	Confirmation of knowledge and skills during Incident Command Revalidation exercise, with stretch ICE requested

Table 4: Stretch Objectives.

6 Incident Command Development Panel

6.1 An Incident Command Development Panel (ICDP) will consist of representatives from Operations, Development and Training, ORT and HRM.

6.2 The role of the panels is to provide an additional level of support and scrutiny in assisting individuals to reach the required standard.

6.3 There are a range of interventions which may be available to the panels to consider, including:

(a) Incident command courses

(b) Intensive development plans

(c) Operational monitoring options

(d) Operational shadowing options.

6.4 As a final resort, 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 Director or their nominated Deputy, following the recommendation of the panel.

7 Revalidation Governance Group

7.1 The Revalidation of Incident Command Governance Group will oversee and monitor the incident command revalidation process. It will report to the Operational Professionalism Board.

7.2 The group will consist of representatives of Development and Training, Operations, ORT & Operational Policy.

7.3 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 2-4 incident commanders.

Document history

Assessments

An equality or sustainability impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA		SIA		RA	

Audit trail

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

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date

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