

# Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guideline

**Subject:** Safety Division or Group

**SOG 708**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this guideline is to define the Egg Harbor Fire Department's protocol for the establishment and operation of Safety Division/Groups. It identifies the need and process for expanding the Command organization to incorporate the safety Division/Group into emergency operations.

**Scope:** This procedure applies to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

## **Guideline**

It is the direction of the Egg Harbor Fire Department to implement a "Safety Division/Group" at any multiple alarm incident, special operations rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, or first alarm HazMat incident. A Safety Division/Group will be implemented at any incident of a special hazard that presents an unusual risk to firefighters or to the community. These guidelines do not diminish the responsibility of each EHFD member to commit to safe work behaviors and to operate within standard operating guidelines at all times. Company officers carry the additional responsibility of ensuring that all members of their crews are operating in a safe manner. It is the responsibility of all Command officers and Division/Group officers to ensure that safe operations are conducted.

## **Operational Guidance**

### **I. Command and control**

- A. Command will be established by the first-arriving member or company.
- B. The Incident Command System/National Incident Management System (ICS/NIMS) will be implemented at all working incidents.
- C. The Incident Commander will be responsible for the early establishment of a Safety Division/Group at any incident that requires it.
- D. An EHFD Incident Safety Officer will normally be assigned at alarms, trench rescue, confined space rescue, or other significantly high-risk incidents.
  1. Command may request the EHFD Safety Officer at any incident.
  2. Upon appointment, the Safety Officer will notify command and receive an initial briefing, and then assume Safety Division/Group responsibilities.
  3. In order to maintain control of accountability and scene management, Command must be notified of the assumption of safety Division/Group responsibilities.

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E. It will be the responsibility of Command to establish a strategy or action plan that includes a safety plan for the incident.

1. The safety plan must be communicated to the Safety Division/Group and other Division/Group officers.
2. Command may request that the Safety Division/Group develop and recommend an appropriate safety plan.
3. The Safety Division/Group works directly for Command and has full authority to terminate, alters, or suspends any unsafe condition or activity.

## **II. Safety Division/Group intervention**

A. Intervention by the Safety Division/Group at scene operations involves three approaches.

1. The first approach involves life-threatening situations.
  - a. Any life threatening conditions will be corrected immediately and directly. Where time permits, Command must be notified. Corrective action will be immediately initiated by the Incident Commander.
  - b. In obvious life threatening situations that do not allow time for Command's intervention, the Safety Division/Group shall immediately stop any action, or countermand any order, under these circumstances by direct and immediate intervention (such as, ordering crews out of a building, countermanding an order for crews to go to the roof, etc.).
  - c. Such action may be taken with the understanding that the Safety Division/Group works for Command and is accountable to Command for actions taken.
  - d. Command must be immediately advised of any direct intervention by the Safety Division/Group under these circumstances.
  - e. A change of strategy and/or tactics by Command or Division/Group officers may be required as a result of the Safety Officer's actions. Division/Group officers may have to be notified of hazards, required safety corrections, or updated on the strategic plan, tactics, and objectives.
  - f. "Emergency Traffic" should be used for any critical emergency notification/alerts required at the incident scene.
  - g. Command must be kept informed of any and all corrections that affects overall site operations, or the strategic plan, via frequent and timely progress reports.
2. The second approach is for non-life-threatening situations.
  - a. This approach involves a "one-on-one" correction of safety problems with individual firefighters, company officers,

and/or Division/Group officers (such as, requirement of SCBA or correct ladder position). It often does not affect incident strategy, and is the most frequent type of interaction.

b. Where corrective action does not affect Command's strategy, Command may not need to be notified. Corrected items should, however, be noted for discussion at a future critique of the incident.

3. The third approach occurs in the on-going incident planning process.

a. Upon the implementation of a Safety Division/Group, Command must provide the Safety Division/Group with an overview of the incident action plan, and with specific details of the safety plan.

b. The safety officer will confirm that a safety plan is in effect, review it, and provide recommendations as needed. In some cases command may request that the Safety Division/Group officer propose a safety plan and recommendations for Command.

c. The Safety Division/Group or safety officer must remain a part of the on-going planning process with Command and/or the Planning Section Chief.

B. The safety officer, upon assuming Safety Division/Group responsibilities, may utilize any previous Safety Division/Group officers to his/her best advantage, coordinating resources and incident assignments as approved by command.

### **III. Safety Division/Group responsibilities**

A. Ensure that all crews and personnel are operating safely and consistently within existing safety standards.

B. Review and ensure that Command has an effective safety plan as part of the incident's strategic plan.

C. Cause the termination, suspension, or alteration of any unsafe operations or actions.

1. Operate as the safety eyes and ears of command.

2. Ensure that safe work measures are practiced.

D. Observe all areas of the incident and identify any structural or hazardous conditions which could create a risk to firefighters or other personnel working at the incident and initiate corrective action.

E. Ensure that all personnel are wearing proper protective clothing and equipment.

F. When assigned by Command, the Safety Division/Group will coordinate the use of Fire Protection Engineers, Building Department Officials, and

other Technical Specialists, in the continuous evaluation of an incident's risk, and provide corrective measures as needed.

#### **IV. Planning Section responsibilities in safety**

A. The Safety Officer will perform the following functions.

1. Monitor the health and welfare of all personnel and insure that they are not overextended, and are rehabilitated in an effective manner.
  - a. The Rehabilitation Division/Group should be a component of the safety plan.
2. Provide Command with frequent progress reports on safety-related issues.
3. Maintain a liaison with Command and/or the Planning Section Chief to update and revise the on-going incident safety plan.
4. Participate in any post-incident critique emphasizing firefighter safety by reinforcing safety behaviors, assessing the level of safety, and identifying areas where safety improvements can be made.