



Department of Community Affairs



Division of Fire Safety

Director's Office

To: All Municipal Officials

From: Director Richard Mikutsky

Re: Incident Management Requirements

Date: August 19, 2019

Each year the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety notifies all fire departments of the minimum, mandatory incident management requirements for fire officer. This is done as a reminder of the qualifications needed, especially as there is often a yearly turnover of officers in the volunteer ranks. This year the notification was made on March 11.

As a result of the numerous deficient qualification notifications that the Division has recently received, and investigated, we are notifying all municipal officials of the necessary qualifications needed to be incident commanders of a fire scene. It is imperative that as municipal officials, you realize the responsibility you have to ensure compliance. Please review these qualification standards that are required to be an incident commander in the fire service.

N.J.A.C. 5:73-1.6 states, that no person shall be promoted, assume or assigned (including elected) any fire service position, the duties of which include the management of emergency operations. Unless, that person has obtained, at a minimum, Incident Management Level 1 Certification issued by the Division of Fire Safety.

In order to qualify for Incident Management Level 1 Certification, a person must meet the following requirements:

- Obtained Firefighter 1 Certification issued by the Division of Fire Safety;

- Have three years of documented experience in the fire service. (This means three years as a firefighter and does not include time spent in an Explorer or Junior Firefighter Program);
- Attended a twelve hour classroom based Basic Incident Management Course (I-200) offered or approved by the Division of Fire Safety.

A certification application must be submitted to receive the Incident Management Certification. This means that every fire officer, career and volunteer, **MUST** have, at a minimum, Incident Management Level 1 Certification issued by the Division of Fire Safety. We have heard a number of times that some volunteer fire departments believe that these requirements do not apply to them. **This is incorrect.** Failure to comply may result in violations being issued to the fire company, municipality and the individual holding the office.

NIMS Requirements.

In order to ensure compliance with NIMS, which may be required to receive Federal and/or State Homeland Security Grants, the Division of Fire Safety recommends the following:

Fire Officer Requirements

- **Entry Level First Responders:** Including, but not limited to, firefighters, engineers, driver operators, fire police and support personnel; I-100 and IS-700.
- **First Line Supervisors:** Including, but not limited to, Lieutenants and Captains, Acting Lieutenants and Captains, Lead Dispatchers; 1-200 and IS-700.
- **Middle Managers:** Including, but not limited to, Battalion Chiefs, Acting Battalion Chiefs; I-300 and IS-700. It is also recommended that IS-800, Introduction to the National Response Plan be completed. Completion of these courses and holding the prerequisite of Incident Management Level 1 Certification will qualify the individual for Incident Management Level 2 Certification issued by the Division of Fire Safety.
- **Command and General Staff:** Including, but not limited to, the Chief of Department or Acting Chief of Department, the second in command such as Deputy Chiefs, Acting Deputy Chiefs or Assistant Chiefs and Acting Assistant Chiefs; I-400. It is also recommended that both the IS-800 and IS-701, Introduction to Multi-Agency Coordination Systems, be completed. Completion of these courses and holding the prerequisite of Incident Management Level 2 Certification will qualify the individual for Incident Management Level 3 Certification issued by the Division of Fire Safety.

Combination and volunteer departments need to determine how to comply with ICS when their certified officers are not available. This can be accomplished by determining what other members of your department may be asked to assume a command position and ensure that they have the proper level of training. Another way is to adopt SOG's or mutual aid agreements that address utilizing certified officers from other departments or county/regional Incident Management Teams.

However, by simply attending the above listed courses, it does not qualify someone for all ICS positions. There are many position specific training programs that are available through the Division of Fire Safety or the Emergency Management Institute.

Some of which include, “Staging Area Manager”, “Strike Team Leader”, “Resource Unit Leader” and “Division/Group Supervisor”, all of which, provide detailed training in these areas that lead to a better understanding of how ICS is designed to work.

In addition, the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) program has a number of safety and health standards that employers (municipalities and fire districts) must comply with regardless of whether they are volunteers or career. These are contained in the Safety and Health Standards for Public Employers in N.J.A.C 12:100 and include the Standards for Firefighters at N.J.A.C 12:100 Subchapter 10. All PEOSH Standards including the PEOSH Act can be found at:

http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lsse/laws/peosha_law.html.

Examples include the adoption of a respiratory protection program that stipulates how the employer will ensure compliance with an individual’s ability to be medically cleared to wear a respirator; an annual respirator face piece fit test and a policy regarding facial hair when wearing a respirator. Another example includes the requirement that anyone who will be supervising an incident involving a hazardous substance above the awareness level, needs to meet the requirements of On-Scene Incident Commander, and annual refresher training for blood borne pathogens, confined space and hazardous materials, as well as biannual Right-to-Know (RTK) training.

If you have any questions, or need assistance, please contact your Regional Fire Coordinator directly or through our office at 609-292-4109. Someone will be happy to assist you in understanding how to ensure compliance. You may also contact Justin Baker, Assistant Chief of the PEOSH On-Site Consultation Unit at 609-292-2832 or at Justin.baker@dol.state.nj.us.

Lastly, the Division of Fire Safety offers various levels of Fire Officer Certification that not only meet current NFPA standards, but have also been accredited by IFSAC and Pro-board. Fire Departments, Fire Districts and Municipalities should consider requiring these comprehensive certifications based on the specific officer levels within their department.

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact the Office of Fire Department Preparedness at 609-633-6106.

Thank you,

Richard Mikutsky
State Fire Marshal / Director, N.J. Division of Fire Safety