

NIMS
Falmouth Fire-EMS Department
National Incident Management System (NIMS)

1. Intent and Purpose

- To address the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) for all calls within the Town of Falmouth. To establish guidelines for Fire-EMS personnel when functioning at an incident on behalf of the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department.
- NIMS standardizes incident management processes, protocols, and procedures for use by all responders. NIMS mandates the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for all calls. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management and is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across disciplines.
- Using Management Best Practices, NIMS-ICS helps to ensure:
 - i. The safety of responders and others.
 - ii. The achievement of tactical objectives.
 - iii. The efficient use of resources.

2. Definitions

- Incident – an occurrence, either caused by human or natural phenomena, that requires response actions to prevent or minimize loss of life, or damage to property and/or the environment.

3. Scope

- The Falmouth Fire-EMS Department and the Town of Falmouth have adopted NIMS for use at all incidents within the Town of Falmouth. An Incident Commander will be established for all incidents that the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department responds to. The Incident Commander may be an officer, a firefighter, EMT, Safety Officer, or even a member of an outside organization including, but not limited to the Falmouth Town Office, Falmouth Emergency Management, Falmouth Police Department, or Falmouth Public Works. The Incident Commander has the overall responsibility of the management of the incident from the onset through termination.

4. Guidelines

- Establish Command
 - i. The Falmouth Fire-EMS Department will establish **COMMAND** at all incidents.
 - ii. The first arriving unit will establish **COMMAND**, and the ranking officer or member of that unit will serve as **Incident Commander** until command is transferred or the incident is stabilized and terminated.

- iii. The Incident Commander should perform a 360 view of the incident. When this is not feasible, the Incident Commander should direct others to perform this for Command, and request updates and information from other personnel.
 - iv. The Incident Commander will advise Dispatch of the command name. The command name will not change throughout the Incident.
 - v. All communications with Dispatch are directed through the Incident Commander.
- Transferring Command
 - i. It may be necessary for the initial Incident Commander to transfer command to a later arriving unit so that they may perform another critical function at the scene (primary search, interior firefighting, etc).
 - ii. The Transfer of Command should be utilized both as the emergency escalates and also in the demobilization process as the situation is being brought under control.
 - iii. Transferring Command can be done via radio but should be done after a face-to-face briefing if possible. The transfer should include the current situation, current unit locations, assignments, a review of the command board, and a review of the Incident Action Plan (IAP). The IC will notify Dispatch when the transfer of command is complete. It may be advantageous to have the officer being relieved to remain with the new Incident Commander, in the role of IC Aide, Operations Section Chief, or Planning Section Chief since this officer established the incident action plan.
 - iv. The arrival of a ranking officer on the incident scene does not mean that Command is automatically transferred to that officer. Command is only transferred when the Transfer of Command process has been completed. If a higher ranking officer wants to effect a change in the management of the incident, he/she must be present on the scene and then utilize the formal Transfer of Command procedure.
 - v. The first arriving Chief Officer may assume Command, work in an advisory capacity with the IC, or perform another function as assigned by the IC.
- Unified Command
 - i. Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

- ii. The Falmouth Fire-EMS Department supports the use of Unified Command for incidents involving multiple agencies who may have jurisdiction over an event.
- Area Command
 - i. A major incident or incidents involving multiple sites and/or command posts may dictate the use of an Area Command structure.
 - ii. An Area Command structure may be set up at the Falmouth Central Fire Station, Falmouth Police Department EOC or another location to manage emergencies that have spread to multiple regions, towns, or sites. (Example: Public Health Emergencies, Flood with multiple hazard areas, ice storm).
- Termination
 - i. Command should be terminated when the incident has de-escalated to a point where all units have returned to service.
 - ii. The Incident Commander should survey the incident scene to ensure that Command can be terminated safely and effectively.
 - iii. The same standard used to establish Command applies to terminating Command. As long as a unit or units are still on scene, Command should remain in place.
 - iv. The Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that the necessary paperwork is completed that documents the incident. For hazardous materials incidents, the IAP must be written down and included with the incident paperwork.

5. Critical Functions

- Responsibilities
 - i. The Incident Commander is responsible for the following functions as required by the circumstances of the situations:
 1. Assume Command
 2. Initiate and Monitor personnel accountability
 3. Evaluate the situation (size-up)
 4. Initiate, maintain and control the communication process
 5. Develop the overall incident objectives, strategies, and assign resources
 6. Develop an appropriate organization
 7. Coordinate the Transfer of Command if needed
 8. Request and assign additional resources as required
 9. Provide periodic updates
 10. Return resources to service
 11. Terminate Command

6. Command Post

- The Command Post should be located in an area that is close enough to the scene to manage resources, but away from the “hot zone”.
- A green light may be used to signify the command post.
- For incidents involving mutual aid response, the Incident Commander should don the appropriate reflective vest and ensure other Command and General Staff do as well.
- Communications between the Incident Commander and Dispatch should take place on Falmouth Fire Primary, unless circumstances dictate otherwise (example: multiple calls at same time, repeater on back-up power, etc.)

7. Resource Tracking

- The Incident Commander should establish an appropriate accountability system based on the needs of the incident.
- The Incident Commander may assign a Safety Officer to perform Accountability of the incident.
- The Incident Commander or Safety Officer may use the tactical command board to track resources and situation status.

8. Assignments

- Unless a Safety Officer is established, the Incident Commander is responsible for the safety of all personnel.
- The Incident Commander should appoint Command Staff, General Staff, Branch Directors, and Division/Group Supervisors as needed to maintain a manageable span of control throughout the incident.

9. Mutual Aid Response

- When the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department responds to an incident outside the jurisdiction of the Falmouth Fire-EMS, the senior officer / firefighter / EMT should report to the command post upon arrival on scene. If **COMMAND** is not yet established, the senior Falmouth Fire-EMS Officer / Firefighter / EMT will establish **COMMAND** and function as the IC until a transfer of command has been completed to an officer / firefighter from the authority having jurisdiction.
- When other agencies respond to assist the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department, a senior officer / firefighter / EMT may report to the command post to assist the Falmouth Fire-EMS IC.
- A senior officer / firefighter / EMT from another agency may be needed at the Command Post to assist in communications via a frequency different from those used by the Falmouth Fire-EMS.

10. Training

- All members of the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department should complete IS700 (an introduction to the National Incident Management System) and IS100 (an introduction to the Incident Command System) within one year of joining Falmouth Fire-EMS.
- All Officers of the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department should complete ICS 200 (the National Fire Academy NIMS – ICS for the Fire Service (NIMS 100/200 or equivalent) within 1 year of their appointment as an officer.
- All Chief Officers (Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, Chief) of the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department should complete ICS 300 (Intermediate ICS) within 1 year of appointment as a Chief Officer.
- The Chief and Assistant Chief of the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department should complete ICS400 (Advanced ICS) and IS-800 (an introduction to the National Response Plan) within 1 years of appointment as an Assistant Chief or Chief.

These guidelines may be changed or altered by the Fire Chief at any time.