

SUBJECT: INCIDENT CRITIQUE	SECTION: 304.05
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PURPOSE

- A. To provide a means of objectively analyzing fire department operations in a post-emergency environment.
- B. To provide a continuing review and development process through which improved methods and operations may be realized.

POLICY

- A. A formal post-incident critique should be conducted for every major incident occurring within the fire department's jurisdiction.
- B. A major incident is defined as any incident which taxes the fire department's resources to the point where outside assistance must be summoned and extensively utilized, any incident which, by its very nature, presents unusual and/or challenging problems worthy of analysis, or any incident involving the serious injury or death of civilians or fire department personnel.
- C. Semi-formal and informal critiques should be conducted by fire department officers on an as needed basis, in an effort to provide training and overall improvement of fire department operations.

PROCEDURE

A. INFORMAL CRITIQUES

The informal critique simply involves an informal discussion of the events which transpired during an emergency incident.

1. The informal critique can be utilized at the company level after any type of an alarm to which the involved fire company (ies) may have responded.
2. Members of the involved company (ies) may simply meet together in quarters and informally discuss the various aspects of the incident.
3. A Company Officer should serve as the chairperson of the informal critique.
4. Training tips relating to the incident should be brought up during the discussion.
5. The critique emphasis must be on overall operational improvement and should not be designed to embarrass anyone.

B. SEMI-FORMAL CRITIQUE

The semi-formal critique is primarily designed for department discussion of emergency incidents.

1. As soon as possible, following an emergency incident, the Incident Commander (IC) may initiate (at his discretion) a semi-formal critique.
2. The IC should decide upon the time and place for the critique.
3. The IC should serve as chairperson of the semi-formal critique.
4. A plot plan of the incident, which can easily be seen by the group, should be provided at the location of the critique.
5. Discussion should begin with the involved facts of the incident include:
 - a. Date of the incident.
 - b. Time.
 - c. Location.
 - d. Weather conditions.
 - e. Building construction (if applicable).
 - f. Occupancy (if applicable).
 - g. Topography (if applicable).
 - h. Water supply.
6. Discussion of fire department operations should begin with the first officer or member on the scene, describing conditions upon arrival and initial actions and continue by allowing each involved officer and/or fire personnel (in order of arrival at scene) to describe the observations and actions of their particular company.
7. After a description of the facts and the operations has been completed, the discussion should be opened up for questions and answers and expression of opinions by all those present at the critique.
8. The emphasis must be on overall operational improvements and should not focus on embarrassing any individual or group.

C. FORMAL CRITIQUE

The formal critique is designed to involve all levels of the fire department. It is intended to be utilized as a method of detailed analysis of major emergency operations.

1. Based on the nature of the emergency, the Chief may initiate a formal critique.
2. The Chief should make arrangements for the time and place at which the critique should be conducted.
3. The Chief should also notify all outside agencies and departments which may have participated in the incident.
4. A plot plan and all other applicable visual aids should be coordinated by the Chief and provided for the incident critique.
5. The Chief should serve as chairman of the critique and shall appoint a scribe to take notes during the critique. The scribe should not be chosen from among the officers involved in the incident.

6. The critique should begin with a description of the involved facts, including:
 - a. Date.
 - b. Time.
 - c. Location.
 - d. Weather conditions.
 - e. Topography.
 - f. Water supply.
 - g. Occupancy (if applicable).
 - h. Building construction (if applicable).
 - i. Special conditions (such as traffic, crowds, etc.).
7. Fire Department operations should be discussed in chronological order by allowing the involved officers to recount and discuss their observations and actions in order of their arrival at the scene.
8. Involved non-fire department agencies should be allowed to describe their respective involvement of the incident.
9. Once the facts and a description of the operations involved have been presented, the discussion should be opened for questions and answers and expression of opinions from all those present at the critique.
10. The emphasis must be on overall operational improvement and should not focus on embarrassing any individual or group.
11. The Chief should conclude the critique by summarizing the key points involved and providing additional comments as may be necessary.
12. The Chief should prepare a summary of the incident critique and retain one copy on file and provide copies to all involved officers.

RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Incident Commander or Chief is responsible for initiation of the formal critique process following every major incident or whenever directed to do so by the Fire Chief.
- B. The Officer in Charge or Acting Officer in Charge is responsible for initiating semi-formal or informal incident critiques following any incident which may prompt numerous questions from subordinates and/or may (in the opinion of the O.I.C. or acting O.I.C.) provide a valuable training opportunity.
- C. Company Officers are responsible for initiating the informal incident critique process whenever an incident prompts numerous questions by subordinate personnel and/or may (in the opinion of the Company Officer) provide a valuable training opportunity.
- D. The Chief is responsible for serving as critique chairman at all formal critiques.
- E. The Assistant Chief is responsible for preparing a summary report based on information obtained during a formal critique and insuring that the Fire Chief, and the officers involved in the incident receive a copy of the summary. The Assistant Chief is also responsible for maintaining a file of all the formal critique summary reports.