

Interboro Mutual Aid Group

Operations Guideline

Subject: Safety Officer(s)

Effective Date: January 1, 2010

Review Date: July 2014

Purpose: This guideline is to aid and assist fire departments in complying with the regulatory requirements of NJAC 5:75-2.5 and to ensure that a safety officer is appointed at all scenes requiring a safety officer; establish the safety officer's position in the incident command system; define the role, responsibility, and authority of safety officers.

Scope: This guideline shall be utilized at every significant emergency event including but not limited to fires, hazardous materials incidents, roadway emergencies, utility emergencies, natural and man-made disasters, and other such emergencies that the fire department responds to.

Responsibility: This guideline shall apply to all members and all other emergency responders at the scene of a significant emergency regardless of their unit, agency or affiliation.

Procedure:

(a) An incident commander shall appoint a safety officer at every significant emergency event.

1. "Significant emergency event" means any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of an incident commander, **he or she cannot effectively monitor conditions to insure the safety of assigned personnel or he or she deems an operations section is needed or where firefighters are exposed to conditions immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH).**
2. Complex incidents or those that cover a large geographic area may require the appointment of assistant safety officers, who shall be assigned to branches, divisions, or groups.

(b) The following items shall govern the appointment of a safety officer:

1. The safety officer shall be assigned as early in the incident as possible and shall be knowledgeable in the actions being implemented;
2. The safety officer shall report directly to the incident commander;
3. The safety officer shall identify existing or potential hazards and inform command of those findings;
4. The safety officer shall recommend to the incident commander any changes to the incident action plan as a result of on-going surveys;

5. The safety officer shall have the authority to alter, suspend, or terminate any activity that is an unacceptable safety risk. The safety officer shall inform the incident commander and other affected operational personnel immediately if he or she changes any operational activities for safety reasons; and

6. When operating in hazardous positions, the safety officer shall be attired in appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA); have radio communication equipment; and be accompanied by another firefighter.

(c) If a safety officer has not been appointed, the incident commander shall be the safety officer.