



International
Association
of Fire Chiefs



National
Fire Protection
Association

Fire Officer

Principles and Practice
THIRD EDITION



Chapter 1 Introduction to the Fire Officer (Fire Officer I)

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Identify the requirements of a Fire Officer I.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Officer I.
- Describe the fire service in the United States.

Fire Officer I Objectives

- Describe the functions of management.
- Discuss the roles and regulations, policies, and standard operating procedures.

Introduction

- *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, NFPA 1021:*
 - Four levels of Fire Officer: I, II, III, and IV
 - Progressive sequence

Fire Officer Responsibilities

- Being a leader and supervisor
- Managing a budget for the station
- Understanding the response district
- Knowing operational procedures
- Being able to manage an incident

Fire Officer Responsibilities

- Understanding:
 - Fire prevention methods
 - Fire and building codes and ordinances
 - Records management system

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Supervises:
 - A single fire suppression unit
 - A small administrative group within a fire department
- Achieves goals by working through subordinates
- Prioritizes multiple demands

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Administrative duties:
 - Keeping records
 - Managing projects
 - Preparing budget requests
 - Initiating and completing station maintenance requisitions
 - Conducting preliminary investigations

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Supervisory duties:
 - Making work assignments
 - Ensuring health and safety procedures are followed

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Nonemergency duties:
 - Developing preincident plans
 - Providing company-level training
 - Delivering public education programs
 - Responding to community inquiries

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Emergency duties:
 - Supervising a group of fire fighters
 - Functioning as the initial arriving officer at the emergency scene
 - Performing scene size-up
 - Establishing Incident Management System
 - Developing and implementing an incident action plan

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Emergency duties (cont'd):
 - Deploying resources
 - Maintaining personnel accountability
 - Conducting the preliminary investigation
 - Securing the scene to preserve evidence
 - Conducting postincident analysis

Requirements of Fire Officer I

- Candidates are also required to meet Fire Fighter II requirements.
- Term used by International Association of Fire Chiefs: Supervising Fire Officer

Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Officer I

- Supervises and directs a single unit
- Instructs members on procedures
- Responds to alarms
- Assumes command of emergency scenes
- Administers emergency medical first aid

Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Officer I

- Oversees apparatus maintenance
- Receives direction and instruction from the fire captain and battalion chief
- Provides training on apparatus operations
- Evaluates performance
- Reads and applies procedures

Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Officer I

- Completes or maintains records
- Prepares necessary reports
- Performs preincident planning activities
- Conducts occupancy inspections
- Determines fire cause and origin
- Conducts public education programs
- Assists in fire safety inspections

Roles and Responsibilities of Fire Officer I

- Participates in and oversees equipment inspection and testing
- Works directly in firefighting activities
- Takes action on maintenance needs of equipment, buildings, and grounds
- Supervises and performs maintenance and cleaning work

Fire Service in the United States

- Originated as communities of citizens who responded to fires
- Today, there are different approaches:
 - Volunteer departments without pay
 - Volunteer departments paid by response
 - Combination career and volunteer or paid-on-call personnel
 - Career departments

History of the Fire Service

- 24 BC: Roman emperor Augustus Caesar created the Familia Publica.
- 60 AD: The emperor Nero established the Corps of Vigiles.

History of the Fire Service

- 1607: The first documented fire in North America was in Jamestown, Virginia.
- 1630: Boston established the first fire regulations in North America.
- 1735: The first organized volunteer fire company was established.

History of the Fire Service

- Two major fires in 1871 affected the development of the fire service and fire codes:
 - The Great Chicago Fire
 - Peshtigo, Wisconsin, fire



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Fire Equipment

- A progression:
 - Buckets
 - Hand-powered pumpers
 - Steam-powered pumpers
 - Machine-powered pumpers
 - Modern fire apparatus
- Development of municipal water systems

Communications

- Progression:
 - Fire warden or night watchman
 - Public call boxes
 - More immediate and effective communications systems

Communications

- Two-way radios and electronic amplification enable fire units and fire fighters to stay in contact.
 - Before they became available, the chief officer shouted commands through his trumpet.



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Building Codes

- Few building codes existed in Colonial times.
 - Building codes govern construction materials and frequently require built-in fire prevention and safety measures.
- Today, model codes are written by national organizations.

Paying for Fire Service

- Many early volunteer departments were funded by donations or subscriptions.
 - Many still rely on this funding model.

Paying for Fire Service



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- Fire insurance companies were established to help property owners cope with financial loss from fires.
 - Houses that had insurance were designated with a fire mark.

Training and Education

- The first fire fighters simply required strength and endurance.
- With more complex equipment, formal training and good judgment became more important.

Training and Education

- Sophisticated technical equipment:
 - Large vehicles
 - Radios
 - Thermal imaging cameras
 - Self-contained breathing apparatus
- The most important resource on the fire scene remains the fire fighter.

Fire Department Organization

- Fire service draws authority from:
 - Town
 - City
 - County
 - Township
 - Special fire district
- The fire chief is accountable to the governing body.

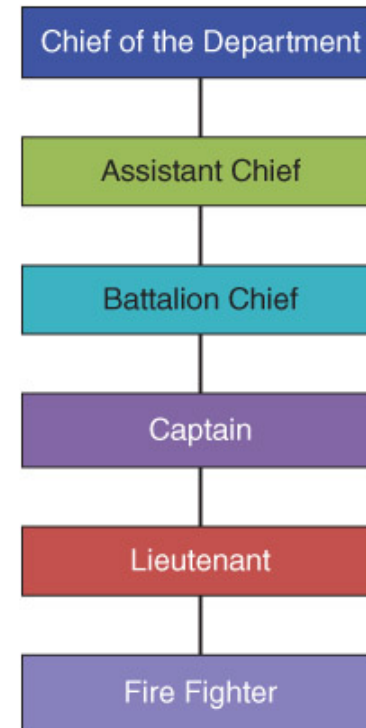
Chain of Command

- Creates structure for:
 - Managing the department
 - Directing fire-ground operations

Chain of Command

- Ranks vary by department, but the concept is generally the same.

Fire Department Organizational Chart



Basic Principles of Organization

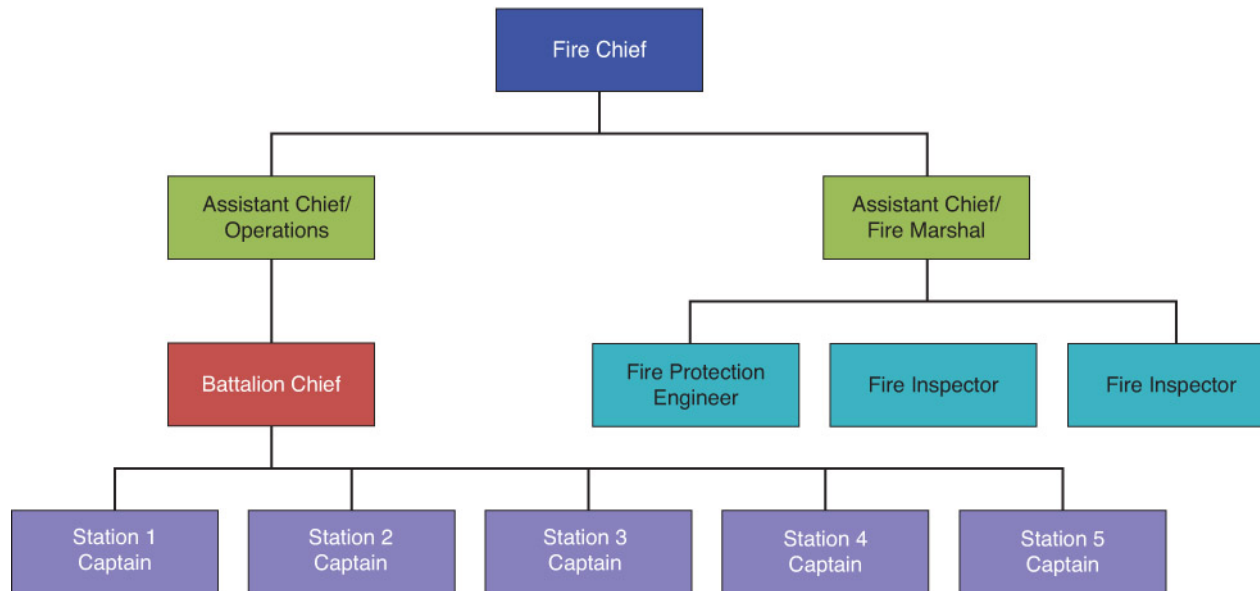
- Paramilitary style of leadership
- Structured based on four principles:
 - Unity of command
 - Span of control
 - Division of labor
 - Discipline

Unity of Command

- Each fire fighter answers to one supervisor.
- Each supervisor answers to one boss.
- A direct route of responsibility leads from the chief to the fire fighter.

Unity of Command

Organizational Chart for a Fire Department



Span of Control

- Maximum number of personnel or activities one individual can control:
 - Usually three to seven

Division of Labor

- Way of organizing an incident
- Breaks down the overall strategy into smaller tasks
- Prevents duplication of job assignments

Discipline

- Discipline includes:
 - Orders from superior officers
 - Standard operating procedures
 - Suggested operating guidelines
 - Policies
- Can be positive or corrective

Other Views of Organization

- By function
- By geography
- By staffing

The Functions of Management

- Planning
 - Developing a scheme, program, or method to accomplish an objective
- Organizing
 - Putting resources together into an orderly, functional, structured whole

The Functions of Management

- Leading
 - Guiding or directing a course of action
- Controlling
 - Restraining, regulating, governing, counteracting, or overpowering

Rules and Regulations

- Developed by government or government-authorized organizations
- No room for latitude or discretion
 - Example: Wearing a seat belt when riding in a vehicle

Policies

- Provide guidelines for present and future actions
- Often require judgment on the best course of action within the policy
- Example: Maintaining station sidewalk safety in winter

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- Written organizational directives that establish routine methods to follow for designated operations or actions
- Developed within the fire department
 - Example: Process for vertical ventilation

Ethics

- Most of the time, fire officers make ethical, “right” decisions.
- When unethical choices are made, there are negative consequences for the individual and the organization.

Ethics

- To make ethical choices and decisions:
 - Have a code of ethics.
 - Select employees who share values.
 - Ensure top management exhibits ethical behavior.
 - Have clear job goals.
 - Have performance appraisals.
 - Implement an ethics training program.

Ethics

- Three questions to ask about a decision:
 - What would my family and friends say if they knew?
 - Would I mind if the paper ran it as a headline story?
 - How does it make me feel about myself?

Summary

- The qualification standards for fire officers are documented in NFPA 1021.
- At the Fire Officer I level, the emphasis is placed on accomplishing goals and objectives through subordinates.
- The officer has to apply policies, procedures, and rules to subordinates.

Summary

- The U.S. fire service originated as communities of citizens.
- Building codes prevent, limit, and contain fires.
- Formalized training is important.
- The chain of command creates a structure for the fire department.

Summary

- The fire department uses a paramilitary style of leadership.
- There are several different ways to look at the organization of a fire department.
- Four functions of managing: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Summary

- Fire officers must know department's regulations, policies, and SOPs.
- Ethical choices are based on values.