
Fire and Rescue Incident Command Training Course: Tactics, Water Supply and Crew Safety

5 – 9 April 2027
Cape town





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Programme Summary

Fire and Rescue Incident Command, covering tactics, water supply and crew safety, is the subject of this five-day training course for fire chiefs, industrial brigade heads and emergency services directors, ending in an incident command plan for one hazard scenario. Fire incident command breaks down when size-up is rushed, water supply is assumed and crews are not tracked. The programme moves from principles, through diagnosis, to design of a command and safety structure, then to application on one scenario. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this Fire and Rescue Incident Command programme for senior commanders.

The Business Case

When command decisions at a fire rest on habit, crews enter buildings without a clear strategy, water runs short at the critical moment and nobody can say who is inside. Leaders who can set strategy, test resource plans and enforce accountability reduce harm to personnel, protect assets and communities, and give boards and insurers a defensible record of how decisions were made.

- Firefighter Safety: Improves as accountability and rapid intervention arrangements are set before entry.
- Response Effectiveness: Rises as strategy, tactics and resources are matched to the incident.
- Asset Protection: Grows as water supply and exposure protection are planned in advance.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Incident Command System: It structures the command roles and span of control built in Session 1.
- NFPA 1561: It frames the incident management and command safety arrangements reviewed in Session 4.
- NFPA 1710: It guides the deployment and response-time analysis applied in Session 3.
- Human factors in decision making: They inform the stress and fatigue controls tested in Session 2.

Intended Participants

- Chiefs who set operating policy for fire and rescue services.
- Brigade heads who maintain readiness at industrial and port sites.
- Directors who fund appliances, staffing and water infrastructure.
- Incident commanders who direct multi-agency responses to large fires.

The programme serves municipal fire services, oil and gas facilities, airports and ports, and suits mixed groups where operational, financial and risk colleagues must agree one command approach.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a command structure suited to the scale of an incident.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate a fire scene and rank its hazards before committing crews.
3. Participants will be able to calculate water supply needs and identify gaps in sources and delivery.
4. Participants will be able to justify strategy and tactics for a given fire scenario.
5. Participants will be able to design accountability and rapid intervention arrangements for crew safety.
6. Participants will be able to appraise a response against deployment measures and report the findings.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Fire and Rescue Incident Command Principles

Who commands what, and how is the incident organised?

- Incident Command System Roles
- Span of Control Model
- Strategy Versus Tactics Matrix
- Command Handover Briefing
- Incident Action Plan Format

Day 2: Size-Up and Decision Diagnosis

What is happening, and what could go wrong before crews enter?

- Building and Fuel Hazard Survey
- Fire Behaviour Indicators
- Risk-Benefit Decision Rule
- Stress and Fatigue Indicators
- Resource Gap Register

Day 3: Water Supply and Deployment Design

Is enough water and enough crew available, and when?

- Water Demand Calculation Sheet
- Source and Relay Layout
- Appliance and Staffing Plan
- Response Time Analysis
- Exposure Protection Plan



Day 4: Crew Safety and Command Governance

How are crews tracked, rescued and protected?

- Personnel Accountability Board
- Rapid Intervention Crew Plan
- Safety Officer Checklist
- Mayday Procedure Design
- Post-Incident Review Template

Day 5: Applying Fire and Rescue Incident Command to One Scenario

Is the command plan ready to be used and reviewed?

- Applying the Session 2 Size-Up to the Chosen Scenario
- Testing the Session 3 Water Plan Under Failure
- Checking the Session 4 Safety Arrangements
- Presenting the Command Decision Record
- Completing the Incident Command Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a scenario simulation built on anonymised incident reports, site plans, hydrant and tanker data and staffing rosters. Participants rotate through the roles of incident commander, safety officer and logistics lead, take decisions under changing information and record what evidence supported each choice. Facilitated reviews then compare the decisions with the arrangements set out in the principles.

- Suggested activity: Commanding a warehouse fire simulation with a failing water source.
- Suggested activity: Running a personnel accountability drill on a paper site plan.
- Suggested activity: Presenting a post-incident review to a panel acting as a board.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an incident command plan for one hazard scenario. It holds a command structure, a size-up summary, a water supply calculation, a crew safety arrangement and review measures. The plan is used to brief duty commanders, support resource requests to the funding body and shape the next training exercise, so that command practice stays open to review.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is fire and rescue incident command suitable for officers without recent operational duty?

Yes. Fire and rescue incident command is taught at senior level and assumes prior fire service or emergency management experience, not recent duty on the fireground.

Which standards does fire and rescue incident command training rest on?

Fire and rescue incident command training rests on the Incident Command System, NFPA 1561, NFPA 1710 and human factors research on decision making.

How is the incident command plan from fire and rescue incident command used at work?

You use the incident command plan to brief duty commanders, justify resource requests and design the next exercise.

How does fire and rescue incident command differ from a programme on hazardous materials response?

Fire and rescue incident command centres on strategy, water supply and crew safety at fires, while a hazardous materials programme centres on chemical identification and containment.