



Fact Sheet

COMMAND AND CONTROL

May 2017

Why did a new policy have to be created?

Clarity of who from Fire and Emergency New Zealand is in control of an incident is important to keep our people, people from other agencies and the public safe.

Who is in control of an incident is currently defined by roles, boundaries and rules set out in the Fire Service Act and the Forest and Rural Fires Act. Both of these will be repealed on 1 July 2017, and replaced by the new Fire and Emergency New Zealand legislation.

The new legislation doesn't have as much detail about roles, boundaries and rules and so this detail needs to be set out in operational policy.

What is the difference between "control" and "command"?

Under the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS):

- "control" operates horizontally across an incident
- "command" operates vertically within an incident, and describes the internal ownership, administrative responsibility, and detailed direction of personnel and resources

For example, an urban officer may be in control of an incident, but a rural officer would command the rural resources, and vice versa.

Why is it only interim?

The Board has decided to keep separate urban and rural structures, and keep existing boundaries and roles for Day One. The interim policy reflects this decision.

The Board has also made it clear that it wants to move to a more unified structure in the future, and so the policy will need to be rewritten when that happens.

Why have personnel been listed in only three bands? I.e. senior officer, officer, and non-officer.

It needs to be clear that if a firefighter (non-officer) is in control of an incident then an arriving officer must take control, regardless of which district they are from. Senior officers make the final call if there is any uncertainty about who should be in control.

Does this mean a Station Officer has the same rank as a Chief Fire Officer?

No, the policy doesn't make any changes to rank structures.

Why is a Senior Firefighter and Crew Leader considered an Officer under this policy?

Both Senior Firefighters who are Station Officer qualified, and Crew Leaders who are appointed as Rural Fire Officers are recognised as an officer within the policy. This enables them to take control of an incident if required.



What do the new helmet markings look like?

The exact mechanism of identification is yet to be confirmed. A range of options are being considered.

Why are we still using the old 'districts' for response?

The Board has decided to keep existing boundaries for Day One.

The Board has also made it clear that it wants to move to a more unified structure in the future, and so boundaries and districts will need to be reconsidered when that happens.

Have district boundaries changed?

No, not for Day One. What you knew as your district or area boundaries for both urban and rural response remain as they are.

Why is there such a focus on working together?

There are two key reasons:

1. Safety, health and wellbeing – WorkSafe's guidance on the Health and Safety at Work Act requires people to "consult, cooperate and coordinate" and the policy reflects this.
2. Duty to volunteers – the new Fire and Emergency New Zealand legislation places a duty on the organisation to "recognise, respect, and promote the contribution of FENZ volunteers" and "develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain, and strengthen the capability of FENZ volunteers".

What is a more senior officer?

There are times when the officer in control of an escalating incident may have concerns about their ability to control that incident. At those times a more senior officer can take control.

For this policy it is defined as "The officer who is more qualified, skilled and experienced".

What is meant by more qualified, skilled, and experienced?

People are coming together from different organisations and with different backgrounds. On Day One there won't be a single, unified qualifications or rank structure.

The policy recognises that the officer with the most qualifications may not have the most experience, and vice versa. It also allows for considering specialist technical skills or local knowledge.

Officers are expected to have a conversation about the risks that are present and to consider qualifications, skills and experience when deciding who is the right person to be in control to manage those risks.

Why should an in-district officer hand over to an out-of-district officer?

The officer may recognise that the incident's complexity is exceeding their level of skill and experience. In these instances, a handover to a more senior out-of-district officer is appropriate.

Why should an officer hand over to a person of the same rank?

An officer may recognise that the other officer has more specialist skills and experience e.g. in hazardous substances, or wildfire behaviour.

What if I arrive as a more senior officer and I need to take over straight away?

The policy allows for urgent and time critical hand over of control where failure to do so will result in a significant risk to safety of those present. However, efficient and effective communications between officers is critical during the transfer process.

If I mentor and monitor an officer and don't take over, why am I still accountable for the incident?

This is to make it clear that mentoring and monitoring is an active, not a passive role. If the incident is deteriorating you are expected to take control if required.

Why has 'vegetation fires' and 'other incidents' been used to determine who will control an incident?

Vegetation fires are the core business of our rural personnel and the policy gives them control of these incidents within rural boundaries. Many voluntary rural fire forces respond to other incident types as well. Generally urban personnel are in a better position to take control of "other incidents".