

FIRE FIGHTERS GUIDANCE NOTE # 2-4

ISSUE: INCIDENT SAFETY OFFICER

The Incident Commander (IC) is ultimately responsible for Firefighter health and safety at the fire scene. Given the complex nature of fire fighting activities, the IC should consider establishing a safety sector to assist with managing scene safety. A safety sector should be established at any incident where the Incident Commander's span of control exceeds a safe operational level, or at incidents where there is a higher than normal risk to firefighter's health and safety.

Any competent person (rank or no rank) who is qualified because of knowledge, training and experience may be designated the Incident Safety Officer (ISO) by the IC.

The Safety Sector is managed by the ISO, and may include assistants.

A Department's written operational guidelines should establish:

- When a Safety Sector should be established.
- Who should be appointed ISO based on the individual department's operations and resources?
- When and under what authority the ISO can unilaterally alter, suspend or terminate dangerous or life threatening operations.
- That the presence of an on scene ISO in no way diminishes the responsibility of individual Officers and the IC for the safety of workers under their direction.
- The roles and responsibilities of an ISO.
- That any person that may be assigned to act as the ISO by the IC requires training on their responsibilities before being assigned.
- That the ISO has to be able to integrate with the communication system being used.
- That the ISO should monitor departmental SOP/OG regarding health and safety.
- How the ISO is to be identified at the scene.