

# Monmouth County Fire Academy

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## Effective Radio Communications & Scene Reporting

# Communications

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- *“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”* \_\_\_\_\_

*George Bernard Shaw*

# Communications



- **Communication is the fire departments circulatory system.**
- **There is no leadership if there is no communication....and vice-versa**

# Communications



- Fire ground communication is a discipline that imposes control and structure onto conditions that are unstructured and uncontrolled.
- Fire ground communications include radio transmissions, verbal orders, hand signals, indicator and warning lights, sounds, tones, color codes and signs.

# Communications

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- Much fireground communication takes place long before anyone gets to the fire or emergency scene.
- Good fireground communication is a function of solid SOP's, pre-planning, policies, training and equipment.

# Communications

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- Effective fire ground communication is standardized, clear, concise and readily understood.
- Must be practiced when nothing is showing
- Great soft environment communicators are often the best emergency ground communicators.
  - You can't just get good because there is a fire or because you are the IC

# Communications

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- **Good reports are a practiced skill**
- **You need to think before you transmit**
- **Words should not be sprayed around like insect repellent.**
- **Communication policies are the backbone of good communications, solid understanding, and training**

# Communications

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- **Soft and semi-soft communication lapses routinely come home to roost on the fire ground.**
- ***"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."***  
**\_\_\_\_ Mark Twain**



# Communications

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- **Communication requires listening and comprehension. If they don't understand what you say, they can't do what you say.**
- ***ALL orders should be acknowledged by repeating the gist of the order***
  - ***"10-4" does not cut it***

# Communications

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- **25 Watt Mobile Step on 5 Watt Portables Every Time**
  - Wait until the air is clear
  - Have something to say
  - Hello You, This is Me
  - Slow down / Sound Bored
- **Alarms in Progress – Stay off radio**
  - If in or at Quarters, Use Phone
  - Don't Ask for Instructions While Responding
  - Don't give long-winded instructions



**Good  
Communications  
is a Matter of  
Discipline**

# What to Avoid

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- **No Screaming...Ever!!!**
- **No Mouth Diarrhea**
  - **You are NOT the most important Person on the Radio**
- **No Foul Language**
- **No Mumbling**
- **Know your radio delays – no cut offs**

# What to Avoid

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- **Plain Text – No Codes**
- **No Insane Numbering System**
  - **Not NIMS compliant**
- **No “localisms”**
- **Command has Priority unless.....**
- **No competing frequencies**
  - **Multiple frequency firegrounds**
- **No Slowing the Companies Down or Proceed with Caution**

# Accountability and Mutual Aid

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- Do you use mutual aid for most fires?
- Is this the only time you see them?
- Is there training / planning?
- Are there any policies?

The day of the incident is NOT the day to figure this out

Leads to Tower of Babel firefighting

# Firefighter LODD report New York 2014

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- **Identified Contributing Factors:**
  - Lack of crew integrity, FF and scene discipline
  - Span of control violations
  - Ineffective personnel accountability
  - Lack of assigned RIC (RIC to work?)
  - Lack of regular / standardized training between M/A depts.
  - Lack of common policy & procedure between M/A depts.
  - Ineffective radio communications

All too familiar??

Is your current operation a disaster waiting to happen??

# Technology

- **Modern Tools of Command**
  - **Toughbook**
  - **Cell Phone**
  - **Google Earth**
  - **Google Maps**
  - **Drones**



# Scene Reports

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- **Purpose and benefits**
  - Paint a picture
  - Same Page Concept
  - Preparation of assignments
  - Standardized Reporting
- **Arrival Report**
- **Initial Progress Report**
- **Division Reports**
- **Command Progress Reports**

# Arrival Report

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- **Company Designation / Address**
- **Height**
- **Construction**
- **Occupancy**
- **Roof Type**
- **Attached / Unattached**
- **Description of Conditions**
- **Actions Being Taken**
- **Establishment of Command**
- **Additional Alarms??**

# Arrival Report

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- **Company Designation / Address**
  - **Who Are You??**
    - **Company designation**
  - **Where Are You?**
    - **Address**
  
- **Height**
  - **How many stories?**

# Arrival Report

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- **Construction**
  - **Fire Resistive**
  - **Non-Combustible**
  - **Ordinary**
  - **Heavy Timber**
  - **Wood Frame**
  - **Truss??**

# Arrival Report

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- **Occupancy Status and Type**
- **Occupied / Unoccupied / Vacant**
  - Residential
  - Commercial
  - Assembly
  - Storage
  - Mixed-Use
- **Roof Type**
  - Flat
  - Peaked
  - Bowstring Truss
- **Attached / Unattached**

# Arrival Report

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- **Description of Conditions – What's Up?**
  - Nothing Showing
  - Smoke Showing
  - Working Fire
  - Fully Involved
- **Actions Being Taken – What R U Doing??**
  - Investigating
  - Stretching an Attack Line
  - Primary Search
- **Establishment of Command**
  - The Arrival Report **MUST NAME** Command

# Assuming Command

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- **Get Briefing from Outgoing IC**
  - Situation
  - Deployment
  - Resources
  - Don't Be in a Rush – Get info you need before letting go of Outgoing IC
- **Announce Command transfer over Radio**



# Initial Progress Report

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- **Given by the IC within 5 minutes of the operation**
  - **Better description of what we have**
  - **Describes what is going on**
  - **Describes the area**
  - **Describes what we have done**
  - **Describes situation**



[video](#)



# Initial Progress Report

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- **State:**
  - **Dispatch from Name of Command**
  - **Address**
  - **Height**
  - **Construction**
  - **Occupancy Status and Type**
  - **Roof type**
- **Follows the Arrival Report**

# Initial Progress Report

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- **State:**
  - **Fire and Smoke Conditions**
    - Heavy / Medium / Light
    - Where?
    - Is it extending
  - **ID and describe exposures**
    - All 4 sides – Alpha through Delta
    - Height / Construction / Distance / Threatened? / Involved?

# Initial Progress Report

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- **State:**
  - **Actions Thus Far**
    - Lines stretched and where
    - Charged / Operating / Not charged
    - Primary search results
    - Ventilation Profile
  - **Fire Status**
    - Doubtful
    - Probable
    - Unchanged
    - Improving
    - Under Control

# Command Limitations

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- **Virtually ALL Command problems come from areas he/she can't see**

- **Rear**
- **Roof**
- **Shafts**
- **Interior**
- **Exposures**

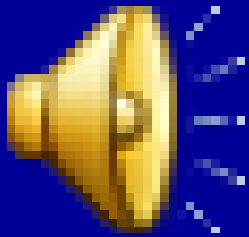
**BE NOSY!!!!!!**

**TIMELY PROGRESS REPORTS FROM ALL  
AREAS HELP DEFEAT THIS HANDICAP**

# Division Progress Report

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- **Command Does not Exist on an Island**
- **Progress Reports at Regular Intervals Assist I.C. in Evaluating Action Plan**



Delta Division

- **Conditions**
- **Actions**
- **Resources**

# Command Progress Report Information

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- **Actions Underway or Completed**
  - Eg. Line Placement and Status
  - Ventilation Progress
  - Search Results
  - Extension checks
  - Exposure Status
- **Incident Status Report**
  - Doubtful Will Hold
  - Probable Will Hold
  - Situation Improving or Unchanged
  - Under-Control

# Engine Company Progress Report

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**"CAR"**

- **Conditions Encountered**
  - Fire Conditions (Fire, Smoke, Heat)
  - Building Conditions
- **Actions Taken**
  - Lines Stretched and/or Operating
  - Line Effectiveness (Progress eg. Fire Darkening, Need Additional Lines)
- **Resources Needed**
  - Back-up Lines (Tactical Reserve)
  - Relief for Initial Attack Crews

# Ladder Progress Report

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- **Conditions Encountered**

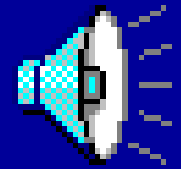
- Location of Life Hazards
- Exposure Concerns
- Location and Extent of Fire and Smoke
- Building Conditions (Shafts, Rear of Building, Roof, Floor Above)
- Unusual Conditions
  - ❖ Haz/Mat, Attack Dogs, Entry Problems, Man Traps

**"CAR"**



# Ladder Company Progress Report

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- **Actions Taken**
  - Search Results (Primary and Secondary)
  - Ventilation In Progress/Completed (Roof Opened, Horizontal Ventilation In Progress)
  - Extension Profile (Get Ahead of Fire or You Lose)
  - Utility Control

# Ladder Company Progress Report

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- **Resources Needed**
  - **Required Relief**
  - **Reinforce Priority/Problems Areas**
    - ❖ **Roof**
    - ❖ **Floor Above**
    - ❖ **Exposures**
    - ❖ **Rear Of Structure (People Do Jump)**