

Identifying Methods for Incident Command Training

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed:  _____

Abstract

The goal of an incident commander is the effective management of an emergency scene while protecting lives, limiting property destruction, and creating a conducive environment for rescuers to work safely. The problem was, officers at Largo Fire Rescue were not receiving incident command training, and opportunities to prepare managers for this responsibility were missed. The purpose of this descriptive research was to identify methods for officers at Largo Fire Rescue to gain incident command training. The research questions were: a) What incident command training do officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess? b) What are other fire departments utilizing to train officers for incident command? c) What methods can Largo Fire Rescue utilize to provide incident command training for its officers? The research was conducted by utilizing books, studies, personal interviews, magazine articles, and the internet to gain information on incident command training. The results demonstrated a need for incident command training. The author recommended a department sponsored training program with specific changes as a result of this research.

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Control of any fire begins with control of the fireground, and fire service personnel of any rank may find themselves in the role of incident commander. That individual is responsible for everything that occurs on the fireground, as well as firefighters and civilians alike (Avilo, 2008).

Decisions made while coordinating incident mitigation can influence progress and be the difference between a successful or unsuccessful outcome. According to the United States Fire Administration (2015), “Twenty-five firefighters were killed in 2014 while performing fireground operations.” Fireground operations such as fighting a fire, performing a rescue, and other emergency operations are duties associated with risk and tragedies do occur; however, perils can be reduced by implementing improvements in training, emergency operations, and firefighter health and safety (USFA, 2015).

Because fireground operations pose a risk, every fire officer should be prepared to function as an initial incident commander, as well as a company-level supervisor within the Incident Command System (ICS). That officer has the initial responsibility to establish command and manage the incident, at least until a higher-ranking officer arrives. The fire officer needs to establish the basic command and control structure and follow appropriate incident management procedures (Ward, NFPA, & IAFC, 2005).

The incident commander’s job is to coordinate on-scene emergency workers and lead the decision-making process. Klaene and Sanders (2008) write, “The incident commander’s primary strategic considerations are life safety, extinguishment, and property conservation.”

Knowledge on how to manage emergency incidents is key for those who serve as incident commanders. Training, preparation, education, and experience afford great benefits, but one

must not receive more credence than the other. According to Clark (1986), “One of the most expensive schools in the world is the school of firefighting experience.” That costs billions of dollars and takes time to acquire; therefore, the costs associated makes it a high price to pay (Clark, 1986).

The problem is, officers at Largo Fire Rescue are not currently receiving incident command training. Lieutenants, district chiefs, assistant chiefs, and division chiefs at Largo Fire Rescue all serve as incident commanders when such needs arise. At the present time, these individuals are not receiving incident command training. Because of this, our department is missing an opportunity to provide officers with training to perfect the skills necessary for incident command.

The purpose of this research is to identify methods for officers at Largo Fire Rescue to gain incident command training. Knowledge gained will be utilized to identify mechanisms which Largo Fire Rescue could employ to address the training problem.

The research questions I will ask include:

1. What incident command training do officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess?
2. What are other fire departments utilizing to train officers for incident command?
3. What methods can Largo Fire Rescue utilize to provide incident command training for its officers?

The purpose of this descriptive research is to determine methods to improve incident command training at Largo Fire Rescue. The approach will describe the current level of incident command training officers at Largo Fire Rescue (LFR) possess, methods other departments are utilizing to train officers for incident command, and methods LFR could utilize to train its officers on the use of incident command.

Fire and non-fire related data will be utilized to research the subject of incident command training. Questionnaires and interviews will also be conducted to gain information, clarify the problem, and to describe solutions.

Once the research has been completed, the results will be utilized to clarify implications of the findings. Lastly, recommendations for addressing the lack of incident command training at LFR will be described based on information learned in conducting the research.

Background and Significance

Largo Fire Rescue is centrally located within Pinellas County on the west coast of Florida. Fire protection in Pinellas County is provided by 19 municipal and independent special district fire departments. Every fire department in Pinellas County has entered into a written automatic aid agreement, which ensures that the closest unit responds to all emergency fire or EMS calls, regardless of location or jurisdiction. Dispatching for all fire departments is provided in a single communication center operated by Pinellas County (Largo Fire Rescue (LFR), 2014).

Largo is the third largest municipality in Pinellas County, with a population of more than 80,000 people. Largo Fire Rescue serves an area of approximately 30.5-square-miles. Pinellas County is the fifth most populated county in the state with 929,050 residents and is the most densely populated with 4,407 persons per square mile. Approximately 22.5 percent of the population are aged 65 and over. A key indicator of the economic stability and strength of Pinellas County is tourism. Additionally, the percentage of Largo's population aged 85 years of age or older doubled between 1999 and 2000, and comprises 6.1% of the population (LFR, 2014).

Largo's service district is primarily residential in nature, with a considerable concentration of mobile home parks. Industry in the district is comprised mostly of retail and

service businesses. Also within the fire district are approximately 40 assisted living facilities and 300 institutional facilities (LFR, 2014).

“The mission of Largo Fire Rescue is to provide education, prevention, and emergency services to safeguard the lives and property of the community” (LFR, 2014). Firefighting personnel are assigned to one of six stations, one of three shifts, work 24 hours on duty, and 48 hours off duty. The firefighters work a 50.2-hour work week, receiving one shift off without pay every 28 calendar days to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The operation's division has the largest allocation of personnel, a total of 126 people are assigned for the completion of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) duties; 42 per shift. These personnel currently staff five advanced life support (ALS) engines, two ALS rescues, two ALS squads, one ALS truck, and one basic life support (BLS) truck. Each shift is managed by two district fire chiefs (LFR, 2014).

The professional standards and operations divisions encompass all emergency services related to response and mitigation for medical-related calls and non-medical calls for service. Included in this category are: medical calls, trauma calls, vehicle accidents, technical rescues, hazardous materials incidents, structure fires, bomb threats, gas leaks, aero-medical landing zones, and water rescues. The department strives to provide a 5-minute or less response time to emergency calls (LFR, 2014).

The department's front-line apparatus includes two ladder trucks, five fire engines, two squads, two rescue units, and two district chiefs. Minimum staffing for apparatus is as follows: fire trucks and engines are staffed with three firefighters, squads and rescues are staffed with two firefighters, and each district chief vehicle is staffed with one chief officer. For fire suppression

incidents, a minimum of three engines, one ladder truck, one squad, one rescue, and two district chiefs respond (LFR, 2014).

	Station Address	Equipment
38	7630 Ulmerton Road Largo, FL 33771	1 – ALS Engine 1 – ALS Squad 2 – Hazmat Vehicles 1 – District Chief Vehicle 1 – Foam Trailer
39	12398 134 th Avenue, North Largo, FL 33774	1 – ALS Engine 1 – ALS Squad
40	2990 Whitney Road Clearwater, FL 33760	1 – ALS Engine
41	180 4 th Street, SW Largo, FL 33770	1 – ALS Engine 1 – ALS Rescue 1 – Aerial Platform Truck 1 – District Chief Vehicle
42	151 Belcher Road, North Largo, FL 33771	1 – ALS Truck 1 – ALS Rescue 1 – Brush Truck 1 – Technical Rescue Truck
43	682 Indian Rocks Road Belleair Bluffs, FL 33770	1 – ALS Engine

In 2014, Largo Fire Rescue responded to 25,087 calls for service. Eight-nine percent of those calls were emergency medical calls and eleven percent were non-medical, fire based calls for service (LFR, 2014).

Largo Fire Rescue was dispatched to 302 structure fire incidents in 2014, 23 of which were considered working fires. A working fire is declared when a fire is beyond the incipient stage, an attack line is in operation, or when three or more units are involved in mitigating the incident (LFR, 2014). Total property damage for working fires in 2014 was \$1,054,076, and \$223,285 for fires (other). Fire (other) is classified as brush fires, fires outside of a structure, and vehicle fires. Total property damage of all fires in 2014 was \$1,277,361 (LFR, 2014).

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) collects information on municipal fire protection efforts in communities throughout the United States. In each of those communities, ISO analyzes the relevant data using a Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). ISO then assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria (LFR, 2014). Largo Fire Rescue recently received an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of class one.

The lack of incident command training, and why it is a problem at Largo Fire Rescue will now be discussed. The three reasons this problem exists at Largo Fire Rescue are organizational turnover, no obvious need identified, and inadequate incident command training.

The first reason why the problem exists is related to officers at LFR leaving the organization. Largo Fire Rescue has experienced officer turnover due to retirements and promotions. In the past twenty-four months, two district chiefs and one lieutenant have retired. In addition, two district chiefs and two assistant chief positions have been filled by lieutenants in recent promotions. The turnover in ranks is not unique to recent times, over the past ten years a similar frequency of turnover has also been evident. The department's pension plan offers

firefighters the ability to retire once 23 years of service is attained; therefore, many have chosen to enjoy this benefit and seek second careers elsewhere.

These retirements also elicited promotion opportunities for firefighters to become company officers, or lieutenants. Several firefighters were recipients of promotion to the rank of lieutenant in recent years. The promotions placed new company officers into supervisor roles and in time required each to serve as fireground and/or incident commanders. Many of these newly promoted lieutenants have limited years of experience in firefighting and incident command. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of the newly promoted officers in utilization of incident command exists primarily due to each individual's personal commitment to ascertain the training.

The second reason this problem exists is due to need and demand, or the lack thereof. No obvious incident command training demand or need was ever indicated. LFR officers routinely handled incidents utilizing incident command, and minor areas to improve upon were always addressed directly with the affected individual. Critiques were routinely utilized on scene and feedback or comments on how to improve were always discussed. More often than not, these critiques addressed deficiencies and mistakes were rectified immediately. The result of this feedback and on-the-spot corrections prevented reoccurrence of improper command techniques. Hence, no gross patterns, issues, or deficiencies drew attention and demanded the department organize to establish an incident command training program.

The third reason this problem exists is due to inadequate incident command training and officer development. The department has focused their attention on other areas of development for officers and firefighters, with areas such as engine company operations, response to high-rise incidents, and vehicle extrication techniques being a few examples of performance targeted. The

department placed incident command training lower on its list of training needs because no urgency for incident command training was identified or declared by staff within the organization. Higher frequency actions performed by firefighters required attention and were areas of training deemed immediate.

This study is significant to LFR for four reasons: Largo Fire Rescue has a need to utilize incident command to mitigate emergencies, no current incident command training exists within the organization, and the study relates to both the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) strategic plan and lessons learned at the National Fire Academy's Executive Development class.

The first reason this study is significant to Largo Fire Rescue is based on a need for effective incident command management. Incidents of various size, degree, and significance routinely occur within our fire district. Small incidents with two vehicles involved in a motor vehicle crash, or larger incidents such as a multi-agency, three-alarm commercial fire which occurred in July of 2015 are incidents which potentially present Largo Fire Rescue commanders with significant challenges. Because of this potential, the need for incident command training is present.

The study is also significant to Largo Fire Rescue because officers within the department currently do not receive incident command training. Training centers on other requirements such as but not limited to engine company operations, extrication techniques, driver safety, and high-rise operations. Additionally, the City of Largo human resources department sponsors city-wide supervisory training on a quarterly basis for professional development. Topics covered in the city-wide training include dealing with difficult people, time management, performance evaluations and feedback, and technical writing. The training received in these classes assists in the performance of administrative fire department duties. Officers at Largo Fire Rescue do

receive incident command exposure; however, a dedicated training program for officers to improve upon the management of incident command is not in place.

The significance of this study for Largo Fire Rescue is beneficial in order to address goal number one of the USFA's strategic plan. That goal is to reduce fire and life safety risk through preparedness, prevention and mitigation (United States Fire Administration (USFA), 2014). Training and preparation of incident commanders will move the department toward positive enhancements and help reduce fire and life safety risks. As mentioned earlier, Largo Fire Rescue officially had 23 working fires in its fire district in 2014 and these fires involved dedicated actions to mitigate active fire situations (LFR, 2014). Hose lines were pulled, water supply was established, and formalized command systems were put into place at these fire scenes. Each incident was dealt with in accordance to department standard operating procedures (SOPs) and all incidents were evaluated upon conclusion utilizing an after-action critique. The overwhelming majority of these situations were commanded well; however, at each incident recommendations were noted for improvement. The recognized areas of improvement discussed in the after-action critiques for those who commanded firegrounds and other incidents eventually demonstrated to staff officers a need for training and future development. The training and development of officers at Largo Fire Rescue will solidify the organizations' resolve to better prepare, prevent, and mitigate fire and life safety risks, a goal of the USFA's strategic plan (USFA, 2014).

Lessons learned while attending the Executive Development course assists the author in performing research to address Largo Fire Rescue's lack of incident command training as well. The Executive Development course provides a framework for performing adaptive work. The USFA (2016) writes, "The three primary themes of the course are leadership, research, and change." The course provides an opportunity for fire service personnel to grow, and the author

will utilize the experience to research and address organizational issues. By examining theory, case-study analysis, reflection, and introspection, the author learned how to enhance personal and organizational development and engage in applied research. These efforts assist the author in exploring change at Largo Fire Rescue.

The problem with no incident command training for officers and its impact in the past have been described; however, the present and future implications of this deficiency must also be examined. Failure to address the lack of incident command training our officers receive exacerbates the lack of development for department personnel. The implications of this for present and future operations limits our abilities to improve in mitigating emergency incidents. Inactivity to address this problem also stands contrary to recommendations of the USFA.

Literature Review

The first question of this research project sought to identify the current level of incident command training officers at Largo Fire Rescue possess. Outside agencies or organizations are incapable of evaluating incident command training Largo Fire Rescue officers currently possess without visiting our department and inspecting training records. Therefore, I propose a look into how others evaluate current levels of proficiency, determine if their training needs are adequate, and assist employees in obtaining the knowledge essential for completion of assigned responsibilities. To view how others deal with similar problems is beneficial, for their actions and approach may provide information not previously considered. The correlation is relevant to this study because it deals with comprehending levels of training our current officers possess. The insight gleaned serves as a foundation for research into addressing the author's problem statement.

The Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) writes about understanding levels of employee proficiency. According to SHRM, the possession of knowledge one needs in their industry is identified as clusters. They describe competency as a cluster of attributes with knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) being essential to the effective performance of a job. Furthermore, the competency model defines requirements for effective performance in a job, profession, or organization (Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), 2016).

The United States Army utilizes evaluations for employee development. The evaluations gather feedback and data from training and determine if programs are appropriate and intended training is provided. These evaluations verify training objectives are met, qualified graduates are produced, required training is received, quality instruction is delivered, and training is supported. The evaluations also aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of training by determining if

soldiers meet job performance requirements, require the instruction received, or need additional instruction not received. Overall, evaluations determine if the training provided meets the Army's needs (United States Army (US Army), 2004).

A slightly different view on addressing employees' proficiency is taken by Silberman in his book *Active Training*. According to Silberman (1996), "Building a training program may not always be the initial action to take in employee development." He goes on to explain how the desire to solve problems often ends up with the creation of a training program; however, training is not always the right solution. Problems might exist due to lack of knowledge or skill, unclear performance expectations, poor performance feedback, or a lack of tools. Furthermore, the problem may be improper resources or materials to do the job, insufficient benefits or rewards, a poor match between employee's skills and requirements of the job, or a lack of job security. Silberman believes in pinpointing the problem before creating a training program (Silberman, 1996).

Klaene and Sanders touch on incident command abilities in the book *Structural Firefighting*. According to Klaene and Sanders (2000), "Fireground coordination is achieved by the incident commander applying management principles, and using the standard operating procedures learned." They believe inexperience is the key reason weaknesses in command exist (Klaene & Sanders, 2000).

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 also highlights the benefit of performing self-evaluations. According to the USFA (2015), "Professional development at the USFA is internal to the organization and external to the fire service." The USFA believes this assists in ensuring individuals and the USFA as a whole have the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to deliver required services. Furthermore, they

describe professional development as their edge against failure. The USFA believes their insurance for optimum fire service performance is training, and efforts must be continued to promote excellence in fire service training and enhance fireground intelligence (USFA, 2015).

The second question of this research project focused on identifying types of incident command training other departments utilize. Numerous methods exist to conduct training in all types of industry; therefore, a look into what others are utilizing to develop employees is prudent.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) like most, requires training to increase skill levels of participants. The CDPH believes training objectives should be measurable with terms which explain expectations such as identify, describe, and demonstrate. The purpose of CDPH's training activities is to have participants learn while engaging in the hands-on practical application of desired skills (California Department of Public Health (CDPH), 2012).

In researching how organizations outside the fire service train their employees, commercial airlines appeared to be a relevant source of information for this project. Southwest Airlines claims the safety and security of their employees and customers are a top priority. Safety and security are taught to employees through training, communication campaigns, and education. Southwest Airlines attempts to proactively deal with issues before they become injuries, accidents, or incidents. New employees receive safety and security training, and throughout the year, each department experiences additional job-specific instruction. Southwest also utilizes a safety and security team to communicate and educate the importance of safety and security to employees through internal publications, evaluations, assessments, checklists, and an annual symposium (Southwest, 2011).

With incident command training in mind, the author decided to review literature written by the military discussing time-based decision making. The United States Army (1997) writes, “Before a unit can conduct decision making in a time-constrained environment, it must master the steps in the full military decision-making process.” Understanding all the roles in each step and requirements to produce essential products is the only way to shorten this process. The military believes training on these steps requires thoroughness and must include battle drills that are time constrained, stressful, and that replicate realistic conditions. Anticipation, organization, and prior preparation are listed as the keys to success in a time-constrained environment (US Army, 1997).

Researching how others train for incident command compelled the author to look at recommendations from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and their Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFIPP). The goal is to reduce the number of firefighter fatalities. In order to accomplish this goal, NIOSH conducts investigations of line-of-duty firefighter deaths, identifies contributing factors, and generates recommendations for prevention. NIOSH hopes the fire service will use this data to develop, update, and implement policies, programs, and training which prevents firefighter fatalities. Among the data found in the recommendation is the need to assess your department. These evaluations include whether or not your department utilizes ICS at all incidents, if sufficient training in ICS is provided, and if the incident commander knows the location of company members at all times. NIOSH also recommends a continuous risk versus gain evaluation when an offensive, interior attack is occurring (Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Training officers for incident command is not new to the fire service. In “Command Presence: Presentation is everything,” Billy Schmidt (2006) states, “Understanding the abilities

of your staff is an essential component of officer development.” He also details how command presence (the ability to maintain self-control in the midst of chaos) is a continuous learning process, and it is not automatically attained with a badge or trumpets. Schmidt (2006) writes, “It’s developed through training and education, observed by watching others, and absorbed through hands-on experiences.”

The final research question sought to determine which methods Largo Fire Rescue may utilize to provide incident command training to its officers. In researching methods for Largo Fire Rescue to provide incident command training, literature on learning principles was investigated. Some psychologists believe learning is best completed through hands-on experience rather than lecture only. Weeks (2014) describes how developmental psychologists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky believe “knowledge is built up step by step, going over ideas in more and more detail and making connections with other ideas.” Piaget and Vygotsky theorize that learning is optimal when it involves actively and continually experiencing things rather than obtaining knowledge by lecture or instruction. Receiving instructions from a teacher standing in front of a room may not be the best method for learning. Weeks (2014) theorized, “Knowledge is more likely to stick if we are encouraged to participate in the learning process.”

Not surprisingly, the literature review on incident command in the fire service yielded copious amounts of information. In “Mastering Fireground Command,” Kastros (2011) reports the more an incident commander trains with his engine and truck companies prior to an incident, the fewer deficiencies will be experienced on incident scenes. According to Kastros (2011), “Incident commanders should have expert knowledge of the capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses of their companies and apparatus.” He believes incident commanders should train with their companies in order to understand how long it takes to complete a water supply, how

many trucks are needed to perform roof cuts, and the time needed for an engine company to get hose lines into commercial structures. Incident commanders need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their crews; therefore, opportunities to address deficiencies and improve fireground operations will exist (Kastros, 2011).

Gary Klein (1993) reported that incident commanders make decisions based on recognition and experience. According to Klein (1993), “Recognitional-decision making is better when decision makers are experienced, time pressures are greater, and conditions are less stable.” He believes training is needed in recognizing situations, communicating situation assessment, and acquiring the experience to conduct mental simulations of options (Klein, 1993). This piece of literature directly relates to the author’s attempt to research methods for incident command training at Largo Fire Rescue.

In summary of the literature review conducted, valuable insight was gained which influenced how this project was conducted. The result of this research has helped provide direction for future exploration into addressing an organizational need. The literature review opened the author’s eyes to ideas, concepts, and practices not previously considered. Ideas such as competencies, the need for stressful hands-on style training, and the importance of experience in decision making are a few examples of information attained from the research. The research conducted and the information gleaned served as a steering force in this project. These findings and observations helped achieve answers for both the problem statement and research questions detailed in this applied research project.

Procedures

To answer the author’s three research questions posed in this applied research paper, many different types of resources were utilized. Books, magazines, internet searches, studies,

surveys, standard operating procedures, email questionnaires, personal observations, and an oral interview were all utilized for research. Each specific research question was examined, and the procedures used are as follows.

To identify the level of incident command training officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess, an investigation into employee training occurred. For this inquiry, Largo Fire Rescue provided several resources for the author's project. The department's library was referenced, the deputy chief was emailed a research question, standard operating procedures were reviewed, and the certification database Firehouse was searched. The internet was also utilized to research data, with Google and Google scholar being the primary sources for searches. The following internet keyword terms and phrases were utilized: training, employee knowledge, Society of Human Resources Managers training, evaluation of training programs, Army training evaluation, employee training, state of Florida Fire Officer One, and United States Fire Administration. The internet websites Society of Human Resources Managers, *US Army TRADOC Pamphlet 350-70-4*, and the *United States Fire Administration's Strategic Plan* provided data for literature review as well as the textbooks *Active Training* and *Structural Firefighting*. These sources were utilized due to their professional background and significance to the research question. The data gained from this research provided a perspective on how others have dealt with similar questions.

To determine Largo Fire Rescue's current level of incident command training, two staff officers at the department were asked for assistance. Largo Fire Rescue Deputy Chief David Mixson was emailed a question inquiring about the department's current requirements for National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, and specific details on the needs of lieutenants, district chiefs, and command staff officers were targeted. The question was, *what*

levels of NIMS training do we require for firefighters, lieutenants, district chiefs, division chiefs, and higher? The assistant chief of training was asked to run a report in Firehouse and list the number of officers who possess Florida fire officer one certification. The following question was posed, *of the 36 officers at Largo Fire Rescue, how many possess fire officer one certification?*

The department's standard operating procedures (SOPs) were also utilized for research on this question. SOP 601 Incident Command was researched because it explains when incident command shall be initiated and by whom. Understanding the incident command SOP led the author to further explore requirements for acting officers and lieutenants (company officers) at Largo Fire Rescue. In order to attain this data, SOP 208 Promotional Procedures and SOP 309 Acting Officer Certification were reviewed to determine eligibility requirements for becoming an acting lieutenant (relief lieutenant) and lieutenant.

Research also occurred utilizing the city of Largo's website to determine the minimum job requirements, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the positions of fire lieutenant and district chief. The city of Largo's human resources department website was utilized to locate requirements for both the lieutenant and district chief positions. Next, the author examined the process of attaining a state of Florida fire officer one certification, a requirement for both the lieutenant and district chief position. The state of Florida's State Fire Marshal Division manages the fire officer program, so the author explored their website and focused on details involving requirements. Detailed information on requirements for completion of fire officer one certification was available and it can be viewed at <http://www.fldfs.com/Division/SFM/BFST/default.htm#Certifications>.

An oral interview with Largo Fire Rescue's division chief of professional standards also took place in order to gain an internal perspective on incident command training. The interview

served to address each research question posed in the author's applied research project. Division Chief Josh Stefancic was interviewed in Largo Fire Rescue's administration offices on January 12, 2016. Chief Stefancic was chosen because he manages the department's professional standards division, which oversees training for all employees in the organization. The author's research questions, along with questions for chief Stefancic were emailed to him in advance of the interview to allow preparation time.

The final procedure carried out for researching question number one involved creation of a survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions regarding incident command training. Email was used to seek feedback on the survey, and the free internet site Survey Monkey was utilized for developing the questions. Survey Monkey's website address is <https://www.surveymonkey.com>. This particular medium was chosen because it allowed recipients to complete the questions at their pace while affording privacy in the submission of answers. The questions were designed based on literature review and assisted in focusing the author's research subject on incident command. Largo Fire Rescue officers were selected to address research question number one because of their potential to serve as an incident commander. The question relates to the specific content of this research question, and it was: *What incident command training do officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess?* The survey was sent to each officer at Largo Fire Rescue on 1/9/16 via department email, and it included a link to Survey Monkey. The survey asked for officers to indicate types of incident command training currently possessed, with classroom, practical, online, crew-oriented, self-study, or none as options for selection. All thirty-six officers at Largo Fire Rescue were emailed the survey, and twenty-four responded.

To determine methods other fire departments utilize to train officers for incident command, the author utilized books, questionnaires, studies, magazine articles, the internet, and surveys to gather data. For the internet, research was completed utilizing Google and Google scholar as the primary sources for searches. The following keyword terms and phrases were utilized for searching: fireground command training, incident command training, decision making, rapid decision making, Southwest Airlines training, NIOSH firefighters, and National Fire Academy training. An extensive investigation in these websites resulted in information for this research.

The author also utilized the United States Fire Administration library in Emmitsburg, Maryland while attending the Executive Development course in August of 2015. Numerous searches for topics on incident command and fireground command were explored, and material deemed useful was documented. Parts of the bibliography were created at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) for future research and documentation.

Many internet searches provided useful information for the author's research project. The following internet sites yielded data to address the author's research and provide an understanding into methods others use for training: California Department of Public Health, Fire Rescue 1, Southwest Airlines, and the US Army's Decision Making in a Time Constrained Environment study.

The use of questionnaires and surveys were also utilized for conducting research. Questionnaires and surveys were created to address all three research questions in the applied research project, with a purpose of gathering opinions on incident command training. Email was used to solicit input to questionnaires, and the free internet site Survey Monkey was utilized for creating surveys. Survey Monkey's website address was detailed earlier. Again, these mediums

allowed others to complete the questions at their pace and allowed privacy in the submission of answers. The questions contained in both surveys and questionnaires were designed based on literature review and related to research on incident command.

The surveys were sent to the Pinellas County operations group, classmates in the author's Executive Development class, the Florida Fire Chiefs Association, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. These surveys were created for officers not employed with Largo Fire Rescue to gain an external perspective on the subject matter. The survey asked about incident command training and questions included: *1. Does formal incident command training occur in your department? 2. How often does the training occur? 3. What methods are utilized? 4. Has your department utilized the ICS system in the past two years? 5. Do you believe ICS training should occur?* The survey was sent to the Pinellas County operations chiefs group on 1/8/16. This method was utilized to gain external opinions on incident command training, and these individuals were chosen because of professional positions held within their respected organizations. The Florida Fire Chiefs Association (FFCA), and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) were also sent the surveys on 1/11/16 and 1/21/16 respectively. These organizations were chosen because of their professional fire-service affiliations. Executive Fire Officer (EFO) requests are often sent to members of these organizations, and the author hoped for a large number of responses. The exact number of FFCA and IAFC recipients is unknown because of the author's inability to determine specific distribution statistics in each organization. In total, 82 responses were received.

Questionnaires were also utilized to gather data for this research question. Questionnaires were sent to two groups of fire service personnel, the Pinellas County operations group, and classmates of the author's August 2015 Executive Development course. The questionnaire was

utilized to gather input on methods other departments employ to train on incident command. The purpose of this questionnaire was to seek information from fire officers outside of Largo Fire Rescue on the subject of incident command training. The author chose the Executive Development group because of their knowledge of requirements for an applied research project, and the Pinellas County operations group was chosen because of the professional positions each held within their organization. Email was once again used to solicit the input on incident command training, and it was sent on 1/30/16 to the Pinellas County operations group, and on 1/31/16 to the author's Executive Development classmates. Of the 19 operations chiefs sent the email, 1 responded. Of the 23 class members sent the email, 1 responded. The question addressed methods other agencies use for incident command training. Specifically, the author sought details on how their department trains officers tasked with the utilization of incident command on emergency scenes. The email correspondence was as follows: *Hello all, I'm working on my applied research project, and would like to ask for your assistance, please. I'm researching how departments prepare their officers for operating incident command. Specific methods which departments utilize to train their officers to use the ICS system at incidents? Table top scenarios, classroom instruction, simulation training, back of vehicle command board practice, dry-run practice at drill grounds with engine companies, trucks etc.? Details are appreciated.*

To identify methods Largo Fire Rescue may utilize to provide incident command training for its officers, the author used books, magazine articles, the internet, and personal observations. Research into how private industry trains their personnel was performed in order to evaluate mediums previously unknown to the author. Primarily, private industry which works under similar time constraints as fire service personnel was the focus of this research. Companies such

as the United Parcel Service (UPS), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) were targeted. The author's intent was to research training methods these agencies utilize to prepare their workforce for real-life involvement. The research focused on training which required the employee to perform duties under stressful conditions.

Specific research occurred in the book *Heads Up Psychology*, a report from Gary Klein, and websites of the following organizations: UPS, FBI, FAA, National Fire Academy, and *Fire Engineering* magazine online. Each source was researched in the hopes of identifying specific types of training which could be advantageous to the author's project.

For the entire research project, personal observations of emergency incidents at Largo Fire Rescue occurred. Upon return to duty at Largo Fire Rescue, after the Executive Development course was completed, the author routinely responded to emergency calls where incident command could potentially be utilized. Structure fires, vehicle crashes, and a bomb threat were just a few examples of incidents the author responded to. These incidents provided direct observation and personalized experiences of incident command operations. Work on the author's applied research project was occurring simultaneously while these responses were taking place, and the personal observations were beneficial. The author worked diligently to minimize personal bias in recording the observations, understanding the findings would be influential in answering research questions. In order to record personal observations of incidents, a data collection form was created. The form enabled the author to record observations and behaviors witnessed on incident scenes for future use. Observations such as location, date, time, actions witnessed, familiarity with the incident command system, areas of concern, and opinions on training needs were recorded. Data collection also included recommendations from lessons learned during post-incident critiques at the conclusion of the incident. The author attempted to

record the data as soon as practical after each event to avoid misrepresentation. The actions observed by the author were related to all three research questions in the applied research project.

Limitations while working on this research were encountered by the author. Attempts were made to reduce limitations; however, efforts by the author were at the time met with unpreventable circumstances. For the personal observations conducted, a strong attempt was made to remain neutral in completing the research. Understandably, bias inevitably exists; however, conscious attention and open-mindedness was foremost with the author throughout this process. The internal limitations primarily dealt with understanding the current levels of incident command training LFR officers possessed. Documentation of non-departmental sponsored courses and training inhibited assessment of fire officers' incident command education. Classes and training attended outside of Largo Fire Rescue were only visible if the employee had made an effort to provide the department with certificates of completion. Therefore, the internal levels of incident command training were limited to required classes officers possessed, and the department documented. An additional research limitation the author experienced within the organization was the inability to locate incident command training documentation. This limitation dealt with an inability to reference informal incident command practice sessions. LFR surveys indicated officers practice incident command scenarios while on duty; however, documentation detailing those incident command training sessions was not located.

The responses to emailed surveys and questionnaires were also a limitation the author experienced. Primarily, the internal and external limitations dealt with responses or the lack thereof. Many people who perceivably had the ability to provide input failed to honor the author's request for participation. Limited numbers of individuals completed the surveys, and few responded to the emails; consequently, the author had a difficult time gathering a quality

sampling of opinions on incident command training. Since there was no mandate for any recipient of the request to comply, the author was subjected to the will of those included in this process and received limited input.

The external limitations of this project dealt with responses to questionnaires and literature review. As stated earlier, questionnaires and surveys received limited responses; therefore, the author's ability to gain input on experiences others have with incident command training was minimal. The literature review's limitations primarily dealt with detailed information on how often, specific types of, and how to provide fire service personnel incident command training. Ideas for such training were found, but clear and precise details of methods and frequency of utilizing this type of officer development were difficult for the author to locate.

Results

The results garnered while undertaking this project illuminated findings relevant to the author's applied research subject. The fire service may utilize these findings to provide employee growth, development, and incident command training. Sufficient data was gained to answer each research question. The results of this project are described below after each individual research question.

The author's first research question was: *What incident command training do officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess?* Results of this research provided the author with functional data.

Exploring how organizations outside of the fire service examine their employees' current abilities yielded useful findings which related to the first research question. The Society of Human Resource Managers (2016) described a focus on understanding current levels of

employee proficiency. They described how attributes such as knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) give rise to behaviors needed to perform a given job effectively.

The second result of this research described evaluation of current processes. The US Army utilizes evaluations to determine training efficacy for recent graduates of programs. The feedback determines soldiers' abilities to meet job performance requirements, understand if the instruction was received, and evaluate if any additional instruction is needed. The process gathers data from the field to assess a graduate's performance in a job environment, and determines if the graduate was trained to meet real-world job performance requirements (US Army, 2004).

In the textbook *Active Training*, Silberman (1996) explained that an examination into root causes of issues must occur. He surmised that training is not always the solution for problems because their cause is not always a lack of knowledge or skill. Instead, it might be unclear performance expectations, poor performance feedback, lack of tools, insufficient resources and materials to do the job, inadequate financial and other rewards, a poor match between employee's skills and the requirements of the job, or a lack of assurance of job security. Silberman (1996) explained how you must pinpoint the true problem first before any training program can be developed.

Additional findings of this research were present in fire service literature. In *Structural Firefighting*, Klaene and Sanders (2000) described that fireground coordination is achieved by incident commanders applying management principles and using the standard operating procedures learned. They also went on to detail how weaknesses in command can be attributed to inexperience (Klaene & Sanders, 2000).

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 was a source for research as well. The plan reinforced the need to perform self-evaluation of training offered. The USFA described measures which ensure individuals have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to deliver required services as essential. The USFA listed their greatest insurance for optimum fire service performance as training and enhancement of fireground intelligence (USFA, 2015).

Additional research by Billy Schmidt (2006) declared, “Understanding the abilities of your staff is an essential component of officer development.” He went on to explain how command presence does not automatically come with the badge or trumpets; instead, command presence is developed through training, education, observation of others, and learned through hands-on experiences. This essential component of professional development is a continuous learning process (Schmidt, 2006).

The result of this research indicated Largo Fire Rescue firefighters and officers have the minimum levels of required National Incident Management System (NIMS) training. The required levels of NIMS training at Largo Fire Rescue complies with recommendations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). NIMS identifies courses to train personnel capable of implementing all functions of emergency management. Firefighters at Largo Fire Rescue have completed the following NIMS training: ICS: 100 Introduction to Incident Command System, ICS: 200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents, ICS: 700 National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction, and ICS: 800 National Response Framework, An Introduction. Company officers (lieutenants) have completed an additional course: ICS 300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents, and chief officers have completed ICS: 400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff.

The department's standard operating procedures (SOPs) were utilized for this research project. SOP 601 (Incident Command) details specifics on when incident command shall be initiated and who assumes the position. According to SOP 601, the initial command is established by the first arriving company officer. This requirement places company officers in the command role frequently due to their ability to arrive on-scene before chief officers (LFR, 2014).

Another result of this research dealt with fire officer one, and who must obtain this certification. Largo Fire Rescue requires individuals who may be placed in the position of incident commander to obtain the state of Florida Fire Officer One certification. Fire lieutenants, acting lieutenants, and chief officers are required to complete the program and attain the certification prior to applying for one of these positions (LFR, 2014).

Researching the minimum requirements for the positions of acting lieutenant, lieutenant, and district chief also provided relevant findings. As mentioned earlier, these positions require the state of Florida fire officer one certification. Firefighters who serve as acting lieutenants must also complete the Largo Fire Rescue acting officer certification program. Acting officer certification (LFR SOP 309) requires Largo Fire Rescue engine driver certification, Florida state fire officer certification, and three years of consecutive employment with the department (LFR, 2014). Once these requirements are attained, interested firefighters complete a memo requesting to participate in the certification process, include copies of certificates and prerequisite classes, and send supporting documentation to the office of professional standards. Candidates are then required to pass a written examination (80% minimum) prior to the acting officer (lieutenant) class. Upon conclusion of the class, candidates are required to complete the acting officer (lieutenant) training manual. The manual contains sign-off sheets, acting officer evaluation forms

(completed by the candidate's company officer each shift), and an acting officer call log. Once all requirements are met, and a memo from the candidate's company officer is submitted declaring he or she has demonstrated appropriate skill levels for the role as acting officer, fire administration reviews the documentation and awards acting officer certification (LFR, 2014).

As a result of this research, the author examined eligibility requirements for the positions of fire lieutenant and district chief at LFR. The eligibility requirements for the position of lieutenant include: State of Florida firefighter certification, state of Florida EMT or paramedic certification, state of Florida fire officer one certification, Largo Fire Rescue firefighter for 5 years, Largo Fire Rescue engine driver certification, Largo Fire Rescue acting lieutenant certification, and possession of a valid Florida class E driver's license (Largo, 2016).

The minimum requirements for district chief include: State of Florida firefighter minimum standards certification, state of Florida emergency medical technician or paramedic certification, state of Florida fire officer one certification, possession of a valid Florida class "E" driver's license, Associate Degree from an accredited institution, and one year of current active experience as a company officer at Largo Fire Rescue or other fire department (Largo, 2016).

In order to gain an internal perspective on this research question, Josh Stefancic, the professional standards chief of Largo Fire Rescue was interviewed. Chief Stefancic often serves in a position within the ICS at LFR incidents, and his opinion on its use was sought.

Question 1: "Why do you feel LFR needs to train officers in the use of ICS?" Chief Stefancic cited safety and accountability as primary reasons for this type of training. He then explained how all officers should receive ICS training due to the organization allowing its officers to serve in these positions. Chief Stefancic believed ICS training is paramount.

Question 2: “Do you have any personal observations of LFR incidents in the past which indicate ICS training is needed?” Chief Stefancic declared a need for ICS training exists at Largo Fire Rescue because of how incidents outside the scope of a single-family dwelling fire present our organization with a challenge. Chief Stefancic believes Largo Fire Rescue trains for traditional incidents often and routinely handles these situations well; however, when it comes to incidents infrequently dealt with, he sees a need for practice. Incidents such as traffic crashes with multiple patients and/or extrications, as well as incidents in multi-family dwellings and high-rises are examples of areas requiring training. Chief Stefancic went on to clarify how the use of divisions and groups in large fire incidents are specific examples of areas needing attention. Additionally, Chief Stefancic pointed out how important it is for command officers to utilize their division and group supervisors efficiently in order to maintain an appropriate span of control and division of labor.

Question 3: “Do you feel continued training for officers in ICS is needed?” Chief Stefancic answered with a resounding yes, and he explained how a need for continued ICS training is important. Chief Stefancic said, “It is easy to look and study how the ICS system is supposed to work and identify all the possible boxes; however, one needs to learn how and when to create certain positions.” He described how this is best done through constant training, education, and scenario practice. Chief Stefancic believes constant training and education also reinforce the expectations of the organization.

Question 4: Any comments on the subject of ICS you would like to offer? Chief Stefancic answered, “Yes, all fires go out and all patients get to the hospital, and the ICS system is a method which allows us to accomplish this in a simple way.” Chief Stefancic explained how repetitive use and training command officers for ICS helps build experience and comfort in using

the system. He likened it to building a "file-bank" in their head of what has worked or hasn't worked in the past. Chief Stefancic believes "the more ICS is put to use by command officers, the better they will become at using it." And lastly, gaining proficiency by using ICS at smaller incidents makes utilization of the system at large-scale incidents easier.

The final informational result of research question one came from responses to a department survey. The survey was sent to officers within LFR, and it sought out information on types of incident command training possessed. The survey provided the following results for types of incident command training officers at Largo Fire Rescue possess. Of the 36 officers sent the survey, 24 responded. Officers were asked to identify each type of incident command training they possessed. The choices to select on the survey included classroom, practical, online, crew-oriented, self-study, and none. Of the 24 responses, the results were as follows: Classroom training was the largest medium of training received. 91.67% (22 officers) reported classroom sessions as the level of training possessed. Equally, 91.67% (22 officers) reported experience with practical-based incident command training. Online-based incident command training was identified by 87.50% of the responders or 21 officers. The self-study selection was next, it was indicated by 83.33% of the responders or 20 officers. Crew-oriented incident command based training was experienced by 79.17% of all responses, or 19 officers. And finally, no one or 0.00% of the responses indicated NONE as the level of incident command training possessed.

The author's second research question focused on what other fire departments are utilizing to train officers for incident command. The research uncovered new information on methods organizations are exercising to train employees for roles they are required to perform. The findings of this research provided ideas which may be useful in training fire officers for incident command.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) discussed methods currently being utilized for training their personnel. They declared that training is required to increase the skill levels of participants, and related activities are developed to help participants learn desired skills. CDPH believes the purpose of training activities is to allow participants to engage in the hands-on practical application of the skill desired (CDPH, 2012).

Southwest Airlines provided ideas on safety and security training, methods which may be of benefit for training incident command as well. Southwest Airlines incorporates the safety and security of employees and customers into activities both on the ground and in the air via training, communication campaigns, and education. Southwest Airlines attempts to identify workplace and operational risks through proactively dealing with issues before they result in injuries, accidents, or incidents. New employees at Southwest Airlines receive safety training, and throughout the year, all departments receive additional job-specific training. Additionally, a comprehensive employee outreach campaign is in place to address safety and security issues beyond departmental levels. The outreach team communicates and educates Safety and Security to Southwest's employees through internal publications, safety and security evaluations, assessments, checklists, and at a safety and security symposium (Southwest, 2011).

The US military studied time-based decision making as a method it could utilize to train commanders. Time-based decision making occurs on the fireground as well, and it may be beneficial to the fire service. The US Army (1997) reports, "Before a unit can conduct decision making in a time-constrained environment, it must master all steps in the full military decision-making process." The only way a unit can shorten this process is by fully understanding the roles of all steps and requirements to produce necessary products. The military believes training on these steps must be thorough and result in a series of battle drills which are stressful and replicate

realistic conditions and timelines. They highlight anticipation, organization, and prior preparation as the keys to success in a time-constrained environment (United States Army, 1997).

The author also found useful information on training employees from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program's (FFIPP) goal is to reduce the number of firefighter fatalities. This goal requires NIOSH to conduct investigations into line-of-duty firefighter deaths so that contributing factors and recommendations for prevention can be promoted. 1,286 individual recommendations from 335 FFFIPP investigations conducted from 1998 to 2005 provide guidance for fire service personnel. NIOSH believes developing, updating, and implementing effective policies, programs, and training to prevent fatalities among firefighters is paramount. Among those recommendations is the implementation of the ICS at each incident, both large and small. NIOSH also recommends training on ICS to include knowing the location of company members at all times, evaluation of risk versus gain before initiating an offensive, interior attack, and reassessment of risks throughout the incident (Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

In addressing this research question, the author located fire service literature which discussed training incident commanders. Schmidt (2006) recommends training to develop a command presence, which he defines as, "Your ability to exhibit self-control while in the midst of chaos." He believes command presence doesn't automatically come with a badge; instead, it's developed through training, education, observing others, and being a part of hands-on experiences (Schmidt, 2006).

The author also gained feedback on methods for incident command training when surveys were sent out to the Pinellas County operations group, classmates in the Executive Development class, the Florida Fire Chiefs Association, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. In total, 82 responses were received from personnel of these groups. The questions asked in the survey and the response results by percentages and number of each selection are described below:

1. Does your department utilize the Incident Command System (ICS)?

- Answered: 81
- Skipped: 1

100% of 81 answered yes.

2. Does your department formally train officers on how to use the Incident Command System?

- Answered: 82
- Skipped: 0

Yes: 89.02%, 73

No: 10.89%, 9

3. How often does your department have continuing education on ICS for your officers?

- Answered: 82
- Skipped: 0

Annually: 39.02%, 32

As needed, No set schedule: 39.02%, 32

No continuing education offered: 9.76%, 8

Other, frequency not listed above: 12.20%, 10

4. If you answered yes to any question above, what type(s) of formal training does your department offer for ICS? Please select all that apply.

- Answered: 81

- Skipped: 1

Classroom Instruction: 82.72%, 67

Computer-based: 50.62%, 41

Hands on practical (simulation, table-top drill): 72.84%, 59

None, officers self-train: 9.88%, 8

5. In the past two years, has your department utilized the Incident Command System to control an incident?

- Answered: 82

- Skipped: 0

100% answered Yes.

6. I believe ICS continuing education/ training should occur?

- Answered: 82

- Skipped: 0

Yes: 98.78%, 81

No: 1.22%, 1

In order to seek specific ideas for incident command training, feedback on the subject was solicited. A question was emailed to the author's fellow EFO classmates, as well as neighboring operations chiefs in Pinellas County, requesting input on incident command training. Specifically, details on how their department trains officers tasked with the utilization of incident command at emergency scenes were asked. The email correspondence was as

follows: *Hello all, I'm working on my applied research project, and would like to ask for your assistance, please. I'm researching how departments prepare their officers for operating incident command. Specific methods which departments utilize to train their officers to use the ICS system at incidents? Table top scenarios, classroom instruction, simulation training, back of vehicle command board practice, dry-run practice at drill grounds with engine companies, trucks etc.? Details are appreciated.* Of the 23 class members that I sent the email to, 1 responded. Of the 19 operations chiefs that I sent the email to, 1 responded. The input was limited but each response provided useful insight.

Executive Development-classmate Paul Siebert of Frisco, Texas responded to the information request and provided information on how his organization approaches incident command training. His department embraces on-the-job training (OJT) for officers to become proficient at incident command because they utilize ICS on most calls. Classroom instruction with NIMS–ICS 100, 200, 700 and 800 are also utilized for incident command instructional purposes, as well as ICS policy, strategy, and tactics classes. Siebert also reported incorporation of simulated incident command training in evolutions and drills. The drills utilize photo imaging, fire-simulation software, as well as training-ground evolutions involving live-fire burns (Siebert, 2016).

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue's Deputy Chief of Operations Chad Pittman responded and provided insightful information on incident command training. According to Pittman (2016), "Our organization is getting prepared to release developmental assessment center (DAC) training for all officers." Chief Pittman wrote an EFO paper on this concept and believes it will be instrumental in improving the ICS abilities of its officers due to the similarities involved. He described DAC as workplace scenario training with exercises designed to provide feedback and

coaching on actions experienced. Chief Pittman went on to explain that he believes real life experiences offer more opportunities to learn as opposed to classroom lecture sessions (Pittman, 2016).

The results of research question number three helped describe methods Largo Fire Rescue can utilize to train its officers on incident command. These findings were beneficial to the author and will now be discussed.

For starters, some psychologists believe learning is best completed through hands-on experience. Weeks (2014) writes developmental psychologists believe knowledge is built upon in steps, and covering ideas in detail helps to make connections with other ideas. He explained how actively and continually experiencing things is better than gaining knowledge secondhand. This point explains how being told or shown something by an instructor may not be the optimal learning method. Knowledge is more likely to be retained if participation in the learning process occurs (Weeks, 2014).

The United Parcel Service, or UPS as it's more commonly referred to as utilizes hands-on learning for training employees. UPS's training philosophy is "teach me, show me, and let me." Drivers are taught UPS expectations and then practice in a realistic, hands-on fashion. UPS's training employs 3-D computer simulations, webcast learning modules, and traditional classroom instruction. UPS also trains employees by utilizing an outside course designed as a small town. The simulated town with small houses and street signs provides drivers with realistic situations encountered in daily activities (United Parcel Service (UPS), 2015).

The author additionally found ideas for methods to train incident commanders when researching how the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) prepares their agents for field work. The FBI utilizes realistic-style training environments such as a simulated town, built with the

help of Hollywood set designers, for agent development. The small town, with a constant flow of people, has a bank, post office, hotel, laundromat, barber shop, pool hall, homes, shops, and more. This learning environment allows agents to train while immersed in realistic, stressful scenarios. Agents practice basic tactics, investigative techniques, firearms skills, defensive tactics, and more under realistic conditions. The training allows agents to investigate terrorist activities, make arrests, process evidence, conduct interviews, perform searches, use ballistic shields, tactically clear areas so they're safe to enter, and engage in simulated gun fights with "criminals" (Federal Bureau of Investigations, n.d.).

To address this research question, the author also considered professions which deal with decision making in stressful situations. This led to a review of the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) and methods they use to train Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs). Air traffic controllers' training begins at the FAA Academy, where students get foundational air traffic control knowledge in the classroom and simulator. Once in the field, students receive additional classroom, simulator, and on-the-job training to become certified professional controllers (CPC). All controllers receive periodic proficiency training which entails recurrent and other supplemental training (Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), 2015).

The fire service also provided data for this research question. An article in *Fire Engineering magazine* entitled "Mastering Fireground Command" stressed that incident commanders (IC) need to train with their engine and truck companies before actual incidents occur. In the article, Kastros (2011) said, "Incident commanders should have knowledge of the capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the companies and apparatus they operate with." The article clarifies how incident commanders should train with their companies in order to know how many engines are needed to complete hose lays, how many trucks are needed to perform

roof ventilation cuts, and how long engine companies take to advance hose lines into structures. This practice provides the IC with knowledge of their companies' strengths and weaknesses and illustrates training needs. This method also allows the incident commander to address deficiencies and improve on fireground operations (Kastros, 2011).

The author would be remiss if the National Fire Academy (NFA) wasn't utilized for researching this project. The National Fire Academy offers a wide array of training opportunities, some of which may be utilized for incident command. The NFA provides courses online, at the main campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and off campus throughout the nation in cooperation with local and state fire-training organizations, and local colleges and universities. Additionally, numerous on-campus and online incident management classes exist. Command and control for incident operations, target hazards, and multi-alarm incidents are just a few examples of classes offered by the NFA which can assist incident commanders in professional development. Twelve online courses for Incident Management and a series of simulation scenarios are also available for the student to practice decision-making and assigning crews to operational tasks on the fireground (United States Fire Administration, 2016).

Gary Klein (1989) indicates methods which may be useful for incident command training as well. Klein indicated that incident commanders make a decision based on recognition and experience. He believes that recognition decision making is best when decision makers are experienced. Klein argues that training is needed in recognizing situations, in communicating situation assessment, and in acquiring the experience to conduct mental simulations of options (Klein, 1989).

Fire simulation training is also a potential source for incident command training. *Fire Engineering* magazine has a free online fire simulator where incident commanders can practice

decision-making on the fireground. Various degrees of fireground situations are available for interactive training such as a fire in a single family dwelling, a high-rise apartment building, and a commercial structure (Fire Engineering, 2016). This free source of incident command training can be accessed at <http://www.fireengineering.com/training/fire-simulations.html>.

The author also utilized personal observations of incident command implementation at Largo Fire Rescue incidents for this research project. A total of ten incident-responses allowed the author to observe the incident command system in operation at real-life events. A data collection form was created for the observation, and the following questions were asked. Was the incident command system (ICS) used in this incident? Did the ICS appear to flow smoothly? Did all officers on scene appear to be familiar with the ICS system? Were there any areas for improvement in ICS use noted/ discussed? Was there an after-action critique for officers tasked with command roles? What is Chris McDonald's opinion on why areas for improvement on ICS occurred at this incident? Would training on ICS be beneficial for addressing the areas for improvement?

The data analysis of these observations illustrated an overall acceptable level of incident command proficiency. The incident command system was utilized on all of these incidents, and recommendations for areas to improve upon were minor in nature. Limited occurrences of procedural, or policy-driven deficiencies were observed, and the author believes these instances are correctable by reinforcing expectations during training. The after-action critiques provided valuable insight into how officers can improve, or get better at the utilization of incident command. In summary, the author's personal observations of incident command use at real-life incidents provided positive feedback. The officers at Largo Fire Rescue appear to be comfortable utilizing ICS, and areas for improvement can be addressed through training.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to identify methods for officers at Largo Fire Rescue to gain incident command training. The goal was the identification of methods and techniques for training incident command to Largo Fire Rescue officers in order to improve performance. As a result of this research project, ideas for such training have been identified.

The first research question asked was: What incident command training do officers at Largo Fire Rescue currently possess? The literature review completed on this topic found the following published information which related to the research question.

SHRM (Society of Human Resource Managers) described the knowledge one needs in their industry as clusters. The clusters being interrelated attributes including knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that give rise to behaviors needed to perform a job effectively. Furthermore, the competency model demonstrated effective performance in a specific job, profession, or organization (SHRM, 2016).

The US Army discussed evaluations. The evaluations were to improve the quality and effectiveness of training and determine if soldiers meet job performance requirements, require instruction received, and need any additional instruction not received. In short, the evaluations determine if the training meets the needs of the Army, and they gather data from the field to assess a graduate's performance in a job environment. This process determines if the graduate was trained to meet real-world job performance requirements (US Army, 2004).

Silberman (1996) wrote about unclear performance expectations and poor performance feedback, lack of tools, resources, materials to do the job, inadequate financial and other rewards, poor matches between an employee's skills and the requirements of the job, or a lack of

assurance of job security. While Klaene and Sanders (2000) described how weakness in command can be attributed to inexperience.

The result of this research described how NIMS is required for all firefighters at Largo Fire Rescue. It also detailed in a SOP who is in command and when command is initiated. A second SOP described who can act as a lieutenant, and listed minimum requirements for the position. Additionally, the State of Florida fire officer one requirements were researched, and the city of Largo minimum job requirements for the position of lieutenant determined.

The analysis of this research illustrates the following. SHRM writes critical actions in the workplace can be attributed to having the correct KSAs identified for each job, as well as to identify what job performance factors make one competent in their position (SHRM, 2016). A review of LFR's job description and required KSAs for the position of lieutenant identified factors such as considerable knowledge of departmental rules and regulations, and ability to analyze situations quickly and accurately to determine the proper course of action to be taken. Review of the district chief's required KSAs identified extensive knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of modern firefighting, considerable knowledge of instructional methods and techniques applicable to fire training, ability to perform combat firefighting and rescue tasks, and extensive knowledge of the rules and regulations of the department including fire prevention laws and ordinances. However, review of the positions did not clearly describe competency factors; what makes a lieutenant or district chief ok, great, or outstanding. Silberman (1996) identified the creation of adequate job descriptions for employees to ensure an appropriate match or best fit for the position. Additional research into clarification of each position's KSAs is necessary.

The United States Army believes in performing both internal and external audits to ensure success throughout its ranks (US Army, 2004). Largo Fire Rescue has an annual employee evaluation program which measures overall work performance, and the department utilizes an internal affairs policy to address customer complaints. However, the department does not currently have a program specifically designed to measure performance measures or provide feedback when incident command is utilized. Silberman (1996) recommends setting clear job performance expectations and providing feedback to employees. Further research into evaluation of incident command performance and feedback is recommended.

Klaene and Sanders (2000) identify the lack of experience to be a contributing factor in poor fireground performance, and Silberman (1996) recommends ensuring incident commanders are provided necessary training and materials to do the job. Officer's required experience levels are detailed in SOPs and job descriptions at Largo Fire Rescue, with one year lieutenant experience as a prerequisite for district chief, and five years of firefighter experience needed to become a lieutenant. The background in determining experience timeframes for these positions are unknown; therefore, research needs to be completed on experience standards for officer positions.

The department ensures incident commanders receive the tools, equipment, and vehicles to do their job. Although, selection of such materials and the science behind their choice are unknown. The department's training division provides instruction on numerous skills needed to perform as officers; however, limited opportunities have occurred to specifically address incident command. Additional research into the selection of equipment to perform command duties and providing opportunities for incident command training needs to be completed.

The second research question sought to identify methods other fire departments utilize to train its officers for incident command. The literature review completed on this topic found the following published information which related to the research question.

The California Department of Public Health (2012) writes that training is required to increase skill levels of participants, and related activities are developed to help participants learn desired skills. The purpose of training activities is to allow participants to engage in the hands-on practical application of the skill desired.

Southwest Airlines (2011) lists the safety and security of employees and customers as a top priority. It's preached in training, communication campaigns, and education. They seek to identify risks proactively by dealing with issues before they result in injuries, accidents, or incidents. Training occurs via internal publications, evaluations, assessments, and checklists.

The United States military studied time-based decision making for commanders. They believe units can only conduct decision making in a time-constrained environment if steps are mastered in the full military decision-making process. The only way to expedite this process is fully understanding all roles, steps, and requirements to produce necessary products. Training must incorporate a series of battle drills which are stressful and offer realistic conditions and timelines. Anticipation, organization, and prior preparation are keys to success in time-constrained environments (US Army, 1997).

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) believes developing, updating, and implementing effective policies, programs, and training to prevent fatalities among firefighters is paramount. NIOSH writes that training should be provided in ICS to include accountability, knowing the location of company members at all times, and evaluation of risk

versus gain before initiating an offensive, interior attack, and reassessment of risks throughout the incident (Department of Health and Human Services, 1998).

Billy Schmidt (2006) recommends training through education, observation of others, and absorption by hands-on experiences.

The results of researching this question illustrated the following information. Responses from surveys and questionnaires on types of incident command training utilized at other departments indicate the majority of departments use a combination of classroom, hands-on practical exercises, and computer-based instruction for development. Realistic training and experience were described as offering more opportunities for learning than the traditional lecture.

The analysis of information gained when researching this question assisted the author in determining the following. The California Department of Public Health (2012) writes that training is required to increase skill levels and to allow participants to engage in the hands-on practical application. Southwest Airlines attempts to identify risks proactively by dealing with issues before they result in a problem, and training occurs via publications, evaluations, assessments, and checklists (Southwest, 2011). A review of Largo Fire Rescue failed to locate requirements for incident command training which included hands-on practical application, the use of evaluations, or checklists. However, such requirements were found for traditional firefighting operations such as water supply, attack lines, and donning of personal protective equipment. The theory of interactive training appears to be supported by the United States military. In time-based decision making, the United States Army (1997) writes that a full understanding of all roles in the process is required. They believe that training on these steps must include a series of battle drills which are stressful and replicate realistic conditions and timelines. Apparently, realistic, scenario-based training which places incident commanders in a

time-constrained environment to make decisions is optimal. Further research into incorporating these parameters into incident command training is recommended.

The third research question relates to methods Largo Fire Rescue could utilize to provide incident command training. When performing literature review for this question, it was determined that some psychologists believe learning is best completed through hands-on experience. Being actively involved and continually experiencing opportunities is better than gaining knowledge secondhand. Knowledge is more likely to be retained if students participate in the learning process, as opposed to being lectured to (Weeks, 2014). This belief seems to be echoed by Kastros (2011) who writes the more an incident commander (IC) trains with their engine and truck companies, the better prepared they will be. Incident commanders should know the capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the companies and apparatus they direct. They should train with their companies in order to know how engines and trucks function on the fireground, to include timeframes and abilities for performance. This level of understanding affords incident commanders with an opportunity to address performance issues if observed.

Klein (1989) recommends that incident command training be based on recognition, and decision making is enhanced when decision makers are experienced. Klein (1989) writes that training is needed in recognizing situations, situation assessment, and acquiring experience to conduct mental simulations of options.

The results of researching this question provided the following information. The United Parcel Service or UPS describes a hands-on training program for its employees which centers around the philosophy of “teach me, show me, let me.” Realistic, hands-on training is utilized with a mixture of 3-D computer simulations, webcast learning, and traditional classroom instruction. UPS training utilizes an outside road course designed with small houses and street

signs to provide drivers with realistic situations encountered in daily activity (UPS, 2015). This medium is also utilized by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) who train in simulated towns with all of the traditional amenities. The learning environment allows agents to be trained while immersed in lifelike, stressful scenarios. Agents perform required duties and test their decision-making skills under realistic conditions (FBI, n.d.).

The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) employs classroom and simulation training for developing Air Traffic Controllers (ATC). In addition to classroom and simulation training, on-the-job training, periodic proficiency training, and recurrent supplemental training occurs (FAA, 2015).

The National Fire Academy (NFA) provides a wide array of training opportunities involving incident command. Online, on-campus, and off-campus incident management training classes are available, including simulators which allow students to practice decision-making and assigning crews to an operational task at fire incidents (USFA, 2016). *Fire Engineering* magazine also offers a free, online fire simulator which incident commanders can utilize to prepare for decision making on the fireground (*Fire Engineering*, 2016).

Personal observations of ICS at Largo Fire Rescue emergency incidents were also carried out. The personal observations illustrated an acceptable level of incident command proficiency, with minimal areas of procedural or policy-driven deficiencies witnessed. The author believes these occurrences demonstrate a need for training and reinforcement of departmental expectations.

The analysis of this information provided the author with the following conclusion. Kastros (2011) writes the more an incident commander (IC) trains with their companies the better. He believes incident commanders should know the capabilities of those they direct and

address performance issues. This statement appears to be supported by Klein (1989) who points out incident command training is based on recognition and experience. Klein (1989) explains that training is needed in recognizing situations, situation assessment, and acquiring experience to conduct mental simulations of options. Further evidence of this statement is echoed by psychologists who believe, learning is best completed through hands-on experiences, and is more likely to be retained if participation in the learning process occurs (Weeks, 2014). The author feels this information indicates a need for incident commanders to be incorporated into hands-on fireground training sessions with engine and truck companies. These opportunities provide recognition experience and a medium to deliver feedback where needed. Limited requirements exist for these types of training at Largo Fire Rescue; therefore, additional research should be completed on this subject.

UPS provides a hands-on training program for its employees where “teach me, show me, let me” is embraced. Realistic, hands-on training is utilized via computer simulations, webcasts, and classroom instruction. UPS also utilizes a simulated town with small houses and street signs to reinforce realism (UPS, 2015). Realistic training is also a medium the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) utilizes. Training in a simulated town allows lifelike, stressful scenarios to be encountered while practicing required duties (FBI n.d.). Similarly, the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) uses the classroom, simulation, and on-the-job training for its employees (FAA, 2015). Review of Largo Fire Rescue’s training methods determined realistic training for many fireground operations is currently being practiced. The feasibility to incorporate incident command training into this practice requires additional research.

The National Fire Academy (NFA) and *Fire Engineering* magazine offer training opportunities involving incident command. The NFA delivers incident management training

classes online and on campus (USFA, 2016). *Fire Engineering* (2016) and the NFA (USFA, 2016) offer online simulation scenarios for incident commanders to practice decision making on the fireground. Utilization of these training opportunities appears beneficial and deserves further inquiry.

Personal observations at emergency incidents allowed the author to witness management of ICS on the fireground. The author believes overall incident command operations at Largo Fire Rescue are acceptable, and limited occurrences of deficiencies were noted. To address these occurrences, the author believes reinforcement of departmental expectations can be facilitated by training on simulated firegrounds. A method of addressing emergency scene deficiencies does exist in the department's fire incident critiques; however, methods to reinforce learning objectives highlighted in these reviews needs to be explored.

The implications of the research offer many benefits to the author's organization. The author has concluded that an incident command training program needs to be created.

Recommendations

The problem identified in this research project addressed officers at Largo Fire Rescue not receiving incident command training. The purpose of this research was to identify methods for officers to gain said incident command training. Based on this research, both long-term and short-term recommendations related to the problem and purpose of this study have been formulated.

The author's long-term recommendation is the implementation of an incident command training program for all fire service personnel at Largo Fire Rescue. A program which is fully supported by the organization and evaluated annually for efficacy. The continuous training program would be realistic and incorporate hands-on experiences for incident commanders to

hone their abilities. The program would also be evolving, and it would keep up with advancements in industry standards and disseminate best practices to all fire service personnel. The program would meet the needs of those who serve as incident commanders.

In the short term, the author recommends immediate training to afford officers in the organization opportunities to gain experience and feedback. Exposure to hands-on training sessions should occur as soon as practical. The department should embrace this initiative, and commit resources to provide facilitation of training. Incorporation of specific recommendations listed below are preferable; however, table-top incident command training with officers providing feedback is acceptable at this time.

Based on the results of the research conducted, the next actions to occur involve departmental support and buy-in on this program. The fire chief and fire administration are advised to adopt this initiative, and fully support resources needed for its implementation. Then, evaluation of officers' current incident command abilities should occur. The author believes further research into identifying proficiency levels and tools for recordkeeping need to be conducted as well. A hands-on incident command training program which includes realistic and stressful environments should be created. The training should also provide clear expectations on standard operating procedures, and provide feedback on performance. Additionally, attendance at National Fire Academy command and control classes should be supported, advertised, and encouraged. And finally, the incident command training program should be reviewed annually to determine if the content created is providing essential tools for successful performance in the field.

Based on the data gleaned from this research, the following recommendations for ICS training at LFR should occur:

- Evaluate officers' current levels of incident command proficiency
- Create an ICS training program for all department personnel
- Ensure all officers attend the training program
- Utilize common incident command check lists and job aids
- Provide clear expectations to officers for incident command
- Ensure standard operating procedures are understood and enforced
- Create a tool for delivering feedback on performance of incident command duties
- Utilize realistic, hands-on ICS training on a continuous basis
- Create ICS training scenarios which occur in a time constrained environment
- Employ computer-based simulation, classroom, and practical-training mediums for receiving ICS instruction
- Utilize engine and truck companies in incident command training scenarios
- Ensure opportunities to assume the role of incident commander during training sessions are afforded in order to gain experience
- Provide department support to the training program and commit to ensuring all needs for implementation are funded
- Create a mechanism for documenting specific occurrences of incident command training
- Encourage and support officers attendance at the National Fire Academy's command and control classes
- Evaluate the training program annually and revise as needed

The author believes implementation of these recommendations will benefit the department. For starters, Largo Fire Rescue will see increased proficiency demonstrated by fireground commanders. These improvements will occur as a result of increased opportunities to

experience realistic training in time-constrained environments. The training will allow officers to practice, receive feedback, and understand what is expected of them when assuming the incident commander position. The author also believes implementation of these recommendations will result in increased safety and operational effectiveness at emergency incidents.

The changes listed as recommendations should be implemented by the training division, but supported by Largo Fire Rescue in whole. The author believes the training should occur at a location where participants are afforded practical experiences in learning. Training which occurs on a regular basis, and with all officers participating is optimal. The author believes fire administration should educate department personnel on how this training opportunity improves fireground operations, personal development, and organizational readiness.

The author believes a follow-up evaluation of these changes is appropriate. The training division, in conjunction with the operations division, should conduct an annual evaluation and determine if the training provided meets the needs of the organization. Feedback from officers at the department should also be solicited, and improvements for the program addressed. This training assessment will allow the department to improve the quality and effectiveness of the instructional program.

The author's recommendations for others who may want to replicate some or all of this study primarily address methods utilized to gather feedback. Surveys and questionnaires were utilized, and a smaller than desired number of responses were received from both. Therefore, the author would suggest forgoing the use of surveys, and focus on personal interviews with specific individuals whom the researcher deems appropriate. The author feels the anonymity of email and surveys limited gathering of data, due to no sense of obligation by recipients when email requests were solicited.

As for the author's organization and future readers, one recommendation stands paramount as a result of this research. Create an incident command training program for everyone who may be tasked with filling the role of incident commander. Design a realistic training program which affords staff with opportunities to gain experience and practice their trade. Support the initiative by providing all necessary resources to see it through, and personally invest in the initiative. Commit to a continuous training program, and provide feedback on performance. Finally, understand that research completed by others can, and will assist you in addressing issues within your organization.

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Appendix A

Largo Fire Rescue Standard Operating Procedure 208

LARGO FIRE RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		
	CATEGORY: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES	SOP: 208
	SUBJECT: PROMOTIONAL PROCEDURES	PAGE 1 OF 3
	APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF SIGNATURE ON FILE	EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 2008
		REVISION DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2014
	Reviewed:	

FIRE LIEUTENANT

The following procedures are in effect regarding promotional examinations for the position of Fire Lieutenant:

Minimum Eligibility Requirements:

1. State of Florida Firefighter certification.
2. State of Florida EMT or Paramedic certification.
3. State of Florida Fire Officer I certification issued prior to 11/18/13; or Fire Officer II certification issued after 11/18/13.
4. Largo Fire Rescue firefighter for five years.
5. Largo Fire Rescue engine driver certification.
6. Largo Fire Rescue acting lieutenant certification.

Responsibilities of Fire Administration:

1. Fire administration will publish the job announcement, testing dates and needed study materials for the position at least 90 days before the process begins.
2. Test reference materials will be made available to personnel at least 90 days before the examination is scheduled. No additional materials will be utilized for the examination after the date of notice.

Responsibilities of Applicants:

Employees wishing to participate in the promotional process must submit a request with fire administration during the application period. The written request should indicate the employee's interest in participating in the promotional process as well as provide documentation that the eligibility requirements have been met (i.e. hard-copy memo with copies of certifications, etc.).

Fire administration will review each request to take the examination to ensure the eligibility requirements have been met and will notify the candidates of their eligibility to participate in the process. A city application for the position being sought must be completed as required by human resources. Those applicants requesting veteran's preference points must apply for such preference as identified by human resources.


Testing Process:

The testing process will consist of three distinct sections, including:

1. Written Examination – a score of 80% on the written examination is needed to pass and continue on through the testing process. Those candidates not receiving at least an 80% on the written examination will be excluded from the remainder of the testing process. Veteran's preference points will then be added to the candidate's passing written examination score only; veteran's points will not be added to scores less than 80%.
2. Assessment Center – may include, but not be limited to, a tactical scenario, in-basket exercise, teaching presentation, conflict resolution scenario, or other

Appendix B

Largo Fire Rescue Standard Operating Procedure 309

LARGO FIRE RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE		
	CATEGORY: TRAINING	SOP: 309
	SUBJECT: ACTING OFFICER CERTIFICATION	PAGE 1 OF 2
	APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF SIGNATURE ON FILE	EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/2008
		REVISION DATE: MAY 14, 2014
	REVIEWED	

INTRODUCTION**Acting Lieutenant**

For the purpose of providing the highest level of safety and proficiency in the acting officer position, the following certification criteria has been established.

Testing of acting lieutenant candidates identifies a person's knowledge, skill and aptitude as it relates to the position of acting officer. The testing criteria as outlined below is intended to be a performance minimum and should not be construed to be a final level of knowledge and ability of a certified acting officer. All candidates successfully completing the acting officer certification are expected to increase their knowledge and skills through training, education, and practical exercise.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Fire Administration shall provide an in-house training program annually for the acting officer certification.

Candidates shall have up to 120 days from the start of the program to meet the minimum required "seat time," and document the required calls to complete the certification process.

Step one: When the in house training program is announced, send a memo through the chain of command to Fire Administration requesting to participate in the certification process along with copies of certificates from the required prerequisite classes.

Step two: The candidate must successfully pass a 50 question written examination prior to the start of the class. A minimum score of 80% is required. In the event of a failure, the candidate will be provided one (1) opportunity for a retest prior to start of the class.

Step three: The candidate will, with the assistance of their company officer, complete the Acting Officer (Lt) Training Manual. This includes completing the sign-off sheets, a completed evaluation form from the candidate's company officer for every shift spent as an acting officer, and the completion of the acting officer call log.

Minimum requirements:

1. Largo Fire Rescue Engine Driver Certification
 - All current Acting Lieutenants who do not possess Largo Fire Rescue's Engine-Driver Certification will be required to obtain said certification by July 1, 2013 to maintain their Acting Lieutenant designation.
2. Florida State Fire Officer Certification
 - Effective July 1, 2013, All Acting Lieutenant candidates must possess a State of Florida Officer I Certification issued prior to November 18th, 2013 or possess an active Florida Fire Officer II Certificate of Competency issued after November 18th, 2013.
 - All current Acting Lieutenants as of June 30, 2013 will retain their department certification status.

Appendix C

Largo Fire Rescue Standard Operating Procedure 601

SUBJECT: INCIDENT COMMAND	SOP: 601	PAGE 3 of 21
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GENERAL COMMAND DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND REQUIREMENTS

1. The Incident Commander and Command Staff shall be responsible for the following objectives at every emergency incident:
 - a Life safety of all civilians and first responders. The IC must use effective risk management to ensure all civilians are rescued, removed from harm, and along with first responders are kept safe throughout the duration of the incident.
 - b Establishing command and control of the incident.
 - c Effective size up and ongoing evaluation of the situation, hazards, and potential consequences of all actions and inactions.
 - d Establishing and maintaining effective communication with all units and resources.
 - e Develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP), and begin assigning tactical resources to accomplish the strategies in the IAP.
 - f Maintain accountability of all personnel, crews, their assignments, and location, throughout the duration of the incident.
 - g Appropriate use of resources based on the situation.
 - h Stabilization of the incident.
 - i Property conservation.
 - j De-escalation of the incident, establishing an effective demobilization plan to return all fire and rescue resources to a ready state.
 - k Providing proper documentation of the incident and any required follow up, post incident critiques, and training.

TYPES OF INCIDENT COMMAND

1. There shall be three basic levels of Command operations established and utilized to command and control incidents;

Initial Command: A mobile type of command established by unit officers. This is an initial command level established by the first arriving company officer. (*"Officer's" shall be determined by the standards within each Department, however it is strongly recommended each Department ensures their Officers are properly trained for the position, and meet or exceed NFPA 1521 Standards*).

Company Officers are by default the initial incident commander at every incident by virtue of the fact they were the first arriving fire department officer on-scene. It is not necessary for the first arriving officer to announce the establishment of "Initial Command" unless several companies will be actively working at the same incident scene. For example a single engine and rescue at a vehicle crash, there is no need to establish "Initial Command" unless the engine officer begins calling for additional resources.

The Initial Command may remain mobile so the officer can conduct an effective size up, direct personnel, and begin initial company operations. Initial Command shall **not** be passed from one unit officer to another; it shall only be instituted by the first arriving fire department officer and held until a Chief Officer arrives on-scene to establish an Incident Command Post. On minor incidents the company officer may elect to remain as the Incident Commander, providing they are not overwhelmed or become task saturated. If the Company Officer chooses to retain Command on minor incidents, he or she is still

Appendix D

Chief Stefancic Oral Interview Questions and Answers

1. Why do you feel LFR needs to train officers in the use of ICS? First and foremost for personnel safety and accountability, as well as to ensure there is no duplication of effort. I feel this is essential training for all officers because we allow all of our officers to serve in any general or command staff positions. Therefore, it is paramount they receive ICS education, training and on the job experience.

2. Do you have any personal observations of LFR incidents in the past which indicate ICS training is needed? In my experience, I have identified the need for ICS training when it is outside the scope of a single family dwelling fire; we train and practice for these often. However, when it comes to those incidents we do not do all the time, we need some fine tuning. This is seen on traffic incidents with multiple patients and/or extrications, as well as incidents in multi-family dwellings and high-rises. Specifically the use of divisions and groups. It is important the command officers utilize their division and group supervisors efficiently to maintain an appropriate span of control and division of labor.

3. Do you feel continued training for officers in ICS is needed? Yes, continued ICS training is important. It is easy to look and study how the ICS system is supposed to work and ID all the possible boxes, however, one needs to learn how and when to create certain positions. This is best done through scenario training of vast incident types. Constant training and education also reinforces the expectation of the organization.

4. Any comments on the subject of ICS you would like to offer? Yes, a colleague (Division Chief Joseph Pennino) commented that ICS is an art, there is nothing exact about it. I couldn't agree with him anymore. Though every fire goes out and all patients get to the hospital,

the ICS system allows us to do this in an easy way. By repetitive use and training command officers build experience and comfort in using ICS, and build a "file-bank" in there head of what has worked or hasn't worked in the past. The more it is put to use by command officers, the better they will become at using it. If one becomes proficient on using them in the smaller incidents, the transition to using them in rare, large scale incidents will be easier.

Appendix E

Personal Observations of ICS at Largo Fire Rescue by Chris McDonald

Data Collection Form (ARP Research)

Date and Time:

Location:

Incident Type:

Period observed:

Was Incident Command System (ICS) used on this incident?

Did the ICS appear to flow smoothly?

Did all officers on scene appear to be familiar with the ICS system?

Were there any areas for improvement in ICS use noted/ discussed?

Was there an after-action critique for officers tasked with command roles?

What is Chris McDonald's opinion on why areas for improvement on ICS occurred at this incident?

Would training on ICS be beneficial for addressing the areas for improvement?

Appendix F

Email Questionnaire

Hello all, I'm working on my applied research project, and would like to ask for your assistance please.

I'm researching how departments prepare their officers for operating incident command. Specific methods which departments utilize to train their officers to use the ICS system at incidents?

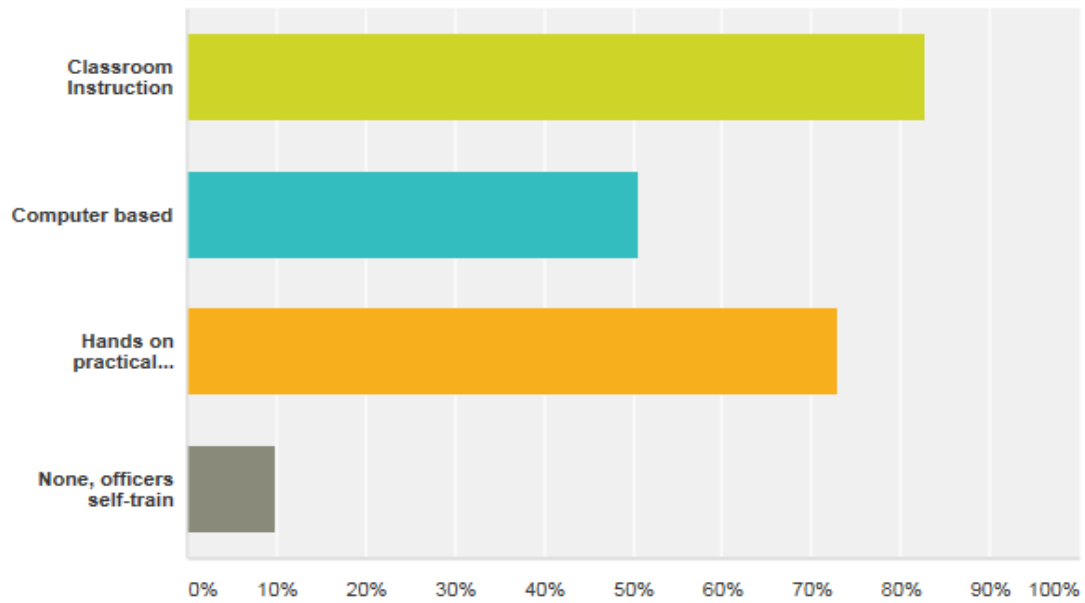
Table top scenarios, classroom instruction, simulation training, back of vehicle command board practice, dry-run practice at drill grounds with engine companies, trucks etc.?

Appendix G

Survey Results

department offer for ICS? Please select all that apply.

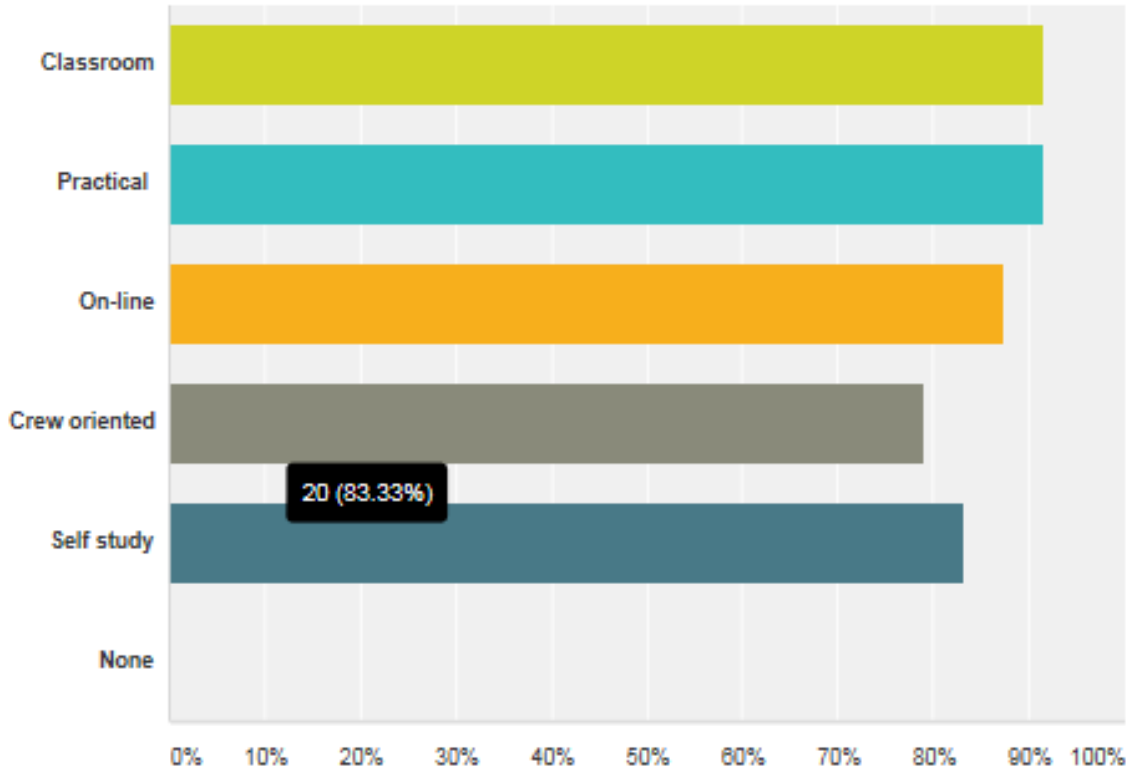
Answered: 81 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Classroom Instruction	82.72% 67
Computer based	50.62% 41
Hands on practical (simulation, table-top drill)	72.84% 59
None, officers self-train	9.88% 8
Total Respondents: 81	

Please check all that apply for the type(s) of Incident Command training you've received.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Classroom	91.67% 22
Practical	91.67% 22
On-line	87.50% 21
Crew oriented	79.17% 19
Self study	83.33% 20
None	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 24	