



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES
Affiliation: Command Guidelines
Subject: Area Command Activation and Management
Number: 450-47
Approved: 10/20/2025 **By: AC Dustin Dern**
Last Reviewed: **By:**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to establish a standardized framework for the activation, organization, and operational management of Unified Fire Authority (UFA) Area Command during complex or multiple simultaneous incidents. Consistent with NIMS/ICS, Area Command establishes area-wide priorities and allocates scarce resources among multiple incidents; it does not direct on-scene tactical operations. This ensures clear communication, resource coordination, and strategic oversight when incident demand exceeds the capacity of common incident management structures.

SCOPE:

This SOG applies whenever two or more significant incidents, events, or planned operations occur concurrently within UFA or in adjacent jurisdictions affecting UFA system coverage, including mutual-aid operations and incidents coordinated with Salt Lake County Emergency Management and VECC. When incidents are multijurisdictional or involve state/federal partners (FFSL, BLM, etc.), UFA will establish a Unified Area Command with agency executives or designees.

GUIDELINE:

- 1.0 Area Command Defined
 - 1.1 Area Command is a strategic-level management structure activated when two or more major incidents occur simultaneously within UFA’s jurisdiction, when a single incident spans multiple Municipalities or Battalions and requires centralized coordination, or when the volume of incidents impacts a small geographical area. Area Command does not replace the authority of individual Incident Commanders but provides overarching direction and resource prioritization.
- 2.0 Activation Criteria
 - 2.1 Area Command may be activated under any of the following conditions:
 - 2.1.1 Two or more 2nd-alarm or greater incidents within 30 minutes or are occurring concurrently.
 - 2.1.2 Multiple smaller incidents that impact a zone, battalion, or municipality.
 - 2.1.3 Regional fire weather conditions elevate the likelihood of large-scale fire activity.
 - 2.1.4 Major wildland-urban interface incident with predicted rapid escalation.



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- 2.1.5 A major structure fire requiring three or more alarms.
- 2.1.6 Critical resource shortages are affecting UFA's ability to maintain system-wide coverage.
- 2.1.7 An Assistant Chief, Operations Chief, Battalion Chief, Division Chief, Duty Officer, may activate Area Command.
- 2.1.8 At the direction of the Fire Chief or an Assistant Chief.

3.0 Area Definition

- 3.1 When activated, Area Command will define management 'areas' aligned to battalion boundaries and municipal risk profiles (east bench, west bench, south valley). Areas may be redrawn as incidents evolve. These area(s) may include:
 - A specific Zone (e.g. Zone 108).
 - Multiple Zones under stress.
 - A Battalion (e.g. Battalion 12)
 - The entire UFA jurisdiction.
- 3.2 A GIS map or descriptive boundary will be used to communicate the defined area to all affected personnel and stations.

4.0 Area Command Structure

- 4.1 Type I Area Command (Major incidents or extended operations)
 - 4.1.1 Minimum Components:
 - Area Commander – Assistant Chief, Operations Chief, or Fire Marshal
 - Operations Support Officer(s)
 - Planning Section Officer
 - Communications Officer (assigned to VECC or Central Dispatch)
 - UFA Communications Technician



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- Resource Officer
 - Resource ordering, staging, transport, supply
- Liaison Officer – Coordinates with:
 - Regional partner Agencies
 - Impacted Municipalities
 - County Emergency Management
 - Cooperating agencies
 - UFA Command Staff

4.1.2 A Command Staff Chief (Assistant Chief, Operations Chief, or Fire Marshal) will respond and establish Type I Area Command in person. Full ICS structure should be implemented. An Area Command Action Plan (ACAP) will be generated and updated each operational period. ECC activation is strongly recommended.

4.2 Type II Area Command (Short-duration, localized events with multiple incidents):

4.2.1 May be initiated by the Duty Officer, Battalion Chief, Division Chief, Operations Chief, or Assistant Chief.

4.2.2 Area Command may operate virtually or with limited overhead, with one individual fulfilling multiple roles.

4.2.3 A simplified action plan and verbal updates may be sufficient.

4.2.4 ECC activation is not typically required.

4.2.5 Type II Area Command provides rapid coordination without the need for full ICS expansion. Ideal for short-term surge, system strain, or coordination needs.

5.0 Communications Plan

5.1 The Communications Chief will:



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5.1.1 Be located at VECC or Central Dispatch (for Type I) or coordinate remotely (for Type II);

5.1.1.1 Type I (Full): Publish ICS-205/205A, designate an Area Command channel/talkgroup, identify resource ordering path (IC → Area Command → VECC), and name a Teams/phone bridge for hourly Area Command huddles.

5.1.1.2 Type II (Minimal/Virtual): Name a single contact/call sign, designate a command talk group and VECC resource ordering pathway, set update intervals (30, 60 minutes).

5.1.2 Initiate direct dispatching;

5.1.3 Ensure all communication channels are assigned and documented;

5.1.4 Use radio discipline and follow established guidelines for resource ordering;

5.1.4.1 No resource requests direct to Dispatch from ICPs, all orders flow from IC → Area Command → VECC (exceptions: Mayday/Emergency Traffic).

5.1.5 Maintain communications with:

- Incident Commanders
- Division Supervisors
- ECC (if activated)
- Fire Chief and Command Staff

5.2 An ICS 205 will be developed for Type I. For Type II, verbal or text-based plans are acceptable.

6.0 Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) Activation

6.1 The Salt Lake County ECC may be activated by the Area Commander for a Type I Area Command. The Area Command sets operational priorities and allocates resources among incidents. The ECC provides policy-level coordination, intergovernmental liaison, JIC/PIO support, Mass Care (sheltering/family



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reunification), and situational reporting to elected officials.

Activate the ECC when:

- Regional policy decisions are needed.
- Multi-Jurisdictional impacts exist.
- Significant public information coordination is required.
- Area Command requests ECC support for logistics beyond fire resources.

The ECC serves as the coordination hub for:

- Multi-agency resource tracking.
- Mutual aid and state/federal assistance.
- Public information coordination.
- Policy-level support.
- Sheltering
- Family reunification.
- Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) notifications.

6.2 ECC activation is optional for Type II Area Command but is encouraged if regional coordination is required.

7.0 Regional Resource Coordination

7.1 All regional resource requests must route through the Area Command.

7.2 Requests for overhead teams, strike teams or task forces, supply caches (Water tenders, fuel, rehab, etc.) are routed: IC → Area Command → VECC/County EM; state wildland resources coordinated with FFSL; federal via standard channels when applicable.

7.3 Area Command assigns regional staging locations and a Staging Manager per ICS. Logistics manages travel, check-in, and demobilization.



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8.0 Fire and Support Personnel Staffing

8.1 Area Command may:

- Direct callbacks of suppression and support personnel
- Track real-time staffing and reserve unit availability
- Prioritize coverage of critical incidents and infrastructure

9.0 Apparatus Staffing and System Coverage

9.1 Area Command may:

- Staff reserve apparatus
- Relocate companies between zones and battalions
- Form task forces or strike teams

9.2 Changes must be communicated to Dispatch, the Staffing Office, and on-duty Battalion Chiefs.

10.0 Objectives and Priorities

10.1 Area Command will issue written objectives and constraints/assumptions each operational period and brief ICs (life safety, incident stabilization, property conservation, continuity of UFA operations/system coverage).

10.2 Area Command will prioritize:

- Life-safety incidents
- Incidents with highest spread potential
- Impacts to critical infrastructure
- Coverage restoration
- MERF (Minimum Emergency Response Force)

11.0 Notifications



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11.1 Upon activation, or within 20 minutes of activation, the Area Commander or designee will notify and send an initial SITREP via phone, radio, or email to:

- UFA Fire Chief and Assistant Chiefs
- Salt Lake or Utah County Fire Chiefs
- Dispatch (VECC or Central)
- County Emergency Management
- Impacted municipalities and allied agencies

11.2 When necessary, notify regional hospitals when transport demand or coverage is impacted (through VECC/ECC medical coordination).

12.0 ICS 209 – Incident Status Reporting Summary

12.1 To maintain awareness:

- ICS 209s required for major incidents under Area Command
- Submitted to Planning Support prior to each operational period
- Summary shared with command staff and ECC

12.2 Type II operations may use verbal updates or summaries as appropriate but does not warrant a full 209.

13.0 Demobilization

13.1 Area Command will demobilize when:

- Incident complexity subsides
- Resource demand stabilizes
- ICs resume autonomous control
- ECC (if activated) is closed

13.2 An AAR will be completed post-demobilization.