



In-Station Training

TM 24-00 Purpose and Intent



Author

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Introduction

10-Minute Trainings have been produced since 2017 to provide tactical decision games for company and command officers to develop and refine their incident command skills. Originally developed when I served as fire chief with Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue, they were rebranded when I became the fire chief with East County Fire and Rescue in 2023. As I will retire after over 50 years in the fire service and 33 years as a chief officer, these training materials will be rebranded yet again under the name Command Competence, CFBT-US LLC.

The mission of Command Competence is to integrate research on fire in the built environment and naturalistic decision-making to help firefighters and fire officers develop and improve their competence as incident commanders.

Command Competence builds on the underlying mission of CFBT-US, LLC which for 18 years has been to bring science to the street and improve firefighters and fire officers understanding of practical fire dynamics.

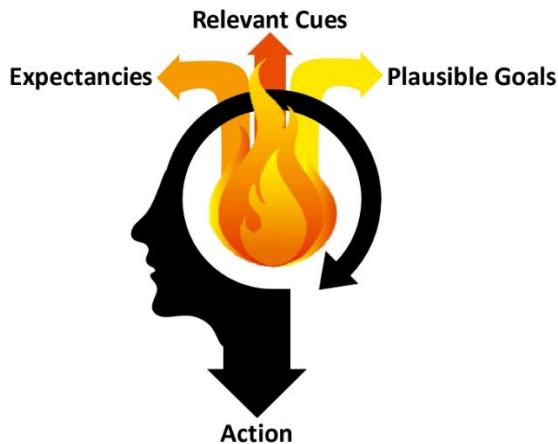
Purpose

The introduction to 10-Minute Training has been revised and updated to introduce new users to this type of training and its underlying concepts.

Firefighters and fire officers operate under significant time pressure in a high-stake environment with vague or shifting goals, imperfect information, and dynamic conditions. Decision-making in this context can be described as naturalistic decision-making. In the 1980s Dr. Gary Klein developed the recognition primed decision-making model based in large part the study of fireground commanders. When making decisions in a naturalistic context, decision-makers depend a great deal on recognition of patterns based on experience.

Watch [Gary Klein's introduction to NDM and RPD](#) (ShadowBox Training, 2022) and [The RPD Model: An Intro to Recognition Primed Decision Making](#) (DecisionSkills, 2021).

The Command Competence logo is built around a graphic representing the four byproducts of recognition: expectancies, relevant cues, plausible goals, and actions.



Stay tuned for more information on how the recognition primed decision-making (RPD) connects to the Blue Card strategic decision-making model, critical factors, standard conditions, and standard outcomes.

Firefighting is not warfighting. However imperfect the comparison is, there are many lessons that the fire service can learn from the military. British Army Colonel T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) wrote:

Nine tenths of tactics are certain and taught in books: but the irrational tenth is like the kingfisher flashing across the pool, and that is the test of generals. It can only be ensured by instinct, sharpened by thought practicing the stroke so often that at the crisis it is as natural as a reflex (Lawrence, 1920).

At the beginning of *Mastering Tactics* by Major John Schmidt, USMCR (2002), he states “In war there is no substitute for experience, no substitute for the intuitive skill that comes from repeated practice. Tactical decision games are a practice field for the tactical leader” (p. 2). 10-Minute Trainings are a practice incident space for fire service task, tactical, strategic level leaders. The first company officer arriving at an emergency incident (IC #1) functions at all three levels (no small responsibility). A later arriving command officer (IC #2) functions at the strategic and tactical level unless they assign division supervisors to manage tactical operations in a specific area of the hazard zone (in which case the IC can focus on the strategic level). 10-Minute Trainings focus on the role of IC #1, IC #2, or tactical level bosses such as division or group supervisors.

Learning Outcome

Firefighters and fire officers understand the concept of recognition-primed decision-making and the methodology underlying 10-Minute Training and how this training aids in the development of decision-making experience.

Conducting the Training

This 10-Minute Training does not look at an emergency incident, rather it provides understanding of tactical decision games and the commonality that these military exercises have with 10-Minute Training.

Read “Are You the Next Napoleon?” on pages 2-5 in *Mastering Tactics* (Schmidt, 2002). After reading this article, consider how you can use 10-Minute Trainings as an individual and how this training can best be used by your crew or the companies you supervise to develop common perspectives and experience in strategic and tactical decision-making.

Consider the following key concepts in the use of 10-Minute Training:

- **Time constraint.** For IC #1 a 10-Minute Training should only take 10-Minutes to address questions related to your company, the second arriving company, and transfer of command (you would likely not have any longer on the fireground). Answer these questions without discussion. In 10-Minute Trainings for IC #2, the time constraint impacts assessment of the actions that have and are being taken, transfer command, and to reinforce or adjust the incident action plan (IAP).
- **Limited information.** You do not have all the information that you might like when completing a 10-Minute Training. You likely will have far less information and greater ambiguity on the fireground.
- **Radio communication.** After the first question related to critical factors considered during response, the answers to questions related to the initial radio report, update report, orders to other companies, and transfer of command are in the form of radio communications (to your crew and other companies as IC #1, and to companies as IC #2). Remember that “verbal clarity requires...intense practice” (p.28, Mattis & West, 2019).
- **Decide, then discuss.** After transfer of command, then discuss responses to questions related to strategy, risk management, and action planning.
- **Questions about the incident.** 10-Minute Trainings are based on actual incidents. The additional questions provided in the training will extend beyond the 10-minute timeframe but provide an opportunity to extend learning by examining incident operations as they occurred.
- **Additional learning.** Each 10-Minute Training includes suggestions for further study on related topics or ways to integrate the lessons provided by the training and additional learning with hands-on skills.



Safe and effective response to emergency incidents requires that we be competent. “Competence is having sufficient knowledge, judgment, and skills to perform a particular duty, job, or function” (USMC, 2020, p. 1-5). Firefighters and officers must be competent in a wide range of physical skills and in the decision-making and communications skills necessary to function effectively as a team.

When completing 10-Minute Training in a group, consider assigning the roles of the other companies and command officer to different people (if the size of the group permits). After completing the initial set of questions, ask the role players to state what actions they would have taken based on the communications the IC provided. Discussion and assessment of these actions can focus on the tactical and/or task level. This discussion provides an excellent opportunity to build shared understanding.

Consider using the after-action review (AAR) format outlined in the *Incident Response Pocket Guide* (IRPG) (NWCG, 2022). The AAR answers the following questions:

1. What was planned?
2. What happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do better next time?

Rubrics for assessment of performance as IC #1 and IC #2 are provided in Appendixes A and B of this 10-Minute Training. These rubrics will not necessarily be used with each 10-Minute Training but provide context for feedback and improvement of IC #1's and IC #2's skills as an incident commander.

Important: Some of the video used in 10-Minute Trainings show less than ideal emergency operations. Remember that no firefighter or fire officer goes to an incident wanting to do a poor job. There are many factors that may influence incident operations and video or a still photograph seldom, if ever provide the entire story. Keep in mind that videos or photos of real incidents are used to provide a learning context.

Additional Learning: There are a wide range of resources on tactical decision games (TDGs) from the military and wildland fire community. Dig into these to improve your knowledge and skill in the use of 10-Minute Trainings (and to find other opportunities to use this training methodology to improve your decision-making skills and those of the members that you work with).

United States Marine Corps TDG Resources

- [Mastering Tactics](#) (Schmidt, 2002).
- [How we Decide](#) (Schmidt, n.d.).

Wildfire Lessons Learned Center TDG Resources

- [Tactical Decision Games - Module 1 – Introduction](#). (WildFire LLC, 2012a).
- [Tactical Decision Games - Module 2 - Engaging the Participants](#). (WildFire LLC, 2012b).
- [Tactical Decision Games - Module 3 - Facilitators Role](#). (WildFire LLC, 2012c).
- [Tactical Decision Games - Module 4 - After Action Review](#). (WildFire LLC, 2012d).

While not specifically focused on TDG's, here are additional resources from the Wildfire Lessons Learned Center on conducting effective after-action reviews.

- [Part 1 - Conducting Effective After-Action Reviews \(AAR\)](#) (WildFire LLC, 2012e).
- [Part 2 - Conducting Effective After-Action Reviews \(AAR\)](#) (WildFire LLC, 2012f).

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Schmidt, J. (2002). *Mastering tactics*. Retrieved December 2, 2023 from <https://bit.ly/2WHjHAB>.

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Wildfire Lessons Learned Center (WildFire LLC). (2012e). *Part 1 - Conducting effective after-action reviews (AAR)*. Retrieved December 2, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/46BYQQt>.

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Appendix IC #1 Rubric

Dimension	Developing (1)	Competent (3)	Exemplary (5)
Crew Pre-Arrival Communication: Response route, water supply, area and building information, pre-arrival task assignments.	Did not communicate with crew members prior to arrival.	Communicated fixed fireground factors related to the incident.	Communicated fixed fireground factors related to the incident. Identified water supply location and required tactics. Ensured clarity of pre-arrival assignments.
Initial Radio Report (IRR): Building/Area Description (size, height occupancy), problem (nothing showing, smoke showing, working fire, defensive fire conditions), initial incident action plan (tasks, location, objectives), declaration of strategy (offense or defense), assume and name command, specified resource determination and Level 2 Staging location if needed (greater alarm).	No IRR transmitted. The IRR did not include one or more of the required elements. The IRR was verbose and/or unclear.	Included all required elements of the IRR.	Included all required elements in the correct sequence. IRR was concise with maximum information density.
Strategy: IC #1 must select offense or defense based on critical fireground factors.	Selected an inappropriate strategy.	Selected appropriate strategy.	Selected appropriate strategy. Supported strategic decision-making in the incident debrief, demonstrating accurate situational awareness and potential for changing conditions.
Incident Action Plan (IAP): The plan of action communicated by the IRR, tactical, and task orders given by IC #1.	Did not support, was inconsistent with, or failed to address critical tactical requirements of the identified strategy.	Corresponded with the identified strategy.	Corresponded with the identified strategy and provided a solid foundation for potential changes in conditions.
Task Orders: Task orders to IC #1's crew to implement the IAP.	Did not provide task orders to crew members to implement the IAP. Task orders were unclear.	Task orders were provided to crew members.	Task orders were clear and concise.

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Dimension	Developing (1)	Competent (3)	Exemplary (5)
Initial Actions: Actions taken by the crew of the first arriving engine (based on the IRR and task orders given to the crew)	Were inappropriate. Did not support the IAP or addressed non-critical fireground factors. Did not address 2 in/2 out or 2 in/1 out as appropriate based on critical fireground factors.	Supported the IAP and addressed the most critical fireground factors. Addressed 2 in/2 out or 2 in/1 out as appropriate based on critical fireground factors.	Supported the IAP and efficiently addressed the most critical fireground factors. Addressed 2 in/2 out or 2 in/1 out as appropriate based on critical fireground factors.
Update Report: Results of 360 or no 360, stories on Side Charlie (or other side), basement and type, changes to the IAP, hazards, reaffirmed strategy, and identified accountability location.	No update report provided. Update report did not include required elements.	Update report included all required elements.	Included all required elements in the correct sequence. Update was concise with maximum information density.
Assignment of Additional Resources: Tactical orders provided to additional resources when they report that they are Level 1 staged.	Did not provide tactical orders to additional resources. Did not use task, location, objective format. Assignments did not support the IAP or 2 in/2 out.	Provided tactical orders in task, location objective format. Supported the IAP and addressed 2 in/2 out.	Provided tactical orders in task, location objective format using standard plays where appropriate. Assignments were concise with maximum information density. Supported the IAP and addressed 2 in/2 out.
Command Transfer: Transfer of command between IC #1 (company officer) and IC #2 (command officer).	Did not complete the Command Transfer sequence. Did not provide a conditions, actions, needs (CAN) report.	Provided a conditions, actions, need report when requested.	Provided a conditions, actions, need report when requested. Identified needs based on critical fireground factors and status of tactical operations.
Command Presence: The Incident Commander must be in control of themselves as well as the resources being managed.	Presented a significant lack of confidence in communicating the incident action plan. Did not gain control of incident operations or lost focus during the incident and was unable to reestablish control of ongoing operations.	Established command and communicated the plan of action in a calm and confident manner.	Established command and communicated the plan of action in a calm and confident manner (i.e. highly poised). Maintained effective ongoing control of incident operations and responded to changing incident conditions effectively and in a proactive manner.

Appendix B- IC #2 Rubric

Dimension	Developing (1)	Competent (3)	Exemplary (5)
Pre-Arrival Consideration of Fixed and Variable Incident Factors: Response route, water supply, area and building information, weather conditions (particularly wind speed and direction).	Did not identify fixed fireground factors related to the incident.	Identified major fixed and variable fireground factors related to the incident that are known prior to arrival. Maintained an accurate awareness of the location and function of resources operating at the incident.	Identified fixed and variable incident factors that are known prior to arrival including response route, water supply, area and building information, time of day, and relevant weather conditions. Identified water supply location and required tactics. Accessed pre-plan information prior to response.
Initial Actions: Actions taken by the first arriving command officer prior to contacting IC #1.	Did not position in an appropriate strategic command position. Did not initiate a tactical worksheet.	Positioned in an appropriate strategic command position. Initiated a tactical worksheet.	Positioned in an appropriate strategic command position. Initiated a tactical worksheet. Conducted personal reconnaissance if necessary (i.e., IC #1 did not report completion of a 360).
Command Transfer: Transfer of command between IC #1 (company officer) and IC #2 (command officer).	Did not assume command when appropriate (incident not controlled or near control prior to arrival). Assumed command without command transfer (unless due to critical issues requiring immediate action). Did not communicate command transfer to dispatch.	Assumed command when appropriate (incident not controlled or near controlled prior to arrival). Confirmed or determined the location and function of operating resources. Obtained a CAN from IC #1 Confirmed command transfer ("I'll take it from out here"). Communicated command transfer to DISPATCH and reaffirmed strategy and resource determination.	Assumed command when appropriate (incident not controlled or near controlled prior to arrival). Maintained an accurate awareness of the location and function of resources operating at the incident during response and confirmed the location and function of operating resources. Obtained a CAN from IC #1. Confirmed command transfer ("I'll take it from out here"). Communicated command transfer to DISPATCH and reaffirmed strategy and resource determination.

Dimension	Developing (1)	Competent (3)	Exemplary (5)
Strategy: IC #2 must maintain an offensive or defensive strategy based on critical fireground factors.	Did not correct an inappropriate strategy established by IC #1 Did not shift strategy when required based on gaining additional information or changing incident conditions.	Maintained the strategy established by IC #1 when appropriate. Shifted strategy when required based on recognition of critical fireground factors.	Maintained the strategy established by IC #1 when appropriate. Anticipated the need and shifted strategy based on potential for changing conditions.
Incident Action Plan (IAP): The plan of action communicated through tactical orders given by IC #2.	Did not support, was inconsistent with, or failed to address critical tactical requirements of the identified strategy.	Corresponded with the identified strategy.	Corresponded with the identified strategy and provided a solid foundation for potential changes in conditions.
Assignment of Additional Resources: Tactical orders provided to additional resources when they report that they are Level 1 staged.	Did not provide tactical orders to additional resources. Did not use task, location, objective format. Assignments did not support the IAP or 2 in/2 out.	Provided tactical orders in task, location objective format. Supported the IAP and addressed 2 in/2 out.	Provided tactical orders in task, location objective format using standard plays where appropriate. Assignments were concise with maximum information density. Supported the IAP and addressed 2 in/2 out.
Span of Control & Incident Organization: Use of organizational components such as divisions and groups to maintain an acceptable span-of-control and provide tactical supervision and safety oversight.	Had an unacceptable span of control (greater than 5-7 direct reports). Established divisions or groups with a single resource (over organizing). Used groups inside the hazard zone. Made resource assignments that resulted in an excessive span of control for tactical supervisors.	Maintained an acceptable span of control (not exceeding 5-7). Used divisions to manage multiple resources assigned to the same operating area in the hazard zone. Used groups for functional assignments requiring multiple resources operating outside the hazard zone. Ensured that resource assignments to tactical supervisors allowed for adequate span of control.	Maintained an acceptable span of control (not exceeding 5-7). Used divisions to manage multiple resources assigned to the same operating area in the hazard zone. Used groups for functional assignments requiring multiple resources operating outside the hazard zone. Ensured that resource assignments to tactical supervisors allowed for adequate span of control. Used a support officer and division safety officers to assist in managing strategic and tactical workload.

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Dimension	Developing (1)	Competent (3)	Exemplary (5)
Incident Documentation: IC #2 must track the location, function, and work time of incident resources and use job aids to maintain ongoing situational awareness.	Did not use a tactical worksheet.	Used a tactical worksheet and documented the location, function, and work time of operating resources. Maintained accountability by resource.	Documented dispatched and responding resources with identified staffing levels. Used a tactical worksheet and documented the location, function, and work time of operating resources. Maintained accountability by resource. Tracked organizational assignments (e.g., divisions and groups) Documented benchmarks. Used the tactical worksheet as a job aid to document water supply, level two staging, and critical safety information. Diagrammed the incident to provide visual documentation of the location of resources. Tracked water supply and attack lines in operation by resource.
Command Presence: The Incident Commander must be in control of themselves as well as the resources being managed.	Presented a significant lack of confidence in communicating the incident action plan. Did not gain control of incident operations or lost focus during the incident and was unable to reestablish control of ongoing operations	Established command and communicated the plan of action in a calm and confident manner.	Established command and communicated the plan of action in a calm and confident manner (i.e., highly poised). Maintained effective ongoing control of incident operations and responded to changing incident conditions effectively and in a proactive manner.
Contingency Planning: The incident commander must anticipate that things will not go as planned and must be able to adapt to changes in conditions.	Did not consider potential contingencies.	Considered and reacted appropriately to changes in conditions.	Anticipated and proactively addressed potential changes in conditions requiring immediate action.

