



RIVER DELTA FIRE DISTRICT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

Post Incident Critique

201.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform Post-Incident Critique (PIC) to identify strengths and weaknesses within the District. This policy describes the various types of a PIC that can be used in the evaluation of district performance. A PIC may also be used to identify equipment needs, staffing deficiencies and training needs. The information collected during the PIC process also may be useful in justifying future funding requests for equipment, personnel and/or training.

201.2 POLICY

The PIC is a valuable tool to improve overall operations of the fire service. It is the policy of this district to use PIC as a tool to identify areas of strength and weakness within the district on an incident-by-incident basis, for the purpose of continuous improvement.

201.2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Incident Commanders, Fire Marshals, Battalion Chiefs and command staff have shared responsibility for the overall effectiveness of the PIC process.

The Incident Commander should informally analyze every incident to improve personnel, unit and system performance. After every major incident or special event, the Incident Commander should develop a PIC to determine strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned about the incident operation.

201.3 POST-INCIDENT CRITIQUE

A PIC should be completed within 30 days of an incident and may result in recommendations for changes to procedures, staffing, equipment use, policy and/or training to better enable the District to serve the community.

A PIC should include lessons learned from the observation of effective and efficient methods of mitigating a major incident. These include all strategic decisions, operational issues, built-in fire protection devices and anything else that assisted in mitigating the incident.

A PIC may include the following:

- Evaluation of the overall operational effectiveness
- Evaluation of safety procedures
- Evaluation of the success or failure of tactical objectives
- Evaluation of the application and effectiveness of policies and/or procedures



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- Specific knowledge that might be beneficial

The information gained from a PIC should be used by company officers and staff teams to:

- Reinforce the incident management system.
- Evaluate current training programs and/or identify training needs.
- Evaluate current policies and procedures.
- Identify and prioritize planning needs for the future.
- Identify equipment problems/concerns.
- Evaluate fire prevention inspection and public education effectiveness.

201.4 TYPES OF POST-INCIDENT CRITIQUES

201.4.1 HOT WASH

An incident "Tailboard critique" should be performed at the incident scene prior to the release of equipment or personnel. A tailboard critique is a meeting of all involved personnel on-scene. It is an informal briefing of the incident, the actions taken and problems encountered. An Incident Commander may present an analysis with key companies or crews while they are on-scene. The advantage to this is that crews are present and all aspects of the call are still fresh. One disadvantage to a tailboard critique might occur at medical incidents, when some members may be caring for patients and are unable to participate.

If the critique takes place while on-scene, it is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to:

- 201.4.1.1 Meet in a safe area, even if it requires relocating to another area.
- 201.4.1.2 Consider the impact of company downtime.
- 201.4.1.3 Consider public perception.

201.4.2 INFORMAL PIC

An informal PIC is used following smaller multi-company incidents, such as structure fires, medical or special operations incidents. The Incident Commander or a designated representative should arrange for and conduct the informal critique.

201.4.3 COMPANY LEVEL PIC

Company level PIC is highly encouraged and should be a standard communication tool for all company officers. It is appropriate for significant incidents involving single companies as well as two-company stations where both companies participated at the incident.



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Company level critiques promote unity and teamwork, enhance communication, improve company performance and is a useful tool for evaluating the health and welfare of crew members following certain traumatic incidents. A company level PIC can take place while returning from a call using the headsets, at the fire station or any location that provides privacy.

201.4.4 FORMAL PIC

A formal PIC should be conducted following all:

- Multiple alarm structure fires
- Multiple alarm brush fires
- Multiple alarm Emergency Medical Service (EMS) incidents
- Multiple alarm special operations incidents
- Incidents in which an unusual event occurs, (e.g., explosion, collapse).
- Fires resulting in a fatality.
- Fires resulting in injury to firefighters that is serious enough to require transport to a medical facility.
- Near miss incidents where firefighters could have been injured.
- Hazardous materials incidents with multi-company involvement.
- Technical rescue operations with multi-company involvement.