

Command & Control Application for Law Enforcement

White Paper

Take Command, Establish Control: The underpinning concept of effective incident and emergency management for law enforcement agencies and emergency services. With the Command and Control System at its foundation, ForwardCOMMAND allows personnel to respond and manage incidents and emergencies using desktop and mobile platform technology.



Executive Summary

Emergency incidents are nothing new and law enforcement and other combat agencies have been acting as first responders since their establishment. What has changed is the capability of the agencies concerned and the effectiveness of the response required. Coupled with the proliferation of modern IT platforms, there is an increased expectation from the community that the major incidents and emergencies are managed and resolved with minimal disruption and loss of life.

Increasingly, combat agencies are adopting command and control methodologies to systematically manage their response. This involves the deployment of a forward commander who is appropriately trained and equipped to lead a team responsible for a number of critical functional areas in response to the incident. The greater the scope and impact of the major incident/emergency, the higher the level of cooperation and integration required amongst the responding team and their commander.

Command and Control System explained

The command and control system is based on several critical functional areas that are vital in the management of major incidents and emergencies. The system can be explained through the concepts of roles; the incident management team, and specific functional area responsibilities.

During any major incident, the commander provides the leadership and direction to resolve the emergency and effectively manage activities of responding resources. The commander is responsible for establishing the incident management team and assigning appropriate personnel to functional roles. The commander outlines their intent and provides all personnel with a clear mission. The commander also conducts a thorough appreciation of the incident and formulates appropriate courses of action based on identified factors and deductions.

The Commander is supported by personnel allocated to the major functional areas of Planning, Operations, and Administration/Logistics. This is further supported by the additional functional areas of Investigation, Intelligence, and Public Information.

The functional area of Planning is responsible for conducting forward looking planning, and in particular, developing the incident action plan. Operations is



concerned with executing the incident action plan, whilst Administration/Logistics ensure that the incident action plan is resourced. *Forward*COMMAND facilitates the incident action plan with effective task execution and workflow functionality. Additionally, a resource plan is also maintained by Administration/Logistics ensuring that resources are effectively managed at the incident scene. The remaining functional areas of Investigation, Intelligence and Public Information have unique responsibilities surrounding the management of their own unique plans.

Why is it important?

A commander can only have 5-6 direct reports. After that, the span of control is greatly diminished. Often, without a proper system, the Commander is left with managing numerous resources including operations teams, specialists, physical resources, and other concerns. This is simply not manageable once the span of control is exceeded. There is a requirement that responsibilities are shared and hierarchies established to ensure that no one person is inundated with information and activity. *Forward*COMMAND encourages the commander to employ the command and control system methodology, thereby assigning major functional roles to selected personnel.

The incident management team often have less training than the commander and cannot be expected to formulate systems and plans on the fly without coaching and close supervision. The commander is reliant on efficient performance to get up to date resource tracking, intelligence information, operation planning, and tasking workflow. *Forward*COMMAND features integral plans and checklists that guides personnel in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

Major operations centres are operated using communications hubs, large displays, and inter-agency messaging software. In contrast, the practitioner in the field often relies on their notebook and training to perform first responder functions, knowing that they can escalate the situation to a supervisor or forward commander. What happens when the forward commander is not sufficiently trained and experienced. Here exists the capability gap between first officer emergency management and comprehensive operations centre expertise and resources. *Forward*COMMAND assists the senior officer/forward commander perform their function using proven methodology. In essence, they become an operations centre in the field.

Due to the varied nature of type and scope for major incidents and emergencies, it would be unrealistic to expect first responders to cover off all required actions and responsibilities without some guidance. Incident and emergency action



checklists as well as operations manuals contribute significantly to an effective response. These often have to be kept on hand by the first responder and currency maintained. *Forward*COMMAND maintains the latest versions of reference materials including incident specific checklists and role responsibilities which are integral to the application.

Artifacts generated during a major incident are significant and are spread across a variety of mediums. Whiteboards are temporary, papers and notes get lost, verbal taskings and instructions are sometimes forgotten in the heat of the moment. *Forward*COMMAND maintains all holdings for subsequent use in evidentiary proceedings, debriefs, training, and general reference.

The *Forward*COMMAND solution

The *Forward*COMMAND application functionality includes:

- **Overview-** at a glance view of critical incident information including the mission statement.
- **Logging-** System generated activity logs in addition to user created log entries
- **Checklists-** Various system and user generated checklist types including: Incident Specific; Responsibilities; Tasks; and Incident Action Plan
- **Plans-** Develop a variety of plans to track resources, collect Intelligence, manage an investigation, and define the media strategy.
- **Records-** Create comprehensive Investigation and Intelligence records
- **Spatial-** quickly reference a map of the incident location
- **Attachments-** Add multimedia and other artifacts
- **Contacts-** Maintain a list of contacts both internal and external to the organisation
- **Library-** Maintain a library of SOPs, Plans, and other reference material



Consider some of the following scenarios where *Forward*COMMAND can be employed effectively:

Air Crash Exercise (Simulated Operation)
A multiagency exercise has been scheduled to practice and assess responses to a simulated air crash disaster. RAAF and Police planners develop the Exercise script, allocate personnel, and schedule commencement. Planners liaise with other involved agencies and script participation.

Music Festival (Planned Operation)
Police receive notification of an upcoming music festival which will require a police presence in order to maintain public order and community safety. The likelihood of illicit drugs also poses a requirement for law enforcement activities. The responsible command develops operational orders, assigns resources, and schedules operations.

Protest (Planned Operation)
Police receive notification of an upcoming protest march which will require traffic management as well as a contingent of police to ensure public order and community safety is maintained. The operation is planned and numerous contingencies formulated in response to identified risks.

Public Order Incident (Unplanned Operation)
After a shooting incident, the victim is conveyed to the nearby hospital where he subsequently passes away. Friends, family, and local community gather at the hospital demanding details. Local police struggle to maintain order and the situation escalates. The senior officer requests outside resources and establishes a command post in order to formally manage the incident.

Land Based Search (Unplanned Operation)
A small child is reported missing by concerned family members. It is also reported that the child has a mental disability and has gone missing from the family property which is surrounded by bushland and waterways. The responding senior officer establishes an incident team and formulates an incident action plan.

Fire/Explosion (Unplanned Operation)
A petrol tanker is involved in a major traffic collision and there is a significant risk of fire and explosion. First responders rescue occupants of vehicles and cordon off the immediate area. A fuel leak is evident and the senior officer liaises with other emergency services personnel at the scene. An evacuation in a predetermined zone is imminent and the senior officer establishes a command post to begin emergency action planning.

Conclusion

*Forward*COMMAND solves fundamental business problems relating to the management of incidents and emergencies. It assists the forward commander implement a structured approach based on sound methodology. It also aids in providing incident specific guidance and responsibilities to support critical decision making. *Forward*COMMAND provides a centralised repository for incident information and holdings which can also serve to prepare future commanders through training practice, debrief processes, and scenario based simulations.



Alex Kurcubic – Principal Consultant
Phone: 0414 569 121 (+61 414 569 121)
E-mail: alex@aksystems.com.au