



**Resource Accountability System Function  
Best Practices 2013**

## **Policy**

To ensure resource safety, it is the policy of the agency that all resources are accounted for at the scene of an incident. This resource accountability system is intended to meet the requirements of NFPA 1561 and the Resource Management component of the National Incident Management System. It shall be operational on all incidents and training exercises. The primary objective of the system is to assist staff in maintaining a constant awareness of the status, location, and assignments of the personnel and equipment under their command. It is the responsibility of each member of the agency to read and fully understand the policy and procedures for resource accountability.

## **System Overview**

This accountability system is a conventional ID tag collection system that involves four layers, designed to address the functions needed at incidents ranging from small to major (Type 5 to Type 1). The layers are designed for a smooth transition from one to another while still being functional as stand-alone operations. The first layer, Personal Accountability, addresses the responsibility of each person for his/her own safety and the safety of others. All personnel must strictly follow the Accountability SOP/SOG. Single Resource Accountability, the second layer, focuses on the accountability needed for the initial response and during a small (size or complexity) incident. The resources check-in using ID tags and are given their assignments. The management and accountability for the scene are the responsibility of the IC. If the incident is or becomes larger or more complex and cannot be handled safely by Single Resource Accountability, the IC transitions to Scene Accountability, where the IC appoints additional staff and command positions. Functional Accountability, the fourth layer, addresses major incidents where the expectation is that other agencies, local, state and federal, may be involved. The ID tags used in the system shall include human-readable and machine-readable (PDF417 barcode and/or RFID chip) information. The machine-readable data allows interoperability with other agencies that currently use an electronic system.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to define the resource accountability system and provide standard operating procedures/guidelines for implementing the system.

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# Definitions

## *System Components*

### **ID Tag**

A 2.5" by 4.25" laminated plastic tag, personnel ID tag , displaying, at a minimum, the agency name and logo, and the individual's photo, name, date of birth (DOB), rank, identification number, type (as applicable) and qualifications. Emergency medical and contact information shall be located on the inside of the folded tag for privacy purposes.

**OR**

A plastic card personnel ID tag shall contain machine-readable information in a PDF417 barcode, QR code and/or a RFID chip with the individual's name, DOB, rank, identification number, type (as applicable) and qualifications. A barcode, QR code and/or RFID chip on the back of the personnel ID tag shall contain medical information.

- The personnel ID tags shall have a snap or clip that shall be used to attach them to an individual's helmet, uniform, a Collector or a First Due Collection Board.
- Personnel shall be issued two (2) complete personnel ID tag assemblies.

### **Blank Personnel ID Tag**

A 2.5" by 4.25" laminated plastic tag, personnel ID tag, which contains a barcode that shall be used for responders that arrive at an incident without personnel ID tags.

**OR**

A Pre-printed ID tag with RFID chip to be programmed on-scene with a DL or other ID.

- The reverse side of the ID tag shall have a blank label to allow for hand written information to include name, rank and agency.
- The personnel ID tags shall have a snap or clip that shall be used to attach them to an individual's helmet, uniform, a Collector or a First Due Collection Board.
- Personnel shall be issued two (2) complete personnel ID tag assemblies.

### **Collector**

A 2.25" diameter ring attached to a 1" x 4" hard plastic tag, equipment Name tag, engraved with the resource name, type and number.

- A 1" X 2" Assignment barcode (PDF417, QR Code and/or RFID chip) shall be placed on the back of the plastic tag.
- The Collector shall have an equipment ID tag that shall contain machine-readable information in a PDF417 barcode and/or RFID chip containing equipment information (e.g. name, type, qualifications).
- The Collector shall hang on a spring-clip that is mounted inside the cab of all vehicles.

## **Blank Equipment Tags on a Collector**

A 2.25" diameter ring attached to a 1" x 4" hard plastic tag, equipment Name tag, engraved with the mutual aid resource name (e.g. Mutual Aid Equipment 01).

- A 1" X 2" Assignment barcode shall be placed (PDF417, QR Code and/or RFID chip) on the back of the plastic tag.
- The Collector shall have an equipment ID tag that shall contain machine-readable information in a PDF417 barcode, QR Code and/or RFID chip containing the mutual aid equipment name (e.g. Mutual Aid Equipment 01).
- The reverse side of the equipment ID tag shall have a blank label to allow for hand written information to include equipment name, type and agency.

## **First Due Collection Board**

A small plastic board (13" x 16") with spring-clips. ID tags or Collectors are attached to the spring-clips.

## **Collection Board**

A 36" x 28" foldable plastic board with spring-clips. Collectors are attached to the spring-clips.

## **Command Board**

A 12" x 14" sheet that is used to diagram resource deployments and other information as determined necessary by the IC. Alternately, an oversized sheet enclosed in Plexiglas may be used with a grease pen. This oversized board may be mounted on a command table and tripod or attached to the side of the command vehicle.

## ***Command Structure***

### **Incident Command Post (ICP)\***

The field location at which the primary tactical-level, on-scene incident command functions is performed and is normally identified by a green rotating or flashing light.

### **Incident Commander (IC)**

The IC is the individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

### **Unified Command (UC)\***

An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the UC, often the senior person from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the UC, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single IAP.

### **Unity of Command\***

The concept by which each person within an organization reports to one and only one designated person. The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective.

## **Division\***

A Division is a partition of an incident into geographical areas of operation. Divisions are established when the number of resources exceeds the manageable span of control of the Operations Chief. A division is located within the ICS organization between the branch and resources in the Operations Section.

## **Group\***

A Group is an established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division. Groups, when activated, are located between branches and resources in the Operations Section.

## **Safety Officer**

A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations and for developing measures for ensuring personnel safety.

## **Accountability Officer**

The person designated by the Incident Commander to manage the resource accountability system during an incident. He/she shall manage the Collection Board.

## **Entry-Control Officer**

The person designated by the Incident Commander to closely monitor all personnel entering a Hazardous Zone or other entry-controlled zones. The Entry- Control Officer shall collect the 2nd ID tag from personnel to document their assignment to the hazardous zone.

## **Company**

There are two types of fire companies, engine companies and ladder/truck companies. Each company is staffed with a Company Officer, an apparatus driver and one or more firefighters.

Resource: [\\*http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do](http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do)

## ***Incident Types***

### **Type 5\*\***

The incident can be handled with one or two single resources with up to six personnel.

### **Type 4\*\***

Command staff and general staff functions are activated only if needed.

### **Type 3\*\***

When capabilities exceed initial attack, the appropriate ICS positions should be added to match the complexity of the incident.

### **Type 2\*\***

This type of incident extends beyond the capabilities for local control and is expected to go into multiple operational periods. A Type 2 incident may require the response of resources out of area,

including regional and/or national resources, to effectively manage the operations, command, and general staffing.

## **Type 1\*\***

This type of incident is the most complex, requiring national resources to safely and effectively manage and operate. \*\*

*Resource:* <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/assets/IncidentTypes.pdf>

## **Accountability Layers and Actions**

### **Personal Accountability**

The duty of all personnel is to understand his/her role in the accountability system including the use of ID tags, the requirement to adhere to Unity of Command and the need to be constantly aware of the safety of fellow personnel.

### **Single Resource Accountability**

A layer of accountability that addresses accountability for initial response to all incidents and operations during a small incident (Type 5). All personnel check-in with ID tags and are given assignments.

### **Scene Accountability**

A layer of accountability that addresses the functions necessary to provide accountability at a medium to large incident (Type 4 and Type 3) where the IC makes general staff and command assignments to assist in the management of the incident.

### **Functional Accountability**

A layer of accountability that addresses the special functions required at major, complex incidents where numerous agencies work within Unified Command.

### **Check-in\***

The process through which resources first report to an incident. Check-in locations include the incident command post, Resources Unit, incident base, camps, staging areas, or directly on the site.

### **PAR**

A Personnel Accountability Report that is conducted on a periodic basis, typically every 20 minutes (varies according to the situation), where each manager is contacted to positively affirm personnel locations/assignments and the number of personnel attached to the resource.

### **Emergency Evacuation\***

Occurs when the Evacuation Alert is sounded and all personnel leave the Hazardous Zone and are accounted for.

*Resource:* FEMA <http://www.fema.gov/nimscast/Glossary.do>



## ***Site Security and Control***

### **Site Credentials**

An official ID tag, card or license that proves that the individual is qualified to be on-site and/or perform certain functions.

### **Mutual Aid**

Response agencies or jurisdictions that have a formal agreement to assist one another upon request. Mutual Aid responders shall follow all incident SOP/SOGs.

### **Freelancer**

An emergency responder that is operating without supervisory approval.

### **Civilians**

Non-emergency services personnel that respond to the incident.

### **Incident Perimeter**

The area surrounding the site or incident that is access-restricted to non-authorized personnel.

### **Hot Zone**

The area within the incident perimeter that is immediately dangerous to life and health.

### **Warm Zone**

The area within the incident perimeter between the hot zone and the cold zone, also known as the contaminate reduction zone.

### **Cold Zone**

The area between the warm zone and the incident perimeter.

## ***Accountability - the 5 W's***

### **Who**

Who (or what) is the resource? The resource could be a responder or equipment. Identify the responder by including a photo, name, rank, identification number, agency, qualifications and medical information.

### **Why**

Why is the resource at the site? Identify the resource as a qualified resource from the primary response agency, mutual aid agency or as a civilian resource.

### **What**

What is the resource doing? Identify the tasks, assignments and functions being performed by the resource.

## Where

Where is the resource located? Identify the physical location of the resource.

## When

When did the resource arrive, have status checked (PAR), become reassigned or demobilized? Identify the actual times during which the resource was operating at the incident and when the resource was released.

## Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines

### *Preparation*

#### ID Tags

- All personnel shall be issued two (2) personnel ID tags.

#### Collector Ring

- All vehicles shall be issued a Collector ring with two tags.
- An equipment Name tag with an Assignment barcode on the back. The Assignment barcode shall be used when a piece of equipment is used for a Company assignment (Engine 1). This Assignment barcode shall be used when calling PAR for the Company.
- An equipment ID tag used when a piece of equipment is in service.

#### Incident Tags

- All Command vehicles shall carry blank personnel ID tags and Collectors with blank equipment Name tags/Assignment barcodes and blank equipment ID tags.

#### Collection Boards

- All first due vehicles shall carry a First Due Collection Board.
- All command vehicles shall carry a Collection Board, a Command Board and a set of blank ID tags.
- All mutual aid agencies shall have compatible accountability equipment, including ID tags and Collectors.

### *Personnel Accountability*

- All personnel shall wear two (2) ID tags attached to their helmet or uniform unless the ID tags are being used during an incident.
- All personnel reporting to the incident without interoperable personnel ID tags shall be issued 2 blank personnel ID tags on which they shall record their name, rank and agency.
- All equipment shall have a Collector with equipment ID tags.
- All equipment reporting to the incident without interoperable equipment ID tags shall be issued a Collector with blank equipment ID tags on which they shall record the equipment name, type and agency.
- All on-scene personnel shall adhere to Unity of Command
- ***Freelancing is strictly prohibited.***

## ***Single Resource Accountability (Type 5)***

- The IC shall function within Unity of Command.
- During a response to an incident, all personnel shall check-in, attach their 1st ID tag to the Collector in the cab of the vehicle. The Officer in Charge shall place the Collector on the First Due Board. Personnel shall be tracked as a Company
- When a Company arrives on-scene they may be split and tasked with different assignments. When the Company is reunited they shall be identified from that point forward as a Company and tracked as a Company.
- Temporary ID tags shall be created, using blank ID tags, for any agency member who responds to the scene without a set of ID tags. The ID tags shall be marked with the members name, rank and agency.
- Any agency member who responds directly to the scene in his/her own vehicle shall first check-in at the Command Post for their assignment unless there is a Check-In area established. The IC or Check-In personnel shall direct the person on the appropriate placement of their ID tags.
- The IC shall call for PAR on a periodic basis from the time that tactical operations begin. Any discrepancies shall be immediately reconciled. If the PAR results in a missing person or Company the IC will implement corrective measures. Immediately after an emergency evacuation is complete, the IC shall conduct a PAR.

## ***Scene Accountability (Type 4 and Type 3)***

- The IC shall function within Unity of Command.
- The IC may fill general and command staff positions.
- The IC shall appoint an Entry-Control Officer who shall maintain the integrity of hazardous zone and maintain a First Due Collection Board.
- The IC shall appoint an Accountability Officer who shall maintain the Collection Board in close proximity to the IC
- The Accountability Officer shall call for PAR on a periodic basis from the time that tactical operations begin. Any discrepancies shall be immediately reconciled. If the PAR results in a missing person or Company, the Accountability Officer shall immediately notify the IC. Immediately after an emergency evacuation is complete, the Accountability Officer shall conduct a PAR.

## ***Functional Accountability (Type 2 & Type 1)***

- The IC shall function within Unified Command.
- The IC shall fill command and general staff positions.
- The IC shall make the Incident Action Plan (IAP) available to those responsible for Resource Accountability.
- The IC shall make real-time resource information available to the EOC via electronic media.

## ***Site Security***

- The IC shall be responsible for the safety and deployment of all resources, personnel and equipment, responding to the site including the primary agency, mutual aid agencies and civilians.
- All personnel and equipment permitted on-site shall be properly tagged and accounted for.
- The IC shall designate and enforce the incident perimeter allowing only authorized personnel and equipment to enter.

- Upon validating credentials, the IC may, at his/her discretion, issue a temporary ID tag.

## ***Demobilization***

- As resources are released from the incident, the Accountability Officer shall retrieve all Collectors and First Due Collection Boards and shall note the resource release time on the Collection Board.
- The ID tags shall be returned to the Company Officer who shall return them to his/her Company personnel. Each individual is responsible to assure they have both of their tags prior to leaving the incident.
- The Collectors and First Due Collection Boards shall be returned to the equipment.
- As resources are released, each resource shall notify the appropriate dispatch center that they are available. The Accountability Office shall confirm that all resources have been demobilized and are accounted for.
- The IC and/or Accountability Officer shall collect all notes, command sheets, logs, etc. to be used in combination with dispatch logs to complete after-incident reports. Copies of reports and all supporting documents shall be filed together in an incident archive.