
Post-Incident Analysis

208.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

208.2 POLICY

The PIA is a valuable tool to improve the overall operations of the fire service. It is the policy of this district to use the PIA as a tool for Incident Commanders (ICs), Fire Marshals, Captains, Shift Commanders and command staff to identify areas of strength and weakness within the District on an incident-by-incident basis, for the purpose of continuous improvement.

The PIA may additionally be utilized in district-wide training to communicate continuous improvement of emergency scene operations and fireground safety.

208.2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

The ICs, Fire Marshals, Captains, Shift Commanders and command staff have shared responsibility for the overall effectiveness of the PIA process.

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

Anyone may request a PIA of a particular incident. Any PIA requests must be made through the chain of command.

Any significant safety issue that is identified in the PIA should be addressed immediately, if it was not already resolved prior to the PIA being completed. If appropriate, a report should be sent to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Near-Miss Reporting System on any significant safety issues.

208.3 POST-INCIDENT ANALYSIS

A PIA 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 PIA 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) A PIA may include:

1. Evaluation of the overall operational effectiveness.

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2. Evaluation of safety procedures.
 3. Evaluation of the success or failure of tactical objectives.
 4. Evaluation of the application and effectiveness of policies and/or procedures.
 5. Specific knowledge that might be beneficial.
- (b) The information gained from a PIA should be used by Captains and staff teams to:
1. Reinforce the incident management system.
 2. Evaluate current training programs and/or identify training needs.
 3. Evaluate current policies and procedures.
 4. Identify and prioritize planning needs for the future.
 5. Identify equipment problems/concerns.
 6. Evaluate fire prevention inspection and public education effectiveness.

208.4 TYPES OF POST-INCIDENT ANALYSIS

208.4.1 HOT WASH

An incident “hot wash” should be performed at the incident scene prior to the release of equipment or personnel. A hot wash is a meeting of all involved personnel on-scene. It is an informal briefing of the incident, the actions taken and problems encountered. An IC 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 hot wash might occur at medical incidents, when some members may be caring for patients and are unable to participate.

If the analysis takes place while on-scene, it is the responsibility of the IC to:

- Meet in a safe area, even if it requires relocating to another area.
- Ensure that the meeting area is inaccessible by the public and media.
- Consider the impact of company downtime.
- Consider public perception.

208.4.2 INFORMAL PIA

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

208.4.3 COMPANY-LEVEL PIA

A company-level PIA is highly encouraged and should be a standard communication tool for all Captains. It is appropriate for significant incidents involving single companies as well as multiple-company stations where more than one company participated in the incident.

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Company-level analysis promotes unity and teamwork, enhances communication, improves company performance and is a useful tool for evaluating the health and welfare of crew members following certain traumatic incidents. A company-level PIA can take place while at the fire station or any location that provides privacy.

208.4.4 FORMAL PIA

- (a) A formal PIA should be conducted following all:
 - 1. Multiple-alarm structure fires.
 - 2. Multiple-alarm brush fires.
 - 3. Multiple-alarm Emergency Medical Services (EMS) incidents.
 - 4. Multiple-alarm special operations incidents.
 - 5. Major disaster drills.
 - 6. Unusual incidents identified by the IC or other staff officers.
- (b) A formal PIA should be considered for:
 - 1. A building fire in which three or more rooms are severely damaged by fire, or where unusual extinguishment problems existed.
 - 2. Any incident in which an unusual event occurs (e.g., explosion, collapse).
 - 3. Any fire resulting in a fatality.
 - 4. Any fire resulting in injury to firefighters that is serious enough to require transport to a medical facility.
 - 5. Any “close call” incident where firefighters could have been injured.
 - 6. Any hazardous materials incident with multi-company involvement.
 - 7. Any specialty rescue operation with multi-company involvement.
 - 8. Any incident, at the IC’s discretion or at the request of a Captain.
- (c) The Training Division is responsible for scheduling and facilitating the presentation of all formal PIAs. This will include:
 - 1. Setting a presentation date and location within three days (whenever possible) of the incident.
 - 2. Supervising the completion of an incident analysis packet that should include a summary of the incident, drawings and identification of any lessons learned.
 - 3. Developing a written After Action Report (AAR) summarizing the PIA and submitting it to the Fire Chief for approval and distribution.
 - 4. Notifying Shift Captains.

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5. Coordinating/scheduling with other departments or outside agencies that worked the incident.
6. Arranging move-up and/or cover companies from other departments.

The Shift Captain is responsible for notifications to all members of the shift who are scheduled to attend the PIA. All members should be notified within one week if a formal PIA is being arranged to allow them to prepare or gather any necessary documentation.

Copies of the AAR should be posted at each fire station for all personnel to review.

A copy of all PIAs and AARs shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief for approval prior to distribution, including any determinations or conclusions reached through the PIA presentations.