

Incident Commander (OIC) / Incident management

The officer in charge's role is often overlooked when it comes to training; a lot of emphasis is put into tool use with the OIC stipulating what he/she wants the crew to carry out, but what training if any do they receive to enable them to effectively manage an RTC.

Will they be familiar with the latest techniques that can be carried out and secondly are they skilled enough to know if a technique is being carried out incorrectly? On the job training is not satisfactory and is certainly not acceptable for the casualty.

That said many incidents will be a test on the OIC's skills as with the rest of the crew. We will always learn from attending incidents and can then apply that to training sessions.

I know there are command courses but the effectiveness is only as good as the level of knowledge that the staff have on the subject.

I have attended many an RTC and the standard of incident management varies greatly from person to person

Even with a very competent and skilled crew the way that the incident is managed will greatly reflect on the overall outcome of the incident.



There is only room for one OIC at an RTC/MVA, with bigger more complex incidents with multiple vehicles involved we can then add in sector commanders following your ICS procedures.

The crew of the first appliance or second or third attendances will need to know who is running that incident. Or in some cases who is managing the sectorized extrication operations.

The OIC/Sector commander will need to maintain a presence on the scene, close enough to step in when needed but far enough away to oversee operations, how many times do we see the OIC standing back chatting with other personnel or the duty officer to get the latest gossip, who is managing the incident then?

The OIC can easily be overcome by the emotion of the situation. They must remain aware of the potential impact of activities at the scene on the safety of responders, casualties and other personnel present and must maintain logical thinking and reasoning processes.

An OIC who is overwhelmed by the emotions of the moment may experience impaired judgment, causing them to assess the situation inaccurately or take inappropriate actions. The OIC must be able to remain objective in the midst of chaos and make calm and rational decisions.

The OIC must take a moment to comprehend the unfolding events, the OIC should initiate actions that will have a positive effect on the situation and bring order to the confusion.

Strong leadership along with sound decision making and teamwork can result in a scene that proceeds in a coordinated and calm manner.

Effective OIC's gain respect by both their actions and their example, and their leadership should inspire confidence in others enabling them to obtain maximum performance.

The chaos of the scene must be sorted through and organised into a safe, efficient and systematic operation.

Liaison with the Paramedics is often short and brief and can lack important information, such as casualty condition, time factors (this will greatly effect how the rescue proceeds), crew briefing is often forgotten and incorrect assumptions can be made as a result.

It is essential that a thorough brief is given to members of the crew covering exactly what is required of them and an acknowledgment must be received so that all those concerned understand their roles.

Communication plays a major part at any RTC/MVA, but for some reason is often very lacking, again even with a competent crew there is still a need for effective briefing and crew communication, this communication is also paramount with the paramedics and police. Rescuers also need to talk to each other so that they know what is happening around them.

Crew appraisal is often forgotten, praising your crew will motivate them and assist with morale it will also show crews that they have not been forgotten, it is also very much needed at those incidents that we would rather not be at, such as body recovery.

As we all know a 360` survey of the scene needs to be carried out by the OIC, the inner scene survey can be carried out by a crew member. This is covered further in another PDF.

Another point to think about: _

The FRS manual and a lot of training staff state that the OIC does the outer survey and a crew member does the inner survey!

Should we change this, will the change fit in with ICS (incident command system) 3-4?

If the OIC does the outer survey instead of the inner, how can they assess the hazards presented within and around the immediate area of the vehicle, how can they assess the level of entrapment and seriousness of the casualties predicament, how then can they formulate a plan?

We teach that the OIC needs to formulate a plan of action based on the degree of entrapment and number or persons in the vehicle/s, risks, hazards etc HOW can they do this without completing an inner scene assessment?

A competent FF is more than able to carry out the outer scene assessment looking for additional hazards and additional casualties, this information can be relayed to the OIC who can then implement their control measures etc

Remember unless the OIC does an inner assessment they can not possibly formulate a plan of action to allow a safe and effective rescue.

A change in our ways perhaps?? Just another topic for you to give some thought and try out, see what you think and if this would aid a more beneficial outcome for all.

Let me know what you think and ill post some views!!

The standard of incident management will set the standard of the rescue from start to finish, if there is evidence of bad management from the start then that will result in an ineffective rescue, with the casualty being the one that will suffer.

The hallmark of an efficient and effective rescue from a RTC is the achievement of simultaneous medical and physical activities

