

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION INQUIRY

AFFIDAVIT OF WALTER EAGLE RYE

I, Walter Eagle Rye of [REDACTED] Warwick in the State of Queensland, Inspector of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service states on oath:

1. I am aware that the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry requires me to provide a statement with respect to the issues raised in its letter dated 17 November 2011 (the Letter).

General Matters

2. In response to the issues raised under the heading "Background" of the Letter I confirm that I agree with numerical paragraphs 3(a), (d) and (e) as set out in the letter.
3. In response to numerical paragraphs 3(b) and (c) of the Letter I recall as follows:
 - a. I recall that in or about December 2009 I was directed by [REDACTED] (Superintendent) to hand one of my two work mobile telephones to the swift water co-coordinator [REDACTED]
 - b. I do not recall receiving any telephone messages or missed calls from Mr Dundas during the day on 10 January 2011. Because I had previously handed one of my mobile telephones to Mr Haddow, I note that on 10 January 2011, Mr Dundas may have attempted to contact me on the telephone number attached to the mobile that (at the time) was (I believe) in the possession of Mr Haddow;
 - c. On 10 January 2011 at approximately 12:00pm, I attended a Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) meeting at the Toowoomba Regional Council Chambers at Town Hall;
 - d. I recall shortly prior to that meeting I received a telephone call from a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who to my knowledge is a builder, to discuss briefly the buildings and fences at Kitchener Street and Anzac Avenue. That is the only telephone call shortly prior to 12pm that I recall receiving;
 - e. I recall at approximately 1:30pm during the meeting I received a telephone call from Assistant Commissioner Dawson to attend immediately at the Fire Communications Centre to assist with managing the situation and instruct the Communications Centre employees.
4. I recall that the procedure detailed in the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Operations Doctrine Incident Management System provides an operational chain where I am of the opinion Mr Dundas could have made alternative contact with the appropriate personnel if he was unable to contact me.
5. The key responsibilities and tasks of an inspector are, set out in the job description, attached to this Affidavit and marked **WER-1**.

255493

Signed: _____

[REDACTED]

Taken by: _____

[REDACTED]

Events of 10 January 2011

6. I refer to numerical paragraph 6 of the Letter and I recall I reported for duty at approximately 7:30am on 10 January 2011.
7. In response to numerical paragraph 7 of the Letter and recall that I attended the LDMG meeting held at Toowoomba Regional Council at approximately 12:00pm on 10 January 2011.
8. In response to numerical paragraph 8 of the Letter, I recall that my movements prior to attending the LDMG meeting on 10 January 2011 were as follows:
 - a. at approximately 7:30am, I arrived at the Queensland Fire and Rescue Services office located at Phillips Street, Toowoomba and opened my computer to check my work e-mails;
 - b. following this I drove to Ahrens M&S Sheds located on Taylor Street, Toowoomba to discuss a building project for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service on Anzac Avenue. However, I was informed by the Manager that they would not be open for trade for a couple of week so I returned to the Phillips Street office;
 - c. from approximately 9:30am to 10:15am I worked on the file for the proposed swift water vehicle at the Phillips Street office;
 - d. whilst at the Phillips Street office I then went to speak with Acting Inspector Patch of the Rural Division regarding the LDMG meeting at Town Hall and invited him to attend with me at the meeting – this meeting lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes;
 - e. after the meeting, I returned to my office and overheard on the portable radio the voices of Inspector Eddie Lacko and Acting Inspector [REDACTED] who were attending at a structure fire;
 - f. I then immediately contacted the Fire Communications Centre to enquire as to the details of the job and why I was not informed;
 - g. between approximately 10:35am and 11:00am I reviewed the overtime report for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Services fire fighters who were employed on a permanent basis;
 - h. between approximately 11:00am and 11:45am, I recall working in my office undertaking general, non-descript office administration work;
 - i. at approximately 11:45am I departed the Phillips Street office and drove to the Toowoomba Town Hall to check on a laptop computer;
 - j. I recall at approximately 11:55am I received a telephone call from Shane Pushman, a builder who wished to discuss a building report, we conversed briefly; and
 - k. At approximately 12:00pm I then attended the LDMG meeting at the Toowoomba Regional Council Chambers at Town Hall.
9. In response to numerical paragraph 8 of the Letter:

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Signed: _____

Taken by: _____

- a. I did not attend a house fire on 10 January 2011. Based on my recollection of events set out in paragraph 8(e) and (f) of this Affidavit I believe it to be true that the attending officers of a structure fire on 10 January 2011 were Inspector Eddie Lacko and Acting Inspector [REDACTED]; and
 - b. My recollection of 10 January 2011 is that I had no interaction with William Dundas and nor did I receive any communications from him on that day.
10. In response to numerical paragraph 9 of the Letter:
- a. to confirm as stated in numerical paragraph 9(b) of this Statement, to the best of my knowledge I do not recall having a telephone conversation with either William Dundas or Mark Haddow on 10 January 2011;
 - b. I do not recall receiving any notifications on my mobile phone of a missed call or any voicemail message from either William Dundas or Mark Haddow on 10 January 2011;
 - c. I am aware and verily believe that is why Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has the procedure that in the event a person's immediate senior officer is not available, for whatever reason, the next person in the chain of command is contacted. In this instance, to my knowledge this would have been Regional Operations Coordination Centre or the Operations Manager Chief.
11. As stated in paragraphs 3(c) and 10 of this Statement I do not recall receiving notification of the telephone calls at approximately 11:50am. I repeat and rely on my movements and activities as set out in paragraphs 3(b) to (d), 8(h) and (i), 9(b) and 10 of this Statement.
12. I recall the two telephone calls I received that may be regarded as 'general business' were:
- a. the call from [REDACTED] just prior to the commencement of meeting, as stated in paragraph 3(c) of this Statement;
 - b. the second phone call I recall was from Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson at approximately 1:30pm on 10 January 2011 when he directed me to attend the Fire Communications Centre immediately as stated at paragraph 3(d) of this Statement.
13. The telephone records for my work mobile telephone are the records of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and I do not have a copy.
14. I recall that from 1:30pm on 10 January 2011 I was at the Fire Communications Centre and undertook the following activities:
- a. I received an overview of the situation from two operators, namely [REDACTED] and I cannot recall the name of the second operator;
 - b. I generally monitored the stress levels of the Communications Centre staff;
 - c. I instructed the Communications operators to prioritise life rescue only events and then 'stack and pack' all non-life threatening incidents until the level of the crisis was downgraded and I continued to monitor this procedure;

Signed: _____

Taken by: _____


- d. attended phone call taken by [REDACTED] for the duration of a call from a young boy who was in a motor vehicle with his mother, who were unfortunately unable to be saved;
 - e. organised information to be correlated for Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson and sent to him regarding the volume of phone calls requesting rescues and assistance;
 - f. liaised with Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson;
 - g. liaised with surrounding fire stations to assist;
 - h. liaised with [REDACTED] requesting permission to attend an incident;
 - i. liaised with pilot of Helicopter organised by the ROCC;
 - j. I generally coordinated the activities of the relevant staff members at the Centre; and
 - k. I re-organised the evening meal to be supplied to the ROCC staff.
15. I have been employed with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service for 38 years and have been a loyal and dedicated employee.
16. It is my opinion that the two phone calls that appear to be in issue, should not be in issue at all if the standard operating procedure of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service was followed during the 10 January 2011 event.
17. I understand that the relevant procedures provide for alternative contact to be made to the appropriate personnel and in this instance I am of the view that this would have been the ROCC or the Operations Manager Chief.
18. The incidents of 10 January 2011 were complex and I am of the opinion were of a Level 3 incident as described in the Incident Management System. Due to this the Incident Controller ought to have had a number of key personnel in place including a Safety Officer and operation planning and logistics staff.
19. I have attached the Level 3 incident procedure to this Affidavit and it is marked **WER-2**.

All the facts and circumstances above deposed to are within my own knowledge, save such as are deposed to from information only, and my means of knowledge and sources of information appear on the face of this my Affidavit.

Sworn by Walter Eagle Rye on 25 November 2011 at Toowoomba in the presence of:

[REDACTED]
Deponent

[REDACTED]
Solicitor/Justice of the Peace
/Commissioner of Declarations [REDACTED]

	Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Operations Doctrine	INCIDENT CLASSIFICATION
	INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	LEVEL THREE
Last worked: 01/03/2005		IMS 3.3

PURPOSE

To outline the classification of a Level Three Incident.

APPLICATION

Applies to Level Three Incidents attended by QFRS personnel.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Incidents are classified by either duration or complexity. Complexity may be through:

- Tactical/operational issues,
- Logistical considerations, or
- Community Impact (local through to international issues).

As incidents grow in size and/or complexity, management becomes more demanding and the Incident Controller needs to consider the delegation of responsibility and may elect to delegate additional functions to enable the Incident Controller to devote more attention to the total control of the incident:

- All incidents for which the QFRS attends (as the control/combat authority) should be classified as a Level 1, 2 or 3 Incidents and will initially be classified as a Level 1 Incident.
- An incident shall be reclassified as a Level 2 Incident by a Senior Urban or Rural Officer and the Incident Controller must be consulted.
- A Level 2 Incident is small to medium in area but may be more complex in nature. The duration of the incident can vary from a few hours to a few days.
- A Level 2 Incident Management Team maybe a transitional phase as the incident develops into a Level 3 Incident.
- The Assistant Commissioner or Regional Inspector only shall reclassify an incident as a Level 3 Incident.

A **Level Three** Incident is large, complex and of an extended duration due and to its nature, and will be divided into sectors with possible divisions being formalised. The Incident Management Team (IMT) will have the majority of roles filled with shift rotation for those roles established.

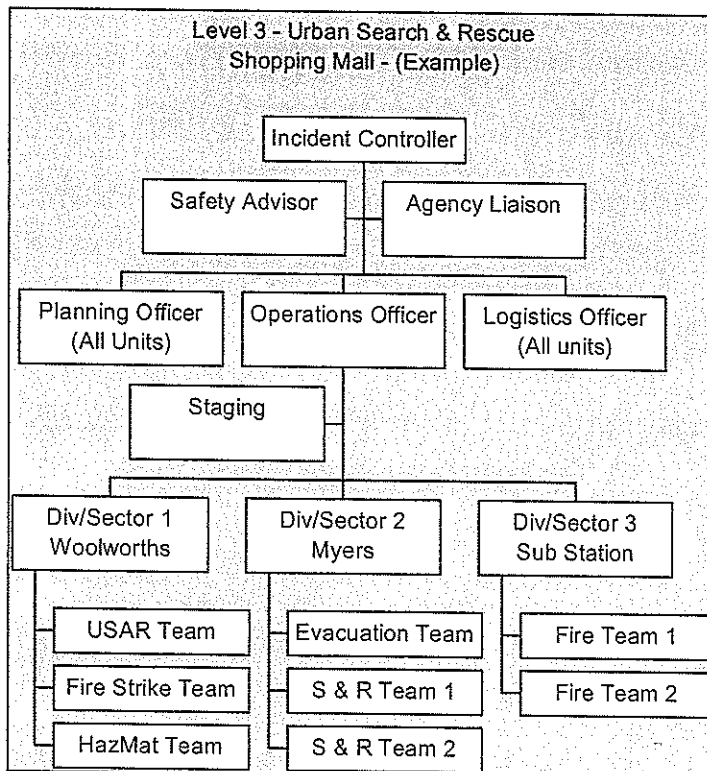
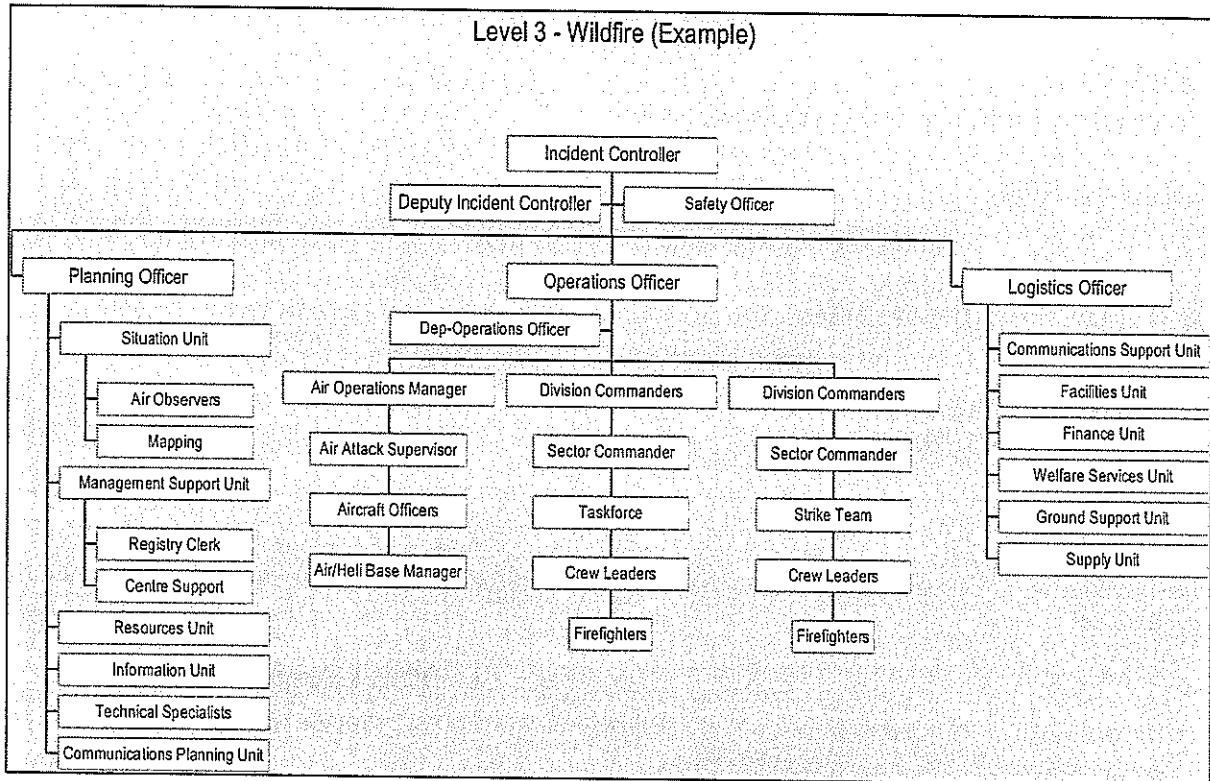
The Incident Controller will have designated a large number of functional roles, which could include but are not limited to the following:

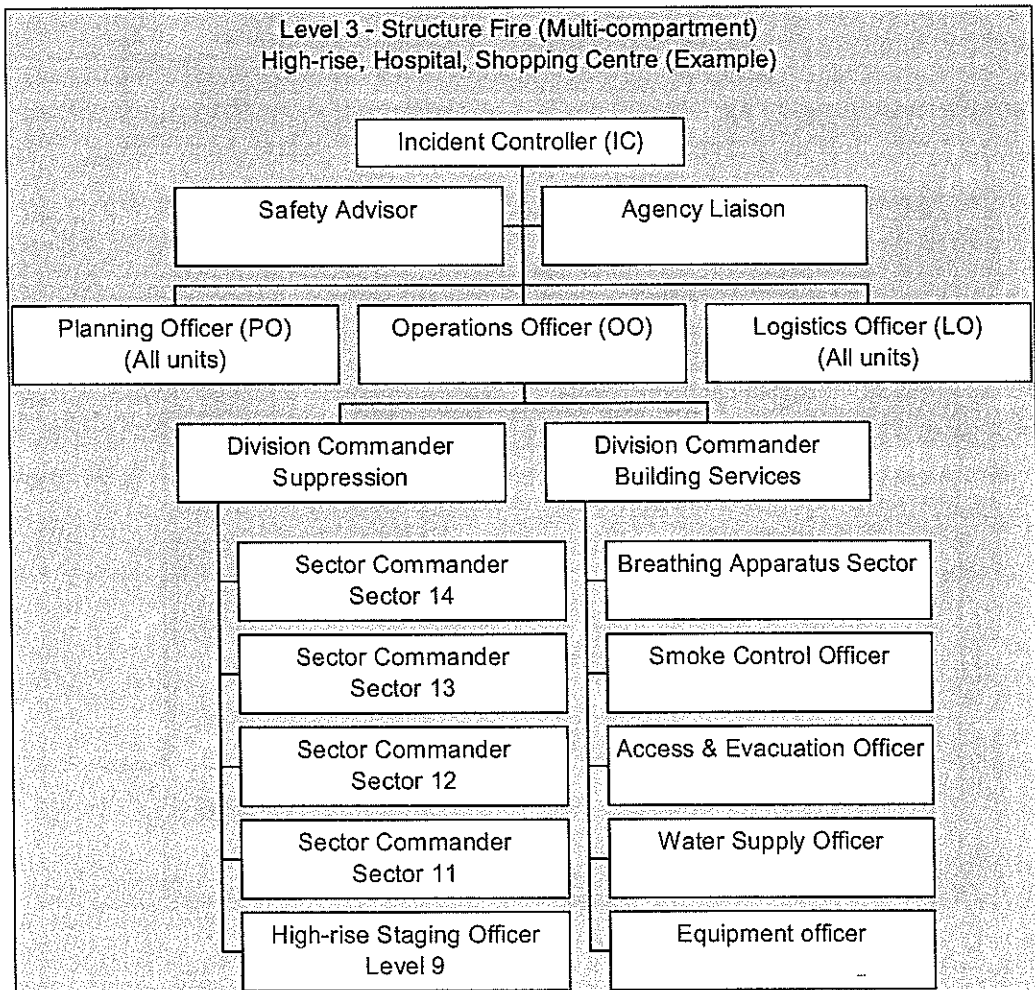
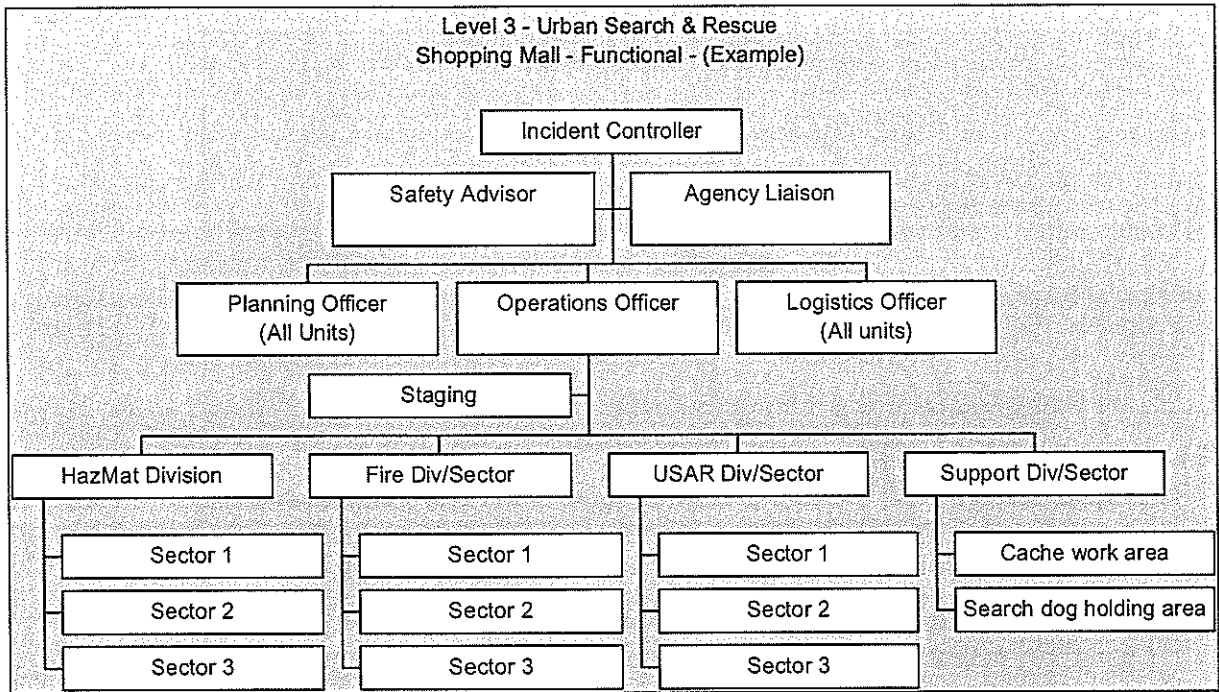
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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Advisor • Deputy Incident Controller • Operations Officer • Deputy Operations Officer • Division Commanders • Sector Commanders • Strike Team Leaders • Air Operations Officer • BA Sector Commander • Planning Officer • Situation Unit • Resource Unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Support Unit • Communication Planning Unit • Information Unit • Media Liaison • Technical Advisors • Logistics Officer • Rehabilitation Officer • Catering Unit • Communication Support Unit • Supply Unit • Medical Services Unit • Decontamination Officer |
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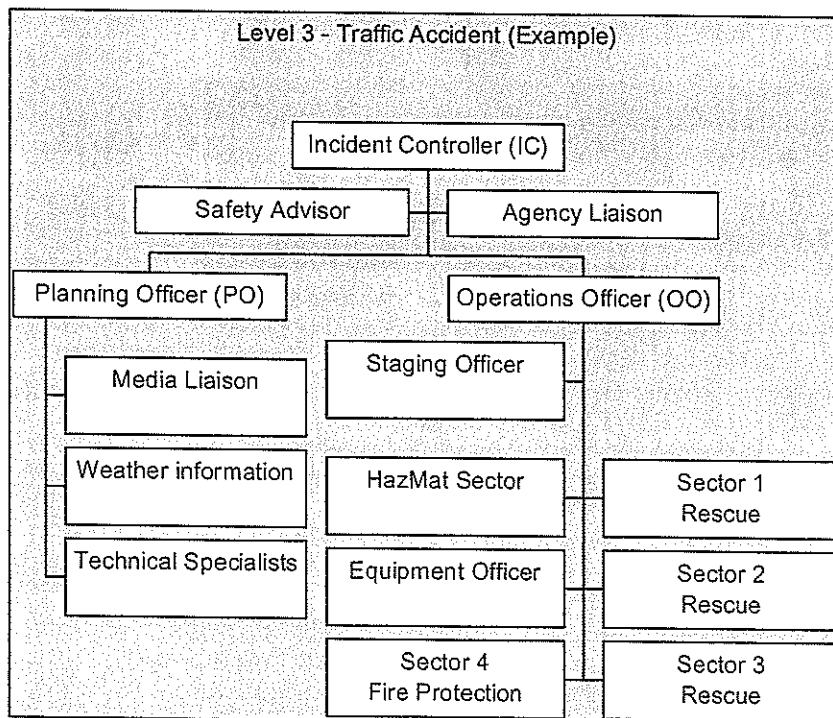
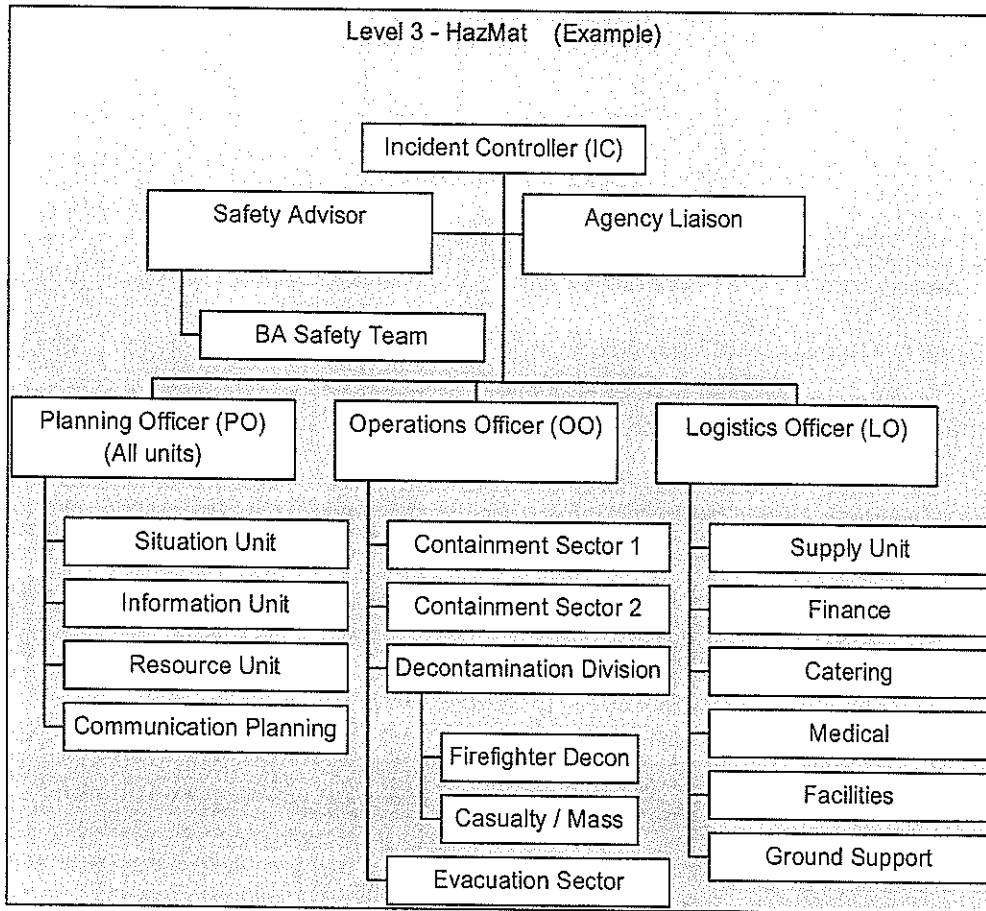
GENERAL INFORMATION (Con't)

Numerous other agencies will be involved significantly depending on the nature of the incident. The threat or impact to the community will be large from the local level to possibly state, national or global level.

LEVEL 3 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES - EXAMPLES







QFRS RELEVANCY

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE Relevancy Matrix						
	Urban Fire		Rural Fire			
	Full time	Part time	Class 4 Brigade	Class 3 Brigade	Class 2 Brigade	Class 1 Brigade
Applies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Not Applicable						
May Apply*						
* This document may apply to some Rural brigades. Check with your District Inspector for additional information.						


 Lee A Johnson AFSM MIFireE
Commissioner

REFERENCES

The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
 QFRS Training and Education Manuals