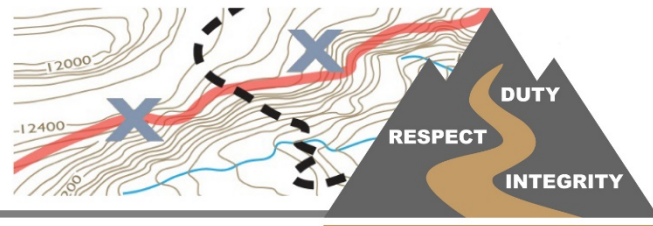


Tactical Decision Games



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

UNIFIED COMMAND

INITIAL FACILITATOR INFORMATION—NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Author(s)

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Target Audience

Initial Attack ICs, Captains, and Chief Officers

Training Objective

Given the following scenario, the players will recognize the need for and implement a unified command structure between the three responding agencies, LA CO, Pasadena City, and USFS. One agency will be identified as being the ordering point. Initial attack incoming resources will be assigned. The ICs should recognize the need for and establish the Operations Section Chief position at a minimum along with strategies for each jurisdiction and agency.

Resources Referenced

- **3 Chief Officers (ICs-LA County Fire, Pasadena City Fire, US Forest Service Fire)**
- 5 ANF FS engines, 5 LA County engines and 5 Pasadena City engines
- 4 dozers: 1 ANF, 1 BDF, 2 LA CO
- 2 water tenders: 1 ANF, 1 LA CO
- 8 crews: 6 LACO, 2 ANF
- 1 ATGS, 4 LACO helicopters, 2 air tankers

*Use strike team or task force leader configuration to reduce the amount of players (e.g., FS Strike Team Type 3s, LA County Strike Team Type 1s, Pasadena Strike Team Type 1s, etc.)

SCENARIO INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Facilitator Briefing to Student(s)

You are the local Battalion Chief on your home unit. You are responding to an initial attack structure fire reported to have spread into the wildland. The initial reported was a small column with heavy black smoke on Lower Clamshell Road. It is 15:30 on a warm September afternoon and recent wildland fire activity in the area has led to moderate fire growth. As you travel to the fire, you note the weather conditions:

- Temperature: 80 degrees
- Wind is reported to be W/SW at 5 - 10 MPH. Santa Ana winds are predicted for this evening starting at sunset.

Lower Clamshell Road is a through road and resources may be responding from either end. There are multiple resources responding to your fire. The US Forest Service and LA County have toned out a full brush response. Pasadena City is responding with five engines. As you arrive on scene, you note that the fire is currently putting up a dark column and seems to be building in the brush. You also note that the two other agencies responding Battalion Chiefs are on scene.

In 3 minutes, assess the situation, prepare, and then communicate to contacts you think are necessary.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITATOR ONLY

Facilitator “Murphy’s Law” Suggestions

The “Murphy’s Law” suggestions listed below can be added as “What ifs” at any time during the scenario to raise the stress level of the leader. You can also use one of your own:

- Wind direction change
- Spotting
- Flat tire on incoming resource
- Radio traffic is overridden by an incoming resource getting directions to the fire (engine, chief officer, etc.)
- Land owner bothering ICs during size-up and initial meeting of the IAICs.
- Resources are arriving and wanting assignments, briefing, and direction.
- Power lines are down between resources or residences
- Water system failure, hydrants have no pressure.
- Panicked public blocking traffic.
- Hazardous materials involved.
- Vehicle accident involving private vehicle and an engine.

Facilitator's Notes

This TDGS should focus on the Initial Attack IC decision making and communication. In the scenario, the player has been presented with moderate fire conditions that are predicted to change to extreme conditions (Santa Ana winds) in a few hours with a current direct threat to 20-30 homes and a threat to hundreds once the weather changes. The multiple agency response suggests a unified command structure be set up as per the local protocol along with the decision to identify one of the agencies as the single ordering point. There is further pressure as the decision maker assumes the role of IC and he/she must continue to fight the fire while setting up the unified command. The utilization of the Operations Section Chief position early on will relieve the IC of the tactical workload, but will require a briefing on the strategy (Commanders Intent) to the Operations Section Chief. The IC (or Operations) must provide a size up and decide between an offensive strategy, a defensive strategy, or some combination before assigning resources.

The scenario implies pressure for a combination offensive/defensive strategy with structure protection as the number one priority. If the IC follows the implied direction, they will decide to use a combination strategy and deploy resources accordingly with the Forest Service being tasked with perimeter control while the two municipal agencies concentrate on structure protection. However, there is no explicit direction that this strategy be assumed. The location of the fire in relation to the homes should provoke immediate concern for the structures along with the realization that if the predicted Santa Ana's surface and the perimeter of the wildfire is not secured, hundreds if not thousands of homes will be threatened.

This TDGS should focus on the need for a unified command being established, the need for a single ordering point and the incoming IA resources assigned on initial attack based on IRPG and local protocols. The facilitator will need to drive the scenario as the IA dispatcher(s). The player is presented with a medium response to an initial attack fire. The facilitator can adjust the number of resources responding to better reflect normal local response. The facilitator should utilize the Murphy's Laws to create barriers as needed.

The player's priority should be establishing situational awareness and the assessing the complexity of the situation as the unified command is being set up. The player should gather appropriate information based on the fire location, jurisdiction and fire behavior.

In the TDGS the player's size-up is less important than the ability to communicate and coordinate with the other responding jurisdiction Chief Officers, focusing on establishing a unified command structure while assigning incoming IA resources. The AAR should focus on "why" the player made the choices they made in establishing the unified command and assigning resources. Once the why has been confirmed the discussion can move to the "how"?

- Why did you establish a unified command?
- How did the unified command structure effect resource assignments?
- Why was a single ordering point established (or not established)?
- How did the single ordering point effect the unified command structure?
- How did you handle multiple IC issues?
- Why did you establish the ICP/location for arriving location?
- How did establishing the Operations Section Chief (or division/group) positions effect the unified command operations and the overall strategy?

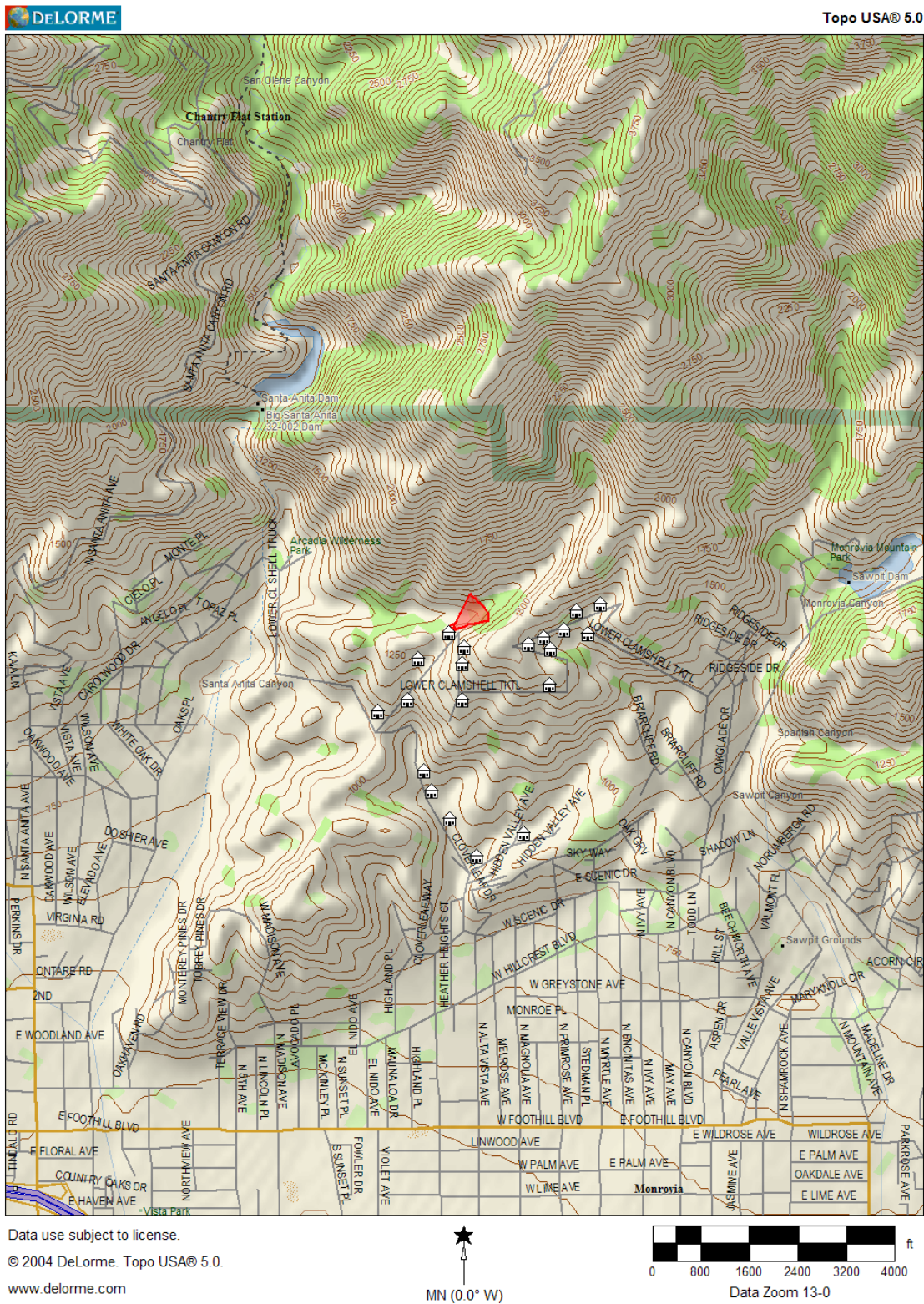
After Action Review

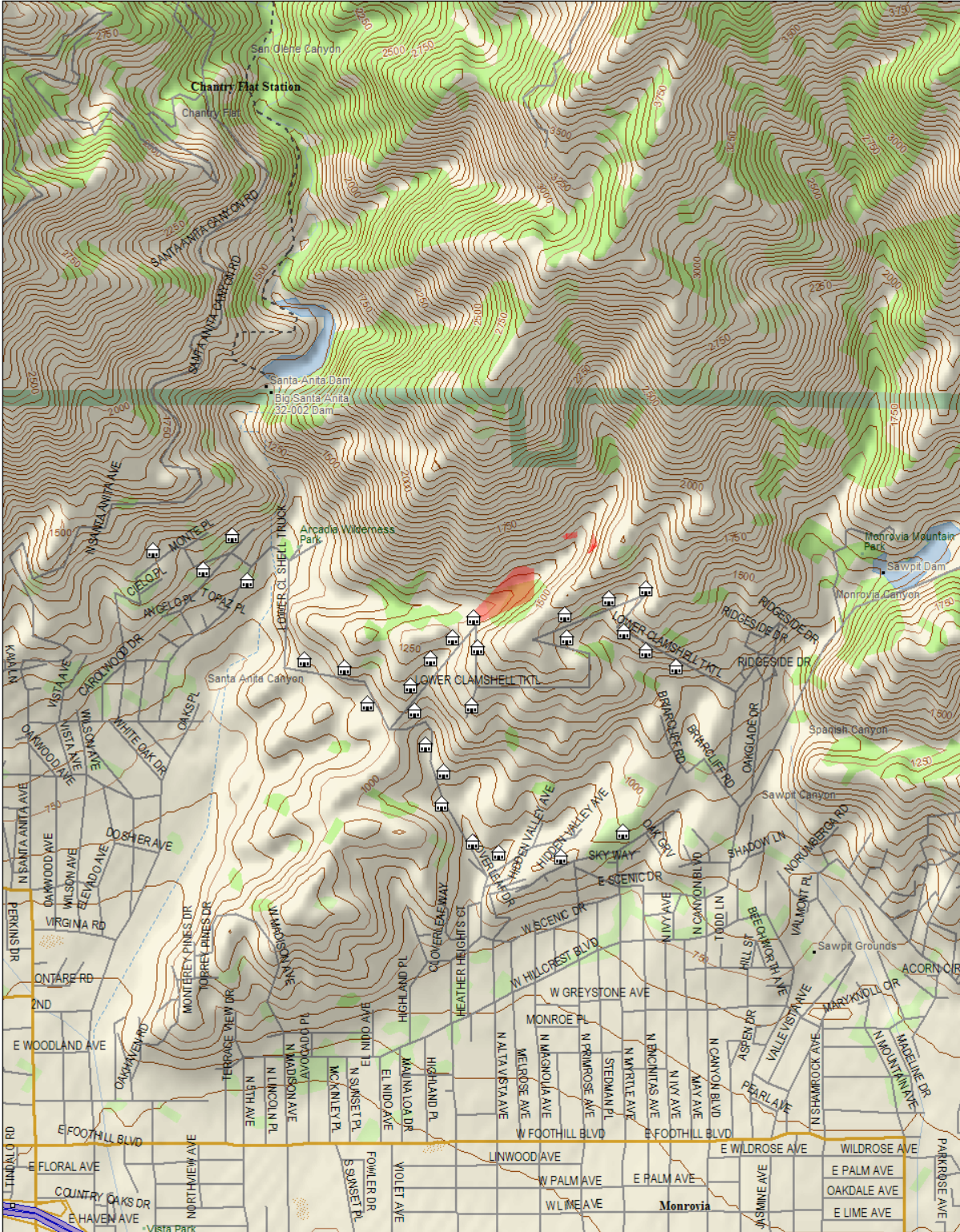
Conduct an AAR with focus on the training objective. Use the AAR format found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide to facilitate the AAR. There are four basic questions in the AAR.

1. What was planned?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do next time?

TDGS shouldn't have a single solution, keep the focus of the AAR on what was done and why.

Two maps follow. The first is for moderate initial fire behavior. The second is for high initial fire behavior with spotting.

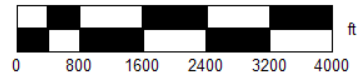
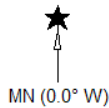




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