

**Avoiding the blame game:
How to conduct a productive
post incident evaluation**

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The purpose of a post-incident evaluation

To understand...

What went well and what can be improved.

In a post-incident evaluation...
No one is on trial.
So do not judge.

Tips

- Avoid using the term “Critique”
- Evaluations are learning opportunities
- Focus on what went well
- Identify your areas to improve
- Make plans for improvements
- Evaluate all incidents, even if you think everything went well
- Make the evaluations non-threatening
- Ask participants open-ended questions

Tips

- Distribute and follow an outline
- Best if facilitated by neutral party
- Ask open ended questions
- Start with what occurred before first arrival
- Company personnel go first, then commanders
- Layout the scene
- Use audio & video if available and valuable
- Schedule soon to avoid losing information
- Document your findings so those who could not attend the evaluation can still benefit from the lessons.

Ground Rules

- Not designed to find fault or criticize the actions of others
- Set rules for civil behavior
- Egos and rank are checked at the door
- Remember, even if things did not go well... no one was messing it up on purpose
- Provides an honest assessment of the operation
- Take notes on what went well and what can be improved

Process

- First arriving officer describes situation and actions
- Each successive company explains what they say and what they did
- Keep the conversation focused on key factors
- Relate actions to SOPs
- Capture what needs to change

A sample event
to evaluate...

Components of a structure fire evaluation.

For each component, if the
answer is “no”... Ask:
Why?
How do we fix it?

Was there an incident
commander watching the big
picture event at all times?

If command was passed, was it necessary and was the new commander properly briefed?

Did the first-arriving crew
complete a 360-degree size-up of
the emergency scene?

Did the person in-charge
remain hands-off (not
perform front-line tasks)?

Did the person in-charge stay far enough away from the action to ensure a big-picture view?

Was the strategy for the incident communicated to everyone at the scene?

Were incoming crews given assignments and were their activities coordinated?

Was accountability of all
personnel maintained at all
times?

**Were communications
clear and concise?**

**Were the right tactics used to
solve the problem?**

Was the person in-charge
plugged-in to everything going on
(broad perspective)?

Did the IC think ahead of the incident (predict where the incident was heading)?

**Was the radio traffic
disciplined and manageable?**

**Was someone assigned to
monitor every radio channel
(talkgroup) in use?**

**Was every communication
from crews working in high-
hazard areas heard the first
time transmitted?**

**Was there adequate staffing
on-scene to carry out the
strategy safely and effectively?**

As emergency conditions
changed, did the
strategy and tactics change?

**Were progress reports clear,
concise, accurate, timely,
and informative?**

**Were tactics coordinated
and non-conflicting?**

**Did the organizational culture
contribute to challenges with
strategy, tactics or operations?**

**Was a safety officer assigned
and did they perform their
duties appropriately?**

**Were there sufficient resources
(apparatus, equipment, rescue
tools, water, etc.)
to accomplish the tactics?**

**Were personnel adequately
trained to perform their
assignments?**

**Were proper SOPs/SOGs
were established,
implemented,
communicated and followed.**

We have some very special guests in the room...



Center for the Advancement of Situational Awareness & Decision Making

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