



New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union
Te Kāhui Kaipatuahi o Aotearoa

CAREER PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS AND COMMANDERS
AUTHORISED COMMAND LEVEL
INTEGRATION, TRANSITION AND FUTURE PATHWAY ARRANGEMENTS

Introduction

Context

This document represents the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union (NZPFU), regarding recognition of the response capability for the command, control and coordination of emergency incidents, by employees of Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) appointed to the ranks of Commander, Assistant Commander, Fire Commander and Assistant Fire Commander as part of the tranche 2 restructure of FENZ.

This is compiled recognising the significant knowledge and experience gaps between former rural personnel transitioning to these new roles and their incumbent urban equivalents. It also recognises the skills some of these employees bring across to the new structure.

It is designed to provide a robust process to enable those employees with deficient skillsets in the urban environment, and conversely those with limitations within the natural environment, to transition and develop without the need to progress through an onerous process from the beginning. It identifies and acknowledges certain skillsets that exist, and how these integrate into the progression system in its current state.

The baseline position set out within this document intends to overcome the shortfalls of the confirmation of relevant experience (CoRE) process. This includes all staff entering newly formed command roles, whether career, volunteer, urban or rural.

The various command levels proposed in this document relate well to the current FENZ rank and role structure as well as established learning and assessment programmes. They also relate to current

Authorised Command levels (ACL). With some additional work to address the identified gaps in training and assessment, the concept should easily be able to be implemented without significant complication or cost factors, whilst becoming a robust and safe system of incident command, control and coordination.

Principles

1. The authorised command level (ACL) pathway and integration must be competency based through current assessed qualifications and a portfolio of evidence and experience, based on successful completion of all agreed prior progression levels, for the relevant (ACL/rank).
2. Includes the pathway for all future employees from recruit level through to achieving an ACL.
3. Includes an integration and transition path to the appropriate ACL for all current operational FENZ employees.
4. Excludes integration and transition of future employees who have not completed all prior progression levels, and that were not employed by FENZ prior to 1 July 2017.

Gap analysis

Current organisational gaps that require addressing to support this strategy:

- An up to date command and control policy which reflects organisational changes between 1st July 2017 (new organisation) and 1st of August 2021 (District structure stand-up). The interim command and control policy is no longer fit-for-purpose.
- ACL (or relevant equivalent) descriptors.
- A current command and control manual (this also requires the addition of current practice incident coordination references).
- A full and final decision around the adoption of CIMS v3 or AIIMS.
- A practical command, control and coordination component of the existing Executive Officer training and progression system (TAPS) program.
- The lack of a Senior Commander development program and associated assessment.
- The incorrect referencing of equivalency of qualifications (e.g. NZQA versus FENZ training outcomes and career TAPS versus volunteer TAPS).
- The absence of an agreed position on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process.
- As FENZ has committed to delivering across reduction, readiness, response and recovery (the four R's), it would be prudent to develop awareness, understanding and training of the recovery function and what that means for FENZ, particularly within the ACL structure.

Although FENZ is responsible for addressing the gaps identified, this must be carried out through a co-design model, with only relevant the unions and associations involved.

Progression

Command progression pathway – Recruit entry

All employees after 1st July 2017

ACL 1 is obtained by completing all of the CEA listed requirements for the pathway from trainee firefighter (TFF) through to senior firefighter (SFF), followed by the career Station Officer (SO) TAPS program requirements in full, whilst continuously holding the substantive rank of operational SFF for at least two years, followed by appointment to the SO rank as per the collective employment agreement (CEA).

ACL 2 is obtained by completing the career Senior Station Officer (SSO) TAPS program requirements in full, whilst continuously holding the substantive rank of operational SO for at least two years, and through appointment to the SSO rank as per the CEA.

ACL 3 is obtained by completing the career Executive Officer (EO) TAPS program requirements in full including a command and control component to be developed; whilst continuously holding the substantive rank of SSO in an operational position for two years, or alternatively by submission of a consolidation portfolio of evidence (POE); and through appointment to Assistant Fire Commander (AFC).

ACL 4 is obtained by completing a career Senior Executive Officer (SEO) TAPS program (to be developed); after holding the substantive rank of Assistant Fire Commander/Fire Commander continuously for two years, or alternatively by submission of a consolidation portfolio of evidence (POE); and on a response roster.

Command transition progression program pathway (CTPPP) – Affected status

Those employed on or before 1st July 2017

1. This is a moratorium position, ring-fenced only to those employed by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) on the 1st July 2017, with 'affected' status as determined by FENZ. These personnel may initially be deployed on a roster to attend all of the person specific qualified incidents from the matrix in Appendix A.

To increase response scope and/or command level – those not appropriately qualified but appointed to these positions can transition via the following pathway which considers recognition of prior learning (RPL) relevant to the role:

- TFF, FF, QFF, SFF ranks will be recognised (RPL) through existing skillsets based on existing pre-requisite elementary unit standards (TBD).

- Engagement in the command transition program requires completion of the following in addition to this:
 - Career SO TAPS – full theory component
 - Career SSO TAPS – full theory component
 - Career EO TAPS – full program (revised program which must include an assessed command and control component)
 - Completion of the incident leadership and development course (ILDC) with the caveat that this is to build an awareness and appreciation for different incident types. This does **not** qualify moratorium transition personnel to attend incidents outside of their person specific response capabilities. Refer to Appendix D.
 - Successful assessed completion of all components will bridge an individual to operate at command level 3, however, they cannot operate at command levels 1 or 2 except for previously attained person specific response competencies. i.e. A former DPRFO who engages in the command transition progression program pathway (CTPPP), may attend and fill all roles up to and including ACL 3 at natural environment incidents, but can only fill ACL 3 roles within their new competency range (built environment).
2. Existing career Commanders within the new District structure as at August 2021, will be offered training/courses to capture capability gaps within wildfire specialisation. This should include a pathway to full wildfire management competence (NIMT equivalent).

This should also encapsulate specialised training within the wildfire environment encompassing the following course types:

- Fire behaviour
- Air operations and supervision/management
- Lead heavy machinery
- Issue permits
- Prescribed burning operations
- Role specific incident/response coordination courses including planning, logistics, public information management etc. jointly developed in a co-design, co-ownership model with FENZ and Unions & Associations.

Ongoing reassessment

All Commanders will undergo a competency-based revalidation assessment on a two-yearly basis.

This should involve:

- Performance assessment based on the previous two years.
- 360 review by predetermined leaders (with the appropriate current training and experience to assess at ACL 3 and above), peers and subordinates.
- A practical assessment centre undertaken by an independent internal group with the appropriate training currency and experience to assess at ACL3 and above. This group should

be qualified to at least one command level above those being assessed and should also include oversight by relevant unions and associations.

Failure to prove competence

The process for anyone deemed not-competent consists of the following steps:

- An immediate opportunity for reassessment. Reassessment process to be jointly developed in a co-design, co-ownership model between FENZ and Unions and Associations.
- If still deemed not-competent, a six-month stand down with additional remedial training provided (content and quantity TBD).
- Third reassessment.
- If still deemed not-competent, the following steps will ensue:
 - The performance management policy is enacted.
 - A determination can be made that the individual becomes a moratorium position, only available for those employed on the 1st July 2017 - (grandfathered rank/pay), and all response is limited to incident specific competencies (as per the matrix at Appendix A)
 - Individuals are still reassessed, as above, on a two-yearly basis to ensure competency is aligned to agreed response parameters.

Limitations

There are limitations on all moratorium personnel within the CTPPP framework.

Involvement in the following activities is limited to their role specific scope, provided they have completed the corresponding command level equivalent program. i.e. if you transition to command level 3, you cannot assess command levels 1 and 2 unless you have completed the relevant steps for that level in full.

List of restrictions:

- Facilitator/mentor for any career staff roles including ILDC or similar courses.
- Training delivery or assessment of urban career staff.
- Simulation team participation.
- OER and training reviews.
- Progression program training and assessment, including material and content review except where it is within their person specific skill range as illustrated in Appendix A.
- Any project work that has any impact or implications for urban personnel, career or volunteer.

Leadership layers

Leadership levels

Three key leadership levels have been identified:

- **Incident Command – IC** – Operational/Tactical
- **Incident Control/Management – IMT** – Tactical/Strategic/Coordination
- **Incident/Response Coordination – RC** – Strategic/Coordination

These three levels of leadership - command, control/management and coordination, mimic the three levels of emergency response and therefore require emergency response leadership accountability, experience and expertise.

RPL of existing planning, logistics and public information (PIM) courses as currently facilitated/run by rural will be recognised as part of the transition, however, moratorium personnel can only fulfil incident specific roles within these capabilities.

These levels are recognised in the matrices in Appendices A to D and relate directly to the skillsets and positions that transition personnel can be appointed to as part of an incident management team. Appendix E outlines roles and competencies in relation to the incident coordination function as well as highlighting future training needs. This supports S24 (2) of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 and provides sufficient safeguards against organisational risk.

Alignment with TCF/LDF

The technical competency framework (TCF) and leadership development framework (LDF) provide a leadership development focus and very little in command, control and coordination, other than reinforcement of existing competencies.

However, these frameworks combined with the addition of the command focussed level (ACL) 1 to 4 progression program, would compliment one another ensuring command competencies align with the desired leadership traits and behaviours of the organisation. This would deliver the organisation the required skillsets and competencies, along with the pathway to achieve these, across both leadership and command. The net outcome of this would be increased firefighter and public safety, along with reduced organisational risk.

Think, Reflect, Discuss, Act

ACL 1				
ACL 2				
ACL 3				
ACL 4				
	Lead self	Lead teams	Lead systems	Lead FENZ

Table 1: Proposed ACL alignment to leadership development framework (LDF)

Appendix A - Person specific response competency matrix

Leadership level ACL Rank Qualification	Descriptor	Minor	Vegetation	Wildfire	Natural event	Animal rescue	Medical response	Structure fire	High rise	Aircraft incident	Ship fire	Rail incidents	Tunnels/mines	Bulk flammable liquid/gas	Places of restraint/detention	Places of care	Explosives/IEDs	Hazardous materials	Decontamination	Specialist/technical rescue ¹	Motor vehicle accident	Urban search and rescue (USAR)	Electrical incidents	Civil disturbances
Operational ACL 1 Station Officer SO TAPS	1 st Alarm < 4 pumps Unlikely to escalate IC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Operational/Tactical ACL 2 Senior Station Officer SSO TAPS	2 nd Alarm 4-6 pumps Some involvement of other agencies IC/IMT	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Tactical/Strategic ACL 3 Assistant Fire Commander EO TAPS ²	3 rd /4 th Alarm 6+ pumps Escalating incident IC/IMT/RC	Black	Green	Green	Green	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Strategic ACL 4 Fire Commander SEO TAPS ³	5 th + Alarm Major emergency RCC/ECC/NCMC IC/IMT/RC	Black	Green	Green	Green	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

 Rural Fire Manager
 Urban Career Commander

IC = Incident Command **IMT** = Incident Management/Control **RC** = Response Coordination

¹ Specialised/technical rescue includes: Trench, water, confined space, collapse, industrial entrapment, workplace accident

² EO TAPS to have assessed command and control component developed

³ SEO TAPS to be developed

Appendix B - Leadership levels following recruit entry

Command progression pathway matrix

		Incident Command (IC)	Incident Control (IMT)	Incident Coordination (RC)
ACL 1	Minor event			N/A
ACL 2	Serious event			
ACL 3	Significant event			
ACL 4	Major event			
		OPERATIONAL/TACTICAL	TACTICAL/STRATEGIC	STRATEGIC/MANAGEMENT

IC = Incident Command **IMT** = Incident Management/Control **RC** = Response Coordination

Matrices reflecting response competencies for various employees. This should be interpreted alongside Appendix A and related to the appropriate incident types an individual is qualified to command/control/coordinate.

Incident Level Descriptors

Event Level	Description	Examples
Level 1 (Minor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Alarm FENZ led event < 4 appliances Minor role as supporting agency under additional functions (S.12) Predominately single agency Command focussed with a single-layered command structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIN, MED and NAT events 1st Alarm structure fire MVA (non-complex) Minor rescue events not requiring technical rescue Minor HAZ events Vegetation incidents not requiring rural response
Level 2 (Serious)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Alarm FENZ led event 4 - 6 appliances Significant support agency role Command structure requiring additional layers to maintain span of control Command focussed with some control across agencies required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure fire escalating and requiring upgrade Multiple MIN/NAT calls requiring limited inter-station coordination Complex MVA with multiple vehicles/persons trapped Level 2 line rescue or other technical rescue
Level 3 (Significant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd – 5th Alarm FENZ led event > 6 appliances Escalating, long duration event requiring multiple command layers Command and control focussed with elements of coordination required for multi-agencies Recovery requirement following incident Control focussed with local level coordination required and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd+ Alarm structure fire or hazmat event Serious ship, aircraft or rail incident Complex (L3) technical rescue or multiple casualty incident MIPS in place for serious Nat event with widespread local impact requiring regional coordination

	external stakeholder involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large vegetation fire with significant requirement for rural firefighting resources
Level 4 (Major)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major emergency with multi-agency responsibility • Long duration event with national impact and implications • Significant/complex multi-agency control structures and coordination required from Regional or National coordination centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declared Civil Defence emergencies such as damaging earthquakes, tsunamis, major floods, major storms etc. • Long duration complex urban and rural fires with national implications and impacts

Note: The above table is indicative only and not an exhaustive description of incident levels/examples

Appendix C - Command Level Competency

At each of the levels (1 – 4), graduating competencies are required. This is a “building blocks” concept where, for example, competency at commanding Level 1 incidents is a pre-requisite for commanding Level 2 incidents and so on.

Current FENZ rank structure, progression and ACL deal adequately with most of the incident levels tabled above. The following table provides progression pathways to achieve competence at each level.

- Level 1 and 2 are already in place through TAPS programs.
- Level 3 is partly in place but has several gaps that require addressing (see gap analysis).
- Level 4 is yet to be developed.

	Rank alignment	Current progression system	Requirements
Level 1	Station Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career SO TAPS • Time based experience requirement (2 years as SFF) • Appointment to rank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No immediate requirement to change
Level 2	Senior Station Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career SSO TAPS • Time based experience requirement (2 continuous years as operational SO) • Appointment to rank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No immediate requirement to change
Level 3	Assistant (Fire) Commander	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Executive Officer TAPS Program (not currently a requirement for appointment) • Appointment to rank 	<p>Changes required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command/control/coordination development and assessment required to be added to EO program, i.e. modified strategic command course • EO program completion to become a requirement for appointment • Time (2 years as operational SSO) or consolidation portfolio based demonstrated experience at previous command level (rank) required to be appointed
Level 4	Fire Commander Assistant National Commander National Commander	No current command program for entry into these ranks	Development of high-level command/control/coordination course required – could be developed with NZDF, NEMA, Police etc. Experience at senior level on a response roster

Note: With command experience at the previous rank and command training and assessment added to the EO programme, entry into the rank of AFC will be consistent with already proven successful progression pathways leading up to that rank.

Appendix D - Transitioning moratorium employee's matrix (CTPPP)*

Built environment incidents

		Incident Command (IC)	Incident Control (IMT)	Incident Coordination (RC)
ACL 1	Minor event			N/A
ACL 2	Serious event			
ACL 3	Significant event			
ACL 4	Major event			
		OPERATIONAL/TACTICAL	TACTICAL/STRATEGIC	STRATEGIC/MANAGEMENT

IC = Incident Command IMT = Incident Management/Control RC = Response Coordination

Natural environment incidents

		Incident Command (IC)	Incident Control (IMT)	Incident Coordination (RC)
ACL 1	Minor event			N/A
ACL 2	Serious event			
ACL 3	Significant event			
ACL 4	Major event			
		OPERATIONAL/TACTICAL	TACTICAL/STRATEGIC	STRATEGIC/MANAGEMENT

IC = Incident Command IMT = Incident Management/Control RC = Response Coordination

* Should be interpreted alongside Appendix A for specific incident types

Appendix E - Proposed multi-agency coordination matrix

The intent of this is to recognise existing skillsets of transitioning personnel at larger scale incidents and propose an initial framework for higher level coordination training for FENZ Commanders (ACL 3 and above).

	IMT	EOC/LCC	ECC/RCC	NCC	NCMC
Support/SME¹	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓* ✓
Agency liaison officer (LO)	✓ ✓	✓* ✓	✓* ✓ ✓	✓* ✓*	✓* ✓ ✓
Function - team	✓ ✓	✓* ✓	✓* ✓ ✓	✓* ✓	✓ ✓
Function - lead	✓* ✓	✓* ✓	✓* ✓ ✓	✓* ✓* ✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Centre leadership roles¹	✓* ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓

Existing skillset transitioning rural personnel	Existing skillset transitioning urban personnel	Proposed skillset for EO command & control program	Proposed skillset for SEO program
✓	✓	✓	✓

✓* Function team/lead roles are limited to training specialisation, i.e. Planning, logistics, PIM etc.

✓* Function team/lead roles are limited to training and expertise e.g. NEMA ITF courses, USAR UCC training, EMAT training

¹ SME and leadership roles limited to field of expertise as per the person specific response competency matrix at Appendix A.