

Dear Managers,

The Portuguese Firefighter Operational Commanding system is a mean of organization with appliance in operational purposes, being deactivated when the incident that caused it ends.

Its goal is to facilitate the implementation of the necessary conditions to the execution of tactical priorities, under the Relief Operations Commander's responsibility.

It is important to refer that the Relief Operations Commander is the person who commands the relief operation on that precise moment.

There are three fundamental principles to take in consideration on the Commanding Operational System:

- Commanding Unit: There's only one element on command on each moment of the incident's timeline;
- Mandatory Function: The function of the Relief Operations Commander has mandatory and permanent character;
- Maintenance of the Control Capability: The number of elements that each graduate has to head directly will be an average of five firefighters, admitting that the control capability of each graduate is that of five, number which is valid to any level whether vehicles, combat groups, divisions, fronts or sectors.

This Operations Theater managing model is applied to any incident, regardless of its typology, being the only difference of the used apparatus and his complexity that will dictate the organization's development.

Facing the organization's development and the commanding phasis (Planning, Organization, Direction and Control), the deciding and managing supporting tools are fundamental to the success of the operation. Accidents and incidents are, most of the time, unexpected, in which case the lack of knowledge and training associated to the eventual loss of control, makes difficult the immediate response in order to manage the evolution having as goal it's domination and consequence's control.

Therefore, an pro-active attitude by the organizations becomes imperative on prevision, inventory and control of possible failures and its consequences, by developing and using management and support tools, in order to give a more quick and effective response, that is not possible other way.

It's in this picture of crisis and rupture with what is humanly controllable and typical of social organization, that management programs like SAHANA EDEN or MAYON can dictate the difference between "Managing" or "Chaos". The management of means and organizations, stocks of staple goods, record and cadaster of the agents involved, fleet management, listing of missing, injured, evacuated or dead persons, record of public and private infrastructures, etc., are of the most importance on a Municipal, District or National Emergency Plan.

At last, I remind the functionalities allowed by these programs and that Organizations must execute:

- Identify the potential incident risk and the response to accidents and other emergency situations, and being able to react on the prevention and response level;
- Periodically analyze and review the level of readiness for emergencies, also as the procedures and response plans, most importantly on the phase of post - emergency incident;
- Test those procedures periodically, whether in a room or in the field.

To all the technicians and managers that work daily on Sahana-Eden and/or Sahana-Mayon programs, I deeply thank the opportunity that unto us was given of sharing knowledge and use of these important tools at Lisbon, and I send my most cordial greetings and wishes that you may continue the excellent work for Humanity.

For the good of all,

Rui Alberto Moreira da Silva

APBV's President