

Operating Guideline # 707

Control Zones

October 9, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to describe the delineation of an incident scene into operational control zones to facilitate accountability, safety and to control the movement of unauthorized persons at an emergency incident.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

The establishment of a scene perimeter (often with the assistance of police) will enable fire crews to operate more efficiently and safely while at the same time keeping onlookers and other first responders safe. Identifying a hot zone and limiting access to it to only essential personnel also serves to minimize damage and prevents freelancing by well-meaning but unassigned individual personnel.

GUIDELINE:

1. The IC should consider the establishment of operational control zones (Hot zone, Warm zone and Cold zone) at any incident where multiple crews are operating.
2. Delineating hot, warm and cold zones through the use of ropes or “fire scene” tape is an effective way of identifying control zones. The police should be utilized to restrict/control the movement of by-standers to areas outside the control zones, and the IC (or designate) should liaise with the police early in the incident to establish the cold zone perimeter.
3. Fire Department personnel operating in the warm or hot zones must be part of a work sector and must have a specific assigned task or bona fide reason for remaining in zone.
4. Personnel intending to operate within the warm or hot zones must communicate and coordinate their entry/exit/assignment with the Accountability Sector/Entry Control officer.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

DEFINITIONS:

“Cold Zone” means an area surrounding the hot and warm zones on the outer perimeter of the incident scene where generally the IC, accountability, rehab, R.I.T., staging and other support functions are safely located. No personal protective equipment is required to be worn in the cold zone as it is an area where no danger exists from exposure to the emergency incident itself. The general public, non-emergency personnel and any by-standers are normally excluded from this area as well.

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“Hot Zone” means the area of the incident where the emergency itself is located. It is an area of increased danger and usually requires that those responders who are operating within it be protected by means of personal protective clothing and other safety equipment. It is an area of exclusion for all but those personnel who are required and actively engaged in incident mitigation procedures. Entry to the hot zone is permitted for **ONLY** those personnel authorized by the Incident Commander **AND** who have their assignment registered with the Accountability Sector/Entry Control officer.

“Warm Zone” means the area of the incident between the hot and cold zones. It is a transition area between these other zones where personnel who are directly supporting the physical operations of those within the hot zone are designated to work. Unnecessary personnel are not usually permitted to loiter in the warm zone and some level of personal protective equipment is usually required as those operating within this zone may be exposed to transitory or tertiary effects of the incident (i.e. – occasional smoke exposure).

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- OG 701 - Role and Responsibilities of the Incident Commander
- OG 207 – Accountability System