**Chapter 1: The Orientation and History of the Fire Service**

**Chief Concepts**

* Throughout your training and career, keep in mind the five fire fighter guidelines:
  1. **Be safe**. Safety for yourself, your teammates, and the public should be your top priority.
  2. **Follow orders**. Remember that your supervisors have more training and experience than you do.
  3. **Work as a team**. Teamwork is essential to safety and successful fire suppression.
  4. **Think!** Always keep your mind sharp and focused.
  5. **Follow the golden rule**. Treat each team member, victim, and citizen as you would like to be treated. Every life is important.
* The training and performance qualifications for fire fighters are specified in NFPA 1001. Age restrictions, educational requirements, medical requirements, and other criteria are established locally.
* A Fire Fighter I works in a team under direct supervision to suppress fires.
* A Fire Fighter II works in a team under general supervision. He or she may assume command, transfer command, and coordinate command within the IMS.
* Throughout your career, you may assume several roles in the fire department. Each role requires additional training:
  + The fire apparatus driver/operator is responsible for getting the fire apparatus to the scene safely as well as setting up and running the pump or operating the aerial ladder.
  + The company officer leads his or her company both on the scene and at the station.
  + The safety officer watches the overall operation for unsafe practices.
  + The training officer is responsible for updating the training of current fire fighters and for training new fire fighters.
  + The IC is responsible for the management of all incident operations.
  + The fire marshal/fire inspector/fire investigator inspects businesses and enforces public safety laws and fire codes. He or she may also respond to fire scenes to help investigate the cause of a fire.
  + The fire and life-safety education specialist educates the public about fire safety and injury prevention.
  + The 911 dispatcher/telecommunicator takes calls from the public and dispatches appropriate units to an emergency.
  + Fire apparatus maintenance personnel repair and service fire and EMS vehicles, keeping them ready to respond to emergencies.
  + Fire police control traffic and secure the scene from the public.
  + Information-management professionals are fire fighters or civilians who take care of a fire department’s computer network system.
  + The public information officer serves as a liaison between the IC and the news media.
  + The fire protection engineer reviews plans and works with building owners to ensure that their fire suppression and detection systems will meet the applicable codes and function as needed.
* Many emergencies require specialized skills. Most large fire departments have teams of specialized fire fighters who can respond to specific emergencies:
  + An ARFF works at military and civilian airports and has specialized training in aircraft fires, extricating victims from aircraft, and extinguishing agents.
  + A hazardous materials technician is trained to identify chemicals, control leaks, decontaminate a scene, and clean up a scene.
  + A technical rescue technician is trained in special rescue techniques for incidents involving structural collapse, trench rescue, swiftwater rescue, confinedspace rescue, high-angle rescue, and other specialized situations.
  + A SCUBA dive rescue technician is trained in water rescue, recovery, and search procedures.
  + EMS personnel are trained to administer prehospital medical care to victims.
* When multiple agencies, such as police, fire, and EMS, work together at an incident, a unified command must be established as part of the IMS. A unified command establishes a single set of incident goals under a single leader and ensures mutual communication and cooperation.
* Governance is the process by which an organization exercises authority and performs the functions assigned to it. The governance of a fire department depends on regulations, policies, and SOGs/SOPs.
  + Regulations are developed by various government or government-authorized organizations to implement a law that has been passed by a government body.
  + Policies are developed to provide definitive guidelines for present and future actions.
  + SOGs/SOPs provide specific information on the actions that should be taken to accomplish a certain task.
* A fire department includes many different types of companies to perform specific tasks at the scene of an emergency:
  + The engine company is responsible for securing a water source, deploying handlines, conducting search and rescue operations, and putting water on the fire.
  + The truck company is responsible for forcible entry, ventilation, roof operations, search and rescue, and ground ladder deployment.
  + The rescue company is responsible for rescuing victims from fires, confined spaces, trenches, and highangle situations.
  + A wildland/brush company is dispatched to wildland and brush fires.
  + A hazardous materials company responds to and controls scenes involving spilled or leaking hazardous chemicals.
  + An EMS company includes ambulances and responds to medical emergencies.
* The chain of command may differ from fire department to fire department, but the basic concept remains the same across the fire service. The chain of command, from lowest rank to highest, is as follows:
  + Fire fighter
  + Lieutenant
  + Captain
  + Battalion chief
  + Assistant or division chief
  + Chief of the department
* Four basic management principles apply to the fire service:
  1. Discipline comprises the set of guidelines that a fire department establishes for fire fighters. Regulations, policies, and procedures are all forms of discipline.
  2. Division of labour is a way of organizing an incident by breaking down an overall strategy into a series of smaller tasks.
  3. Unity of command is the concept that each fire fighter answers to only one supervisor.
  4. Span of control is the number of people whom one person can supervise effectively.
* Highly destructive fires spurred communities to enact strict building and fire codes in an effort to prevent large losses of life and property. Today’s building codes not only govern construction materials but also frequently require built-in fire prevention and safety measures, such as fire detectors.
* Fire equipment has evolved from leather buckets and wooden ladders in colonial times to today’s thermal imaging cameras.
* Communications have evolved from simply shouting to using two-way radios.
* The fire service in Canada today is the product of an evolution over hundreds of years. As a novice fire fighter, it is helpful for you to learn from the past and to study the fire service in Canada today.