Survival Skills for the Newly Promoted Battalion Chief

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OBJECTIVES:

- Define how the role of the Battalion Chief (BC) has changed over the years

- Create an action plan for success as a newly promoted Battalion Chief

- Identify various BC survival skills
DIFFERENT NAME / SAME JOB:

• Battalion Chief
• District Chief
• Division Chief
• Assistant Chief
• Deputy Chief
• Shift Commander
• ????
How has the role & responsibility of a Battalion Chief **changed** over the last 20 to 40 years?
What are some of the challenges a Battalion Chief is faced with on a daily basis?
What To Expect Your First Year As A New Battalion Chief
WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER PROMOTION:

• A probationary period
• A project to complete or program to manage
• Getting evaluated
• Under the microscope
• To be tested
• You will make decisions daily that could have serious long-term effects on your trust, credibility, and long-term success, among other things……
Survival Skills for the Newly Promoted Battalion Chief
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Meet with your boss to discuss **expectations**

• Meet with your personnel to **share expectations**

• Get to know your **boss**

• Get to know your **personnel**
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Put together a to-do list, and use it as a check-list to evaluate your performance on a regular basis

  – Include education, training, experience, as well as knowledge, skills, and abilities you would like to obtain
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Learn the history of things (what worked, what didn’t work, etc.)

• Take the time to observe things (management by walking around and actually paying attention).

• Remain neutral
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Attempt to provide **face time** to your personnel daily.

• Don’t get too involved **or** over commit **too soon** while you’re still learning your job.

• Develop excellent **listening** skills
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• This isn’t a competition!

• Develop & maintain relationships – internal and external.

• In the beginning, attempt to obtain “little victories”
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Be **respectful** of others, especially your predecessors.

• **Strive for consistency.**

• Don’t **selectively** enforce rules & regulations.

• Don’t **jump** to conclusions.
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Immediately take ownership of your new position.
• Surround yourself with talented people.
• Maintain your personal sanity (health and welfare).
• If you never fail….you never give yourself the opportunity to succeed!
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Realize the higher you go, the less people will “like you.”

• Don’t try to be “everyone’s best friend.” Instead, try to be “respected” by your peers and/or superiors.

• **Delegate** when appropriate
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Don’t compromise your values.

• Realize, you’re more in the spotlight now than you ever were.

• One wrong word (or words) can doom your career or reputation
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• It’s not “us versus them” anymore

  – It’s “all of us are in this together” to do what is best for the personnel, the public, and the communities we serve

• Make sure you keep your supervisor in the loop, & know what they expect of you
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• You’re no longer “one of the guys or gals” (hopefully you realized that when you got promoted to Company Officer).
  – You’re now “one of them” (administration).
  – Get used to it.

• You can’t please everyone, remember the 50.1% rule.
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Inspect your stations, apparatus, equipment & personnel on a regular basis.

• Ask lots of questions.

• Learn how to see the big (or bigger) picture.

• Determine who the movers & shakers are – internally & externally.
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• If there was ever a time to be calm, cool and collect, at everything you do – now is it!
• I hope you realize the liability, the commitment, and the responsibility you have to your personnel, your community and your department.
• Admit mistakes (yes, it isn’t fun at times)
SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR NEW BC:

• Don’t allow your personnel to come to you with problems, without having thought of at least 2 solutions.

• You must continuously grow (personally and professionally).
PERSONNEL EXPECTATIONS:

• Ensure they are reasonable, obtainable, legal, ethical, & appropriate

• Share them with your Company Officers to share with their crews

• Encourage your Company Officers to share their expectations with their personnel

• Hold your Company Officers accountable!
ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

• Use the **Headline Test**:

1. Is it the right thing for our **personnel**?
2. Is it the right thing for our **department**?
3. Is it the right thing for our **community**?
4. Would you mind **reading** about it in the morning newspaper or on the internet?

✓ If you can answer a positive **yes** to all 4… **GO FOR IT!**
CLOSING THOUGHTS:

• Some of the happiest employees are those that “like” their supervisor!

• Don’t be part of the problem, be part of the solution

• Monkey see – monkey do (be on your best behavior)!
CLOSING THOUGHTS:

• When all else fails, when your day is going south, when things are just not fun, don’t forget why you’re here:
  – To take care of your community & public.
  – To take care of your department.
  – To take care of your personnel.
Resources:

• Soft cover copy; or

• EBook version

• Available at:
  – iTunes
  – Amazon

www.code3firetraining.com
Resources:

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Thank you very much for your time!
Don’t just stay safe – make it safe!

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