ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Lesson 1: Welcome/Overview

Lesson Overview

The **Welcome/Overview** lesson will provide a brief tutorial on the structure of the course. It will also review the purpose of the course, present an overview of ICS, and describe each lesson and list specific lesson objectives.

This lesson should take approximately **25 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Use the course features and functions.
- Identify the purpose of the course.

Course Introduction

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-risk, incident management concept. ICS is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents. It is a proven management system based on successful business practices.

Designers of the system recognized early that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible to meet the following management challenges:

- Meet the needs of incidents of any kind or size.
- Be usable for routine events or complex emergency incidents.
- Allow personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provide logistical and administrative support to ensure that operational staff can meet incident objectives.
- Be cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

Applications for the use of ICS have included:

- Fire, both structural and wildfire
- Hazardous material situations
- Search and rescue
- Oil spills
- Pest eradication
- Control of animal diseases and
- Planned events, such as parades or political rallies.

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A poorly managed incident response can be devastating to our economy, to our food supply, and to our health and safety. With so much at stake, we must effectively manage our response efforts. ICS allows us to do so. This course presents a more in depth look at ICS and the vital role that you can play.

Lesson Overviews and Objectives

The remaining lessons in the web-based portion of this course will cover the following:

Lesson 2: Staffing Fundamentals: ICS organization and duties and responsibilities of the organizational elements. Lesson 2: Staffing Fundamentals will address the following objectives:

- Match responsibility statements to each ICS organizational element.
- List the ICS positions which may include Deputies, and describe Deputy roles and responsibilities. Describe differences between Deputies and Assistants.
- Describe ICS reporting and working relationships for Technical Specialists and Agency Representatives.
- Describe reporting relationships and information flow within the organization.
- Describe the Air Operations Branch and its relationship to other Functions.

Lesson 3: Resource Management: Stages of resource management and responsibilities related to resource ordering. Lesson 3: Resource Management will address the following objectives:

- Discuss the general principles of resource management.
- Describe the responsibilities for resource management shared among the Command and General Staff.
- Describe how resource needs are identified and resources are procured.
- Describe how resources are checked in and tracked on an incident.
- Describe management actions that may result in poor performance.
- Describe the financial procedures that are part of the resource management process.

Lesson 4: Unified Command: Purposes and advantages of multi-jurisdiction and/or multi-agency Unified Command. Lesson 4: Unified Command will address the following objectives:

- Define the advantages of Unified Command.
- Define the kinds of situations that may call for a Unified Command organization.
- Identify the primary features of a Unified Command organization.

Lesson 5: Incident Management: Ways in which incidents and events are organized to achieve incident objectives. Lesson 5: Incident Management will address the following objectives:

- Describe the process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events.
- Describe the steps in transferring incident command.
- List the major elements included in the incident briefing.
- Develop a sample organization around a planned event.

Lesson 6: Summary & Posttest: Summary of the salient points of ICS 300 and the posttest for the web-based portion of the course.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Welcome/Overview** lesson. This lesson provided a brief tutorial on the structure of the course. It also reviewed the purpose of the course, presented an overview of ICS, and described each lesson and listed specific lesson objectives.

The next lesson will review the ICS organization and duties and responsibilities of the organizational elements.

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Lesson 2: Staffing Fundamentals

Lesson Overview

The **Staffing Fundamentals** lesson will provide a review of the ICS organization and descriptions of the responsibilities of the organizational elements within each section of the ICS. It will also review the general duties of each organizational element, terminology, staffing considerations, and reporting relationships.

This lesson should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 2 Learning Objectives

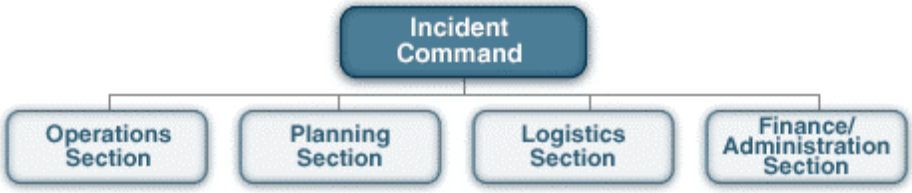
By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Match responsibility statements to each ICS organizational element.
- List the ICS positions which may include Deputies, and describe Deputy roles and responsibilities. Describe differences between Deputies and Assistants.
- Describe ICS reporting and working relationships for Technical Specialists and Agency Representatives.
- Describe reporting relationships and information flow within the organization.
- Describe the Air Operations Branch and its relationship to other Functions.

ICS Management Functions

As you learned in ICS 200, the ICS organization is built around five major functions that may be applied on any incident whether it is large or small. The five major management functions are:

- Incident Command
- Operations Section
- Planning Section
- Logistics Section
- Finance/Administration Section



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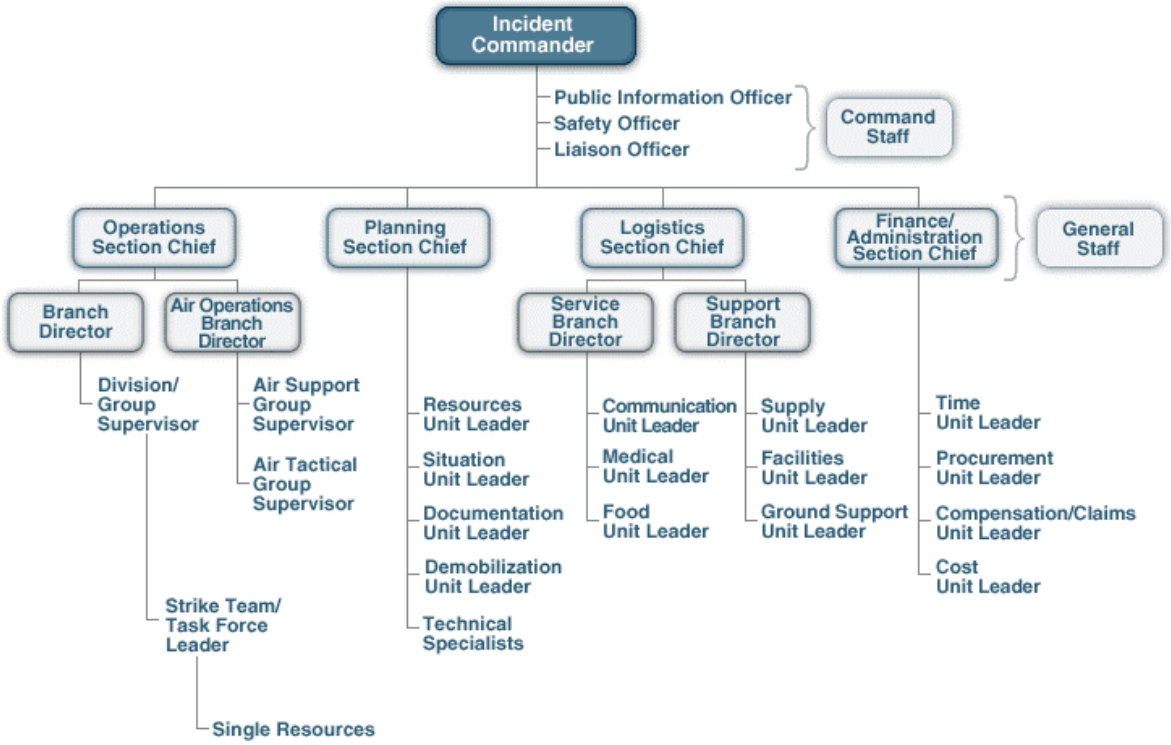
ICS Organization

A major advantage of the ICS organization is the ability to fill only those parts of the organization that are required.

For some incidents, and in some applications, only a few of the organization's functional elements may be required. However, if there is a need to expand the organization, additional positions exist within the ICS framework to meet virtually any need.



ICS Positions

Incident Commander: The individual responsible for overall management of the incident.

Command Staff: The Command Staff consists of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander. They may have an Assistant or Assistants, as needed.

Officer: Officer is the ICS title for the personnel responsible for the Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Public Information.

General Staff: The group of incident management personnel reporting to the Incident Commander. They may have one or more Deputies, as needed. The General Staff consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Section: The organizational level with responsibility for a major functional area of the incident, e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration.

Chief: The ICS title for individuals responsible for functional Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

Branch: The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions.

Director: The ICS title for individuals responsible for supervision of a Branch.

Division/Group: Divisions are used to divide an incident geographically. Groups are used to divide an incident functionally.

Supervisor: The ICS title for individuals responsible for a Division or Group.

Strike Team: A specified combination of the same kind and type of resources with common communications and a Leader.

Task Force: A combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need with common communications and a Leader.

Unit: The organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific incident Planning, Logistics, or Finance/Administration activity.

Leader: The ICS title for an individual responsible for a Task Force, Strike Team, or functional Unit.

Resources: Personnel and equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents. Resources are described by kind and type (e.g., Type III Helicopter) and may be used in tactical, support, or overhead capacities at an incident.

Lines of Authority

ICS establishes lines of supervisory authority and formal reporting relationships. Within ICS, there is complete **unity of command**, meaning that each position and each person within the system has only one designated supervisor.

Direction and supervision follows established organizational lines at all times, however, information can be shared freely throughout the organization.

Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships

Chain of command means that there is an orderly line of authority and reporting relationships within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels

Chain of command is used to communicate direction and maintain management control. Although orders must flow through the chain of command, members of the organization may directly communicate with each other to ask for or share information.

ICS team members work within the ICS position descriptions and follow the designated reporting relationships, regardless of their non-emergency positions or everyday administrative chain of command.

Functional Delegation

The ICS organization may be expanded easily from a very small operation for routine incidents into a larger organization capable of handling catastrophic events. A basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible for a task until that responsibility is delegated to a subordinate position.

The ICS organizational chart is a graphic representation of the incident, including:

- Positions and functions activated.
- Chain of command.
- Reporting relationships.
- Responsibilities delegated.
- Information flow.

Incident Commander's Overall Role

The Incident Commander's responsibility is the overall management of the incident. On most incidents, the command activity is carried out by a single Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is selected by qualifications and experience. The Incident Commander may have a Deputy, who may be from the same agency, or from an assisting agency.

Deputies

The Incident Commander may have one or more Deputies. An individual assuming a Deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy Incident Commander must be able to assume the Incident Commander's role.

Following are three reasons to designate Deputies:

1. To perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.
2. To perform the Incident Command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period).
3. To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Incident Commander's Overall Responsibilities

Before examining the Incident Commander's major responsibilities in detail, let's look at a list of overall responsibilities:

- Assess situation and/or obtain a briefing from the previous Incident Commander.
- Receive delegation of authority from Agency Administrator.
- Establish immediate priorities.
- Determine incident objectives and strategy.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Establish and monitor incident organization.
- Ensure adequate safety measures are in place.
- Schedule planning meetings as required.
- Approve and authorize Incident Action Plan implementation.

- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Coordinate with key off-incident personnel (e.g. community leaders, elected officials).
- Approve requests for additional resources or release of resources.
- Keep Agency Administrator informed of incident status.
- Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize release of information to news media.
- Order the demobilization of incident when appropriate.

Incident Commander's Major Responsibilities

The Incident Commander has a wide variety of responsibilities, some of which are complex and require explanation.

The first responsibility is to **establish immediate priorities**. The Incident Commander's first priority is always the safety of:

- People involved in the incident;
- Responders;
- Other emergency workers; and
- Bystanders.

The second priority is incident stabilization. When considering how to stabilize the incident situation, the Incident Commander must:

- Ensure life safety;
- Ensure continuity of command; and
- Manage resources efficiently and cost effectively.

The next responsibility is to **determine incident objectives and strategy**. All agencies employ some sequence of steps to meet incident objectives. A suggested four-step approach is:

Step 1) Know Agency Policy: Agency policy can affect the establishment of incident objectives. The Incident Commander must be fully aware of agency policy and his or her authority to manage the incident.

Step 2) Establish Incident Objectives: Incident objectives are statements of tasks to be accomplished related to the overall incident. For some incidents the time to achieve the objectives is critical. In others, time may not be an overriding issue. In all cases, incident objectives must be measurable.

Step 3) Develop Appropriate Strategy: Strategy describes the general method or methods that should be used to achieve an incident objective. Strategies can be used either singly or in combination.

Step 4) Execute Tactical Direction: Tactical direction describes what resources must be used and what actions must be taken within the selected strategy or strategies in order to achieve the incident objectives.

The next responsibility is to **establish an Incident Command Post**. The Incident Command Post (ICP) provides a central coordination point from which the Incident Commander, Command Staff, and Planning functions will normally operate. The ICP can be any type of facility that is available and appropriate. Once established, the ICP should not be moved unless absolutely necessary.

The next responsibility is to **establish and monitor incident organization**. The organization needs to be large enough to do the job at hand; yet, resource use must be cost-effective. Anticipated expansion or contraction of the incident will require changes to the organization. The Incident Commander is responsible for overseeing the management organization.

As you've just learned, the Incident Commander has a wide variety of responsibilities. In the next video segment, we'll discuss the remaining major responsibilities of the Incident Commander.
The next responsibility is to **ensure adequate safety measures**. Life Safety at the scene of an incident is always the top priority. If the incident is complex, or the Incident Commander is not a tactical expert in all the hazards present, a Safety Officer should be assigned.

The next responsibility is to **Schedule Planning Meetings as Required**. Planning meetings and the overall planning process are essential to achieving incident objectives. Although time constraints often do not allow for prolonged planning, it is important to know and use an effective planning process, as a lack of planning can be disastrous.

The next responsibility is to **approve and authorize implementation of an Incident Action Plan**. ICS offers great flexibility in the development of Incident Action Plans. Plans can be verbal or written. Written plans should be provided for multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents, or when the incident will continue for more than one Operational Period.

The next responsibility is to **approve requests for additional resources or release of resources**. On small incidents, the ordering responsibility for resources lies with the Incident Commander. He or she will personally determine resource requirements and order or release resources, as needed.

The final responsibility is to **authorize release of information to news media**. On small incidents, the Incident Commander is responsible for authorizing the release of information to the media. On larger incidents, it may be necessary to assign a Public Information Officer to help ensure that procedures are in place for managing the release of information to the media and responding appropriately to media inquiries.

The Incident Commander's major responsibilities are varied. Of primary concern, however is the overall responsibility for the management of the incident.

Characteristics of an Effective Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is normally the most visible person on the incident. The following are just some of the characteristics associated with an effective Incident Commander:

- Command presence
- Understands ICS
- Proven manager
- Puts safety first
- Proactive and decisive
- Calm and objective
- Quick thinking
- Effective communicator
- Adaptable and flexible
- Realistic about personal limitations
- Politically astute

Command Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to provide public information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, these personnel make up the Command Staff.

Each of the Command Staff members may also have an Assistant.

In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the Command Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

The addition of the **Information and Intelligence Officer**, as a Command Staff member, may be most appropriate in incidents with little need for tactical intelligence or classified intelligence, and where the intelligence is provided by supporting Agency Representatives, through real-time reach-back capabilities.

Assistants

The Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer may have Assistants, as necessary. The Assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions, or simply assist in managing the workload associated with the position. An Assistant must be as qualified as the Officer and be able to assume the Officer's role.

Assistant Public Information Officers may be assigned to the field or Joint Information Center or assigned to handle internal information. Assistant Safety Officers may have specific responsibilities, such as aviation, hazardous materials, etc. Assistant Liaison Officers may coordinate with specific agency representatives or groups of representatives.

Information and Intelligence Functions

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence are important elements of ICS. In this context, intelligence includes not only national security or other types of classified information but also other operational information, such as risk assessments, medical intelligence (i.e., surveillance), weather information, geospatial data, structural designs, toxic contaminant levels, utilities and public works data, etc., that may come from a variety of different sources.

Traditionally, information and intelligence functions are located in the Planning Section. However, in exceptional situations, the IC may need to assign the information and intelligence functions to other parts of the ICS organization. In any case, information and intelligence must be appropriately analyzed and shared with personnel, designated by the Incident Commander, who have proper clearance and a "need-to-know" to ensure they support decision-making.

The intelligence function may be organized in one of the following ways:

- Within the Command Staff. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with little need for tactical or classified intelligence, and in which incident-related intelligence is provided by supporting Agency Representatives, through real-time reach-back capabilities.

- As a Unit within the Planning Section. This option may be most appropriate in an incident with some need for tactical intelligence, and when no law enforcement entity is a member of the Unified Command.
- As a Branch within the Operations Section. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence (particularly classified intelligence), and when law enforcement is a member of the Unified Command.
- As a separate General Staff Section. This option may be most appropriate when an incident is heavily influenced by intelligence factors, or where there is a need to manage and/or analyze a large volume of classified or highly sensitive intelligence or information. This option is particularly relevant to a terrorism incident, for which intelligence plays a crucial role throughout the incident life cycle.

Regardless of how it is organized, the information and intelligence function is also responsible for developing, conducting, and managing information-related security plans and operations as directed by the Incident Commander. These can include information security and operational security activities, as well as the complex task of ensuring that sensitive information of all types (e.g., classified information, sensitive law enforcement information, proprietary or personnel information, or export controlled information) is handled in a way that not only safeguards the information, but also ensures that it gets to those who need access to it in order to effectively and safely conduct their missions. The information and intelligence function also has the responsibility for coordinating information- and operational-security matters with public awareness activities that fall under the responsibility of the Public Information Officer, particularly where such public awareness activities may affect information or operations security.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations. Only one Public Information Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Public Information Officer may have Assistants, as necessary, and the Assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions.

Reasons to designate a Public Information Officer include:

- The presence of an obvious high visibility or sensitive incident.
- Media demands for information are reducing Incident Commander effectiveness.
- Media capabilities to acquire their own information are increasing.
- Reduces the risk of multiple sources releasing information.
- Need to alert, warn or instruct the public.

Safety Officer

All agencies stress the importance of safety as both a management and an individual responsibility. In addition, the Command Staff position of Safety Officer may be assigned to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety, and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations.

Only one Safety Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Safety Officer will correct unsafe situations by working through the chain of command. However, the Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to **directly stop** unsafe acts. HAZMAT incidents require the assignment of a Safety Officer. The Safety Officer may assign Assistant Safety Officers, as needed.

Liaison Officer

Incidents that are multi-jurisdictional, or have several agencies involved, may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff. The Liaison Officer is the contact for agency representatives assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. The Liaison Officer may have one or more Assistants, as needed.

Reasons to establish the Liaison Officer position at an incident include:

- When several agencies send, or plan to send, Agency Representatives to an Incident in support of their resources.
- When the IC can no longer provide the time for individual coordination with each Agency Representative.
- When it appears that two or more jurisdictions may become involved in the incident and the incident will require on-site liaison.

Agency Representatives

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated **full authority** to make decisions on all matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer, or to the Incident Commander in the absence of a Liaison Officer.

Assisting Agency

An agency that is assisting on an incident is directly contributing **tactical resources** to the agency or jurisdiction that is responsible for the incident. Thus, fire, police, or public works equipment sent to Department of Agriculture incident would be considered assisting agency resources.

Cooperating Agency

An agency, which supports the incident or supplies assistance **other than tactical resources** would be considered a cooperating agency. Examples include the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, utility companies, etc. On some law enforcement incidents a fire agency may not send fire equipment, but may supply an Agency Representative for coordination purposes. In this case, the fire agency would be considered a cooperating agency.

General Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, t may also be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to perform the other four management functions. These personnel are designated as the **General Staff**. The General Staff is made up of four **sections**:

- Operations Section
- Planning Section
- Logistics Section
- Finance/Administration Section

Each of the General Staff members may also have one or more Deputies. In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the General Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

The addition of the **Information and Intelligence Section Chief**, as a General Staff member, may be most appropriate in those instances where an incident is heavily influenced by intelligence factors, or where there is a need to manage and/or analyze a large volume of classified or highly sensitive intelligence or information.

Operations Section

There is no precise guideline for when the Operations Section Chief will be established on an incident. In some cases, depending upon the complexity of the incident and the desires of the Incident Commander, it may be the first staff position to be established. In other situations, the Incident Commander may elect to maintain control of Operations.

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The build-up of the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and span of control considerations. The Operations Section consists of the following components:

- Ground or surface-based tactical resources.
- Aviation or air resources.
- Staging Areas.

Incidents will use any or all of these components, depending on the need.

The first component of the Operations Section is Ground or Surface Tactical Resources. There are three ways of organizing tactical resources on an incident. Resources can be used as:

- Single Resources.
- Task Forces.
- Strike Teams.

The determination of how resources will be used will be decided based on the area involved and the tactical requirement. Depending on the need, tactical resources can be placed into an Operations organization made up of:

- Resources, which report directly to the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief;
- Divisions, which are used to divide an incident geographically;
- Groups, which are used to describe functional areas of operation; or
- Branches, which can be either geographical or functional and are used in Operations when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control.

Another organizational option for the Operations Section is the establishment of an Information and Intelligence Branch. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence, particularly classified intelligence, and when law enforcement is a member of the Unified Command.

The second component of the Operations Section is aviation resources. Many incidents require the use of aircraft to support the incident. In ICS, all aviation resources assigned for the exclusive use of the incident, whether tactical or logistical, are assigned to the Operations Section. The Air Operations Branch may be established by the Operations Section Chief:

- When the complexity of air operations and/or the number of aircraft assigned to the incident requires additional management support; or
- When the incident requires both tactical and logistical use of air support.

The Air Operations Branch Director supervises both tactical and support aviation operations on the Incident. The Air Operations Branch Director reports to the Operations Section Chief. The Air Attack Group Supervisor manages all aircraft carrying out tactical assignments, such as personnel or cargo transport, spraying, photo or surveillance, etc.
The Air Support Group Supervisor manages the bases for the aircraft, including fuel and maintenance, and keeps time for all aircraft on the incident.

The third component of the Operations Section is Staging Areas. Staging Areas are temporary facilities, which should be located close enough to the incident so that resources can quickly be at the scene of their assignments. All Resources assigned to a Staging Area belong to the incident and are available for active assignment. Staging Areas can be set up at any appropriate location in the incident area and moved or deactivated as needed. Several Staging Areas may be used on a single incident. Staging Area Managers report to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if the Operations Section Chief position has not been filled.

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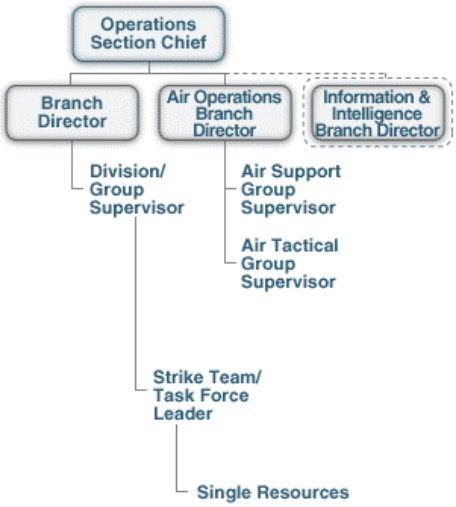
Branches, Division and Groups

A Branch is the organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations Section or Logistics Section.

In the Operations Section, Branches are established when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. Divisions have geographic responsibility and Groups have functional responsibility.

The Air Operations Branch may be established to manage aircraft assigned to provide logistical or tactical support to the incident. An optional Information and Intelligence Branch may be established in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence.



Directors, Managers and Supervisors

The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. The person in charge of each Staging Area is designated as a Manager. The person in charge of each Division or Group is designated as a Supervisor.

In the Operations Section, Branch Directors and Staging Managers report to the Operations Section Chief. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization and the Supervisors report to Branch Directors or the Operations Section Chief.

General Staff Units

Organization of the remaining General Staff functions includes subdivisions called Units supervised by Unit Leaders. While most Unit responsibilities are specific to the function, some are common to all.

Common responsibilities include:

- Obtaining briefings from the Section Chief.
- Participating in incident planning meetings as required.
- Determining current status of Unit activities.
- Confirming dispatch and estimated time of arrival of staff and supplies.
- Assigning specific duties to staff; supervise staff.
- Developing and implementing accountability, safety, and security measures for personnel and resources.
- Supervising demobilization of Units, including storage of supplies.
- Providing Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished.
- Maintaining Unit records, including Unit Log.

Planning Section

The Planning Section is responsible for managing all information relevant to an incident. The Planning Section collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the incident. Dissemination can be in the form of the written Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status display boards. This Section is managed by the Planning Section Chief. In addition, information and intelligence functions are traditionally located in the Planning Section.

The person in charge of each Planning Unit is designated as a Leader. In the Planning Section, Unit Leaders and Technical Specialists report to the Planning Section Chief. The Planning Section Chief can activate the following components as necessary:

Resources Unit: The Resources Unit is responsible for maintaining the status of all resources assigned to an incident. This includes both tactical and support resources. The Resources Unit achieves this through:

- Overseeing the check-in of all resources,
- Maintaining a status-keeping system that indicates the current location and status of all resources, and
- Maintaining of a master list of all resources assigned to the incident, for example, supervisory personnel, tactical and support resources, etc.

Situation Unit: The collection, processing, and organizing of all incident information takes place within the Situation Unit. The Situation Unit may prepare future projections of incident growth, maps, and intelligence information. Two positions report directly to the Situation Unit Leader:

- Display Processor - maintains incident status information. Incident status information is posted on maps and status boards as appropriate.
- Field Observer - collects and reports on situation information from the field.

Technical Specialists, such as Weather Observers, may also report directly to the Situation Unit Leader.

Documentation Unit: The Documentation Unit is responsible for the maintenance of accurate, up-to-date incident files. Incident files are then stored for legal, analytical, and historical purposes. Duplication services are also provided by the Documentation Unit.

Demobilization Unit: The Demobilization Unit is responsible for developing the Incident Demobilization Plan. On large incidents, demobilization can be quite complex, requiring a separate planning activity. Planning for demobilization should begin at the early stages of an incident, particularly in the development of rosters of personnel and resources, thus ensuring the efficient and safe demobilization of all resources. After generating an approved plan, the Demobilization Unit is responsible for distributing the plan at the incident and off-incident, as necessary.

Technical Specialists: Some incidents may require personnel with specialized skills or knowledge to be temporarily assigned to the Planning Section. These persons are called Technical Specialists. Technical Specialists may function within the Planning Section, or be assigned wherever their services are required. In the Planning Section, Technical Specialists may report to the:

- Planning Section Chief,
- Situation Unit Leader, or
- Technical Specialist Unit Leader

In some cases, they may be reassigned to other parts of the organization. For instance Resource Use Specialists may be assigned to the Logistics Section.
If several specialists are assigned to the same task, a separate Unit may be established in the Planning Section. For example, if hazardous materials are a major ongoing factor within an incident, a Toxic Hazards Analysis Unit comprised of toxic substance specialists such as chemists and pathologists may be created. This is also the principle behind the establishment of the Information and Intelligence Unit.

While each incident dictates the need for Technical Specialists, some examples of commonly used specialists are:

- Meteorologist
- Environmental Impact Specialist
- Flood Control Specialist
- Pathologist
- Hazardous Substance Specialist
- Entomologist
- Structural Engineer
- Training Specialist

Logistics Section

With the exception of aviation support, all incident support needs are provided by the Logistics Section. The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistics Section is responsible for the following:

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Communications
- Equipment maintenance and fueling
- Food services
- Medical services
- Ordering and distributing resources and supplies

On very large incidents, or on incidents requiring a great deal of equipment or facilities, the Logistics Section may be divided into two Branches. Each Logistics Branch is led by a Director, who reports to the Logistics Section Chief. Each Branch Director supervises three Units lead by Leaders.

Service Branch

The Service Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all service activities at the incident, including food, communications, and medical support.

The Service Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units the:

- Communication Unit.
- Food Unit.
- Medical Unit.

The Communication Unit is responsible for developing plans that ensure that all elements of the incident organization can communicate with each other. This includes installing and testing communications equipment; supervising the Incident Communications Center, if established; and distributing and maintaining communications equipment. Communications planning is particularly important in ICS, where an incident may grow to include numerous agencies.

The Food Unit is responsible for supplying the food needs for the entire incident, including all remote locations, such as Camps and Staging Areas. The Food Unit works with the Planning Section Resources Unit to anticipate the number of personnel to be fed and develop plans for supplying food to all incident areas. The Food Unit also interacts with other Logistics Units to locate fixed-feeding sites; and to order and transport food.

The Medical Unit is responsible for all medical services for incident personnel. Medical assistance to the public or victims of the emergency is provided by the Operations Section, and not by the Logistics Section Medical Unit. The Medical Unit is responsible for developing an Incident Medical Plan; developing procedures for managing major medical emergencies; providing medical aid; and assisting the Finance/Administration Section with processing injury-related claims.

Support Branch

The Support Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all support activities at the incident, including facilities, resource ordering, and ground support.

The Support Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units:

- The Supply Unit,
- The Facilities Unit, and
- The Ground Support Unit.

The Supply Unit is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing, storing, and distributing all incident-related resources and supplies. The ordering process includes personnel, tactical and support resources, as well as all expendable and non-expendable supplies.

The Facilities Unit is responsible for set-up, maintenance, and demobilization of all incident support facilities except Staging Areas. These facilities may include:

- The Incident Command Post,
- The Incident Base,
- Camps, and
- Other facilities to be used for feeding, sleeping, and sanitation services.

Existing structures in the vicinity of the incident may be used as incident facilities, as appropriate. The Facilities Unit will also provide security services to the incident as needed.

The Ground Support Unit is primarily responsible for the maintenance, service, and fueling of all mobile equipment and vehicles, with the exception of aviation resources. The Ground Support Unit also has responsibility for the ground transportation of personnel, supplies, and equipment, and the development of the Incident Traffic Plan.

Finance/Administration Section

The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. This Section is managed by the Finance/Administration Section Chief. Due to the specialized nature of the Finance/Administration Section, the Finance/Administration Section Chief is usually an employee of the jurisdiction or agency requiring financial services.

The person in charge of each Finance/Administration Unit is designated as a Leader. In the Finance/Administration Section, Unit Leaders report to the Finance/Administration Section Chief. The Finance/Administration Section Chief can activate the following components as necessary:

Procurement Unit

All financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements are managed by the Procurement Unit. The Procurement Unit establishes local sources for equipment and supplies; manages all equipment rental agreements; and processes all rental and supply fiscal document billing invoices. This Unit is also responsible for maintaining equipment time records.

The Procurement Unit works closely with local fiscal authorities to ensure efficiency and compliance with local regulations. In some agencies, certain procurement activities will be filled by the Supply Unit in the Logistics Section. Therefore, it is necessary that these two Units closely coordinate their activity.

Time Unit

The Time Unit is responsible for ensuring the accurate recording of daily personnel time, compliance with specific agency time recording policies, and managing commissary operations, if established at the incident.

As applicable, personnel time records will be collected and processed for each operational period. In many cases, the Time Unit Leader may find it helpful to select Time Recorders familiar with participating agency time recording policies.

Cost Unit

The Cost Unit provides all incident cost analyses. It ensures the proper identification of all equipment and personnel requiring payment; records all cost data; analyzes and prepares estimates of incident costs; and maintains accurate records of incident costs.

The Cost Unit is becoming increasingly important, with frequent requests by the Planning Section for cost estimates related to strategies for achieving Incident Objectives. Accurate information on the actual costs of all assigned resources is essential.

Compensation/Claims Unit

The Compensation/Claims Unit is responsible for administering financial matters arising from injuries, property damage or deaths occurring on an incident. As part of this responsibility, the Unit gathers evidence and prepares claims documentation for any event involving damage to public or private property, which could result in a claim on behalf of or against the Government. In addition, the Unit ensures proper documentation and tracking of any personnel injured on the incident.

Reporting Relationships and Information Flow

As the incident organization grows to meet the needs of the incident, care must be taken to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively.

There are essentially two principles to be followed:

1. There is complete freedom within the organization to exchange information among and between personnel.
2. Orders, directives, resource requests, and status changes must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Information Exchange

The ICS organizational framework is open for individuals to freely supply and exchange information.

Three examples of information exchange are:

1. The Food Unit Leader may directly contact the Planning Section's Resources Unit to determine the number of persons requiring feeding.
2. The Cost Unit Leader may directly discuss and share financial information on alternative strategies with the Planning Section Chief.
3. Division A Supervisor may contact the Situation Unit to share information on an unusual environmental hazard in the Division.

Flow of Orders and Directives

Orders and directives within the ICS Organization must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Three examples illustrating the flow of orders are:

1. Division B Supervisor requests fuel for resources within the Division. This request will be passed through the Branch or Operations Section Chief to ensure that fuel requests can be consolidated before going to Logistics.
2. In an organization using Branches and Divisions, the Operations Section Chief will pass directives to change the resource assignments within a particular Division through the appropriate Branch Director. This ensures that the Branch Director is aware of any changes.
3. The Situation Unit Leader will request additional personnel to work in the Unit through the Planning Section Chief. This ensures that personnel already assigned to the Planning Section will be used if available.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Staffing Fundamentals** lesson. This lesson provided a review of the ICS organization and descriptions of the responsibilities of the organizational elements within each section of the ICS. It also reviewed the general duties of each organizational element, terminology, staffing considerations, and reporting relationships.

The next lesson will describe the resource management process at an incident.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Lesson 3: Resource Management

Lesson Overview

The **Resource Management** lesson will discuss the principles of resource management and responsibilities related to resource ordering. The importance of staging areas in the management of resources will be described. This lesson will also discuss demobilization of resources and considerations related to cost-effective resource management.

This lesson should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 3 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Discuss the general principles of resource management.
- Describe the responsibilities for resource management shared among the Command and General Staff.
- Describe how resource needs are identified and resources are procured.
- Describe how resources are checked in and tracked on an incident.
- Describe management actions that may result in poor performance.
- Describe the financial procedures that are part of the resource management process.

Principles of Resource Management

The basic resource management principles are:

- Planning
- Organizing
- Supervising

Planning is the management process of:

- Evaluating the situation.
- Determining objectives.
- Selecting a proper strategy.
- Deciding which resources should be used to achieve those objectives in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

In ICS, resource planning is ongoing, cyclical and directed toward operational periods.

Organizing is a continuation of the management process after planning, as the Incident Commander and other members of the Command and General Staff group resources into an organization designed to meet incident objectives.

The organization that is depicted in the ICS organization chart illustrates chain of command, delegation of authority, reporting relationships, and coordination responsibilities at the incident.

Supervising is the process of directing and controlling the efforts of resources toward the attainment of specified incident objectives.

Directing the ICS organization hinges on delegation of authority through the ranks of the organization.

Because ICS position assignments are based on knowledge, skills, and abilities critical to the incident rather than on the day-to-day administrative position or rank, the Incident Commander is able to more effectively access and use the knowledge and skills of others.

Controlling involves evaluating the performance of an organization against changing conditions and the Incident Action Plan, making necessary corrections so that incident objectives are accomplished.

Incident Resource Management

At any incident or event, the situation must be assessed and response planned. Resources must be organized, assigned and directed to accomplish the incident objectives. As they work, resources must be managed to adjust to changing conditions.

Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration at an incident. The formalized resource management process in ICS ensures that the management principles translate into practice at the incident.

Role of Management Functions in Resource Management

All five ICS functions play important roles in resource management. In a simplified way, these roles are:

- **Command:** Develops incident objectives, approves resource orders and demobilization.
- **Operations:** Identifies, assigns and supervises resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives.
- **Planning:** Tracks resources, and identifies resource shortages.
- **Logistics:** Orders and supports resources.
- **Finance/Administration:** Pays for resources.

Resource Management Activities

The incident resource management process includes seven interactive activities:

1. **Determining resource needs**: Answers the question: What tactical and support resources do you need to manage the incident?
2. **Resource ordering**: Answers the questions: Who Can Order? and Where Do You Get It?
3. **Check-in process**: ICS has a simple and effective resource check-in process to establish resource accountability at an incident.
4. **Utilizing resources**: In the ICS, chain of command and unity of command provide the basis for effective resource management and personnel accountability.
5. **Tracking resources**: Tracking resources efficiently is essential for personnel safety, accountability, and fiscal control.
6. **Evaluating resources**: Performance of all resources must be evaluated. Evaluation needs to be ongoing throughout the life of the incident. Reasons for poor performance should be identified and addressed at the incident, whenever possible.
7. **Demobilizing resources**: At all times during an incident, the Incident Commander and General and Command Staff members must determine when assigned resources are no longer required to meet incident objectives.

Determining Resource Needs

As you learned in the video segment, the first activity in the resource management process involves determining resource needs. Determining resource needs can be divided into 5 steps:

1. Conduct assessment and develop incident objectives.
2. Identify strategies.
3. Develop detailed tactics.
4. Assign resources.
5. Evaluate outcomes.

Step 1: Conduct Assessment and Develop Incident Objectives

The first step in determining resource needs is a thorough assessment of the current incident situation and future incident potential. From this assessment, the Incident Commander develops incident objectives, which state what is to be accomplished on the incident.

Example:

An assessment of an earthen dam determines that the water level must be lowered quickly in order to reduce the danger of flooding. The Incident Commander develops the following objective:

- Reduce water level behind dam 3 feet by 0800 tomorrow.

This is a well-written objective because it is measurable. It will be clear if this objective has been completed, and will be easy to monitor to make sure the timeline is being met.

Step 2: Identify Strategies

The second step in determining resource needs is to identify strategies to achieve the objectives.

Example:

Objective: Reduce water level behind dam 3 feet by 0800 tomorrow.

Some strategies to meet the above objective might include:

- Increase release rate to 15,000 cfs (cubic feet per second). Implement no later than 1200 today.
- Use pumps to pump water out of the reservoir into the next drainage system.
- Divert inflow away from reservoir and back into original streambed.

The Operations Section Chief will select one, or potentially a combination of these strategies. Identifying a variety of strategies allows the Operations Section Chief flexibility in achieving the objective. The Operations Section Chief can select from any of the strategies, or combine them, in order to meet the original objective.

Step 3: Develop Detailed Tactics

The next step in determining resource needs is to develop detailed tactics that are the instructions to whoever is assigned to carry out the strategy. The instructions include how many and what type of resources will be required to implement the tactic, as well as time lines, etc.

Example:

The Operations Section Chief determines that a combination of the first and third strategies will provide for the most effective tactics:

- Dam manager will increase flow from second and fourth floodgates to a combined rate of 15,000 cfs. Increased flow will begin at 1130 today.
- Diversions on Smith, Powell, Wildcat, and Carson Creeks will be closed no later than 1200 today.

Step 4: Assign Resources

The next step in determining resource needs is to assign resources to each tactic.

Example:

Tactics and assignment of resources:

- Tactic 1: Dam manager will increase flow from second and fourth floodgates to a combined rate of 15,000 cfs. Increased flow will begin at 1130 today. The dam manager alone can accomplish this tactic. No additional resources are required.
- Tactic 2: Diversions on Smith, Powell, Wildcat, and Carson Creeks will be closed no later than 1200 today. The Operations Section Chief assigns two crews of two employees each to this tactic. Crew 1 is assigned the diversions on Smith and Powell Creeks; Crew 2 is assigned the diversions on Wildcat and Carson Creeks. Both Crews are given 4X4 vehicles.

Step 5: Evaluate Outcomes

The final step in determining resource needs is to evaluate the outcome of the resource assignments. This requires reviewing resource assignments to ensure that there are adequate tactical and support resources available to accomplish the assignment, and that the correct resources are assigned to the appropriate tactic.

While most often inadequate or inappropriate resource assignments are identified during the planning process, sometimes errors are not evident until the implementation of the Incident Action Plan. This is a primary reason why it is important to monitor implementation and make resource adjustments, as necessary.

Example:

Evaluate resource assignment outcomes:

- Dam manager increased flow from second and fourth floodgates to a combined rate of 15,000 cfs. Increased flow began at 1115 today.
- Diversions on Smith, Powell, Wildcat, and Carson Creeks were closed at 1145 today.

Effect of Determining Resource Needs

By following the five-step process to determine resource needs, the organization can be certain that the:

- Objectives meet the response needs of the incident.
- Strategies selected will achieve the objectives.
- Tactics are clear, and achievable with the assigned resources.
- Right number of the right resources are assigned in the right place.

Resource Management and Planning Process

Sound planning to determine resource needs is essential at all stages of an incident. It is particularly critical during the initial stages of an incident. Mistakes made at this point may compound and complicate all further actions.

The planning process is designed to implement the five-step process, described on the previous screens, across all functions in the organization. The formal planning meeting provides a forum for the incident management team to review incident objectives, develop tactics, and identify resources needed to carry them out.

Sample Planning Meeting Agenda

	Agenda Item	Responsible Party
1	Briefing on situation/resource status.	Planning/Operations Section Chiefs
2	Discuss safety issues.	Safety Officer
3	Set/confirm incident objectives.	Incident Commander
4	Plot control lines & Division boundaries.	Operations Section Chief
5	Specify tactics for each Division/Group.	Operations Section Chief
6	Specify resources needed for each Division/Group.	Operations/Planning Section Chiefs
7	Specify facilities and reporting locations.	Operations/Planning/Logistics Section Chiefs
8	Develop resource order.	Logistics Section Chief
9	Consider communications/medical/ transportation plans.	Logistics/Planning Section Chiefs
10	Provide financial update.	Finance/Administration Section Chief
11	Discuss interagency liaison issues.	Liaison Officer
12	Discuss information issues.	Public Information Officer
13	Finalize/approve/implement plan.	Incident Commander/All

Resource Ordering

The second activity in the resource management process involves resource ordering.

Usually, incidents have an initial commitment of resources assigned. As incidents grow in size and/or complexity, more tactical resources may be required and the Incident Commander may augment existing resources with additional personnel and equipment.

As a consequence, additional supervisory personnel may be needed to maintain adequate span of control. Additional support personnel may also be added to ensure adequate planning and logistics. On large and/or complex incidents extending over several operational periods, many resource orders may be executed.

Resource Ordering from the Incident

At any incident, the procedure for ordering additional resources will depend on what parts of the incident's organizational structure have been activated at the time the ordering is done, and the administrative procedures of the responsible agency or agencies.

The Incident Commander will usually discuss ordering procedures with the Command and General Staff as part of the initial briefing.

The Incident Commander will usually discuss ordering procedures with the Command and General Staff as part of the initial briefing. During the briefing, I will discuss:

- Who within the organization may place an order with Logistics? This authority may be restricted to Section Chiefs and/or Command Staff, or may be delegated further down the chain of command.

- Which resource requests require Command approval? Ordinarily, on a major incident it is not efficient use of the Incident Commander's time and energy to review and approve all resource orders for routine supplies, food, etc. However, the Incident Commander probably **does** want to review and approve any non-routine requests, especially if they are expensive, require outside agency participation, or have potential political ramifications. An example of this might include a request for National Guard resources to assist in crowd control.
- The need to observe the established resource ordering process. While the temptation to go around the ordering system is often great, especially when there is a real or perceived delay in getting critical resources, doing so simply compounds resource management problems. If the Logistics function is unable to meet the resource needs of the incident, this should be addressed in the normal planning and supervision processes.

Responsibility for Ordering Resources

If the Logistics Section Chief position has been filled, then the Logistics Section Chief has the delegated authority to place the resource order after the order has been approved by the Incident Commander. On larger incidents, where the Logistics Section contains a Supply Unit, the Supply Unit has the authority to place the approved resource order.

Final approval for ordering additional resources, as well as releasing resources from an incident, is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. In addition, the Incident Commander will define who on the incident can place orders with Logistics or the Supply Unit.

The Finance/Administration Section may also play a significant role in resource procurement, especially if the resource request requires a contracted obligation. In addition, cost estimates must be forwarded to the Finance/Administration Section so that they can be included in the ongoing cost summary for the incident.

Ordinarily, in requests involving contracts, the Procurement Unit within the Finance/Administration Section will negotiate the contract, and then the Logistics Section will formally place the order, bringing it into the incident resource management process.

The Resource Order

The Resource Order is used to document resource requests. Most resource orders will be communicated by computer, voice, or FAX from the incident to an agency ordering point. Even though different formats may exist, every resource order should contain the following essential elements of information:

- Incident name.
- Order and/or request number (if known or assigned).
- Date and time of order.
- Quantity, kind, and type. Include special support needs as appropriate.
- Reporting location and contact (specific).
- Requested time of delivery (specific, not simply ASAP).
- Communications system to be used.
- Person/title placing request.
- Callback phone number for clarification or additional information.

Actions Taken on a Resource Request

Resource order forms also have space to document action taken on a request, including, but not limited to:

- Contacts with sources or potential sources for the resource requests.
- Source for the responding resource.
- Identification of the responding resource (name, id number, transporting company etc.)
- Estimated time of arrival.
- Estimated cost.
- Changes to the order made by Command, or the position placing the order.
- Such detailed information is often critical in tracking resource status through multiple staff changes and operational periods.

Single- and Multi-Point Resource Ordering

Incident resource orders may be placed with either:

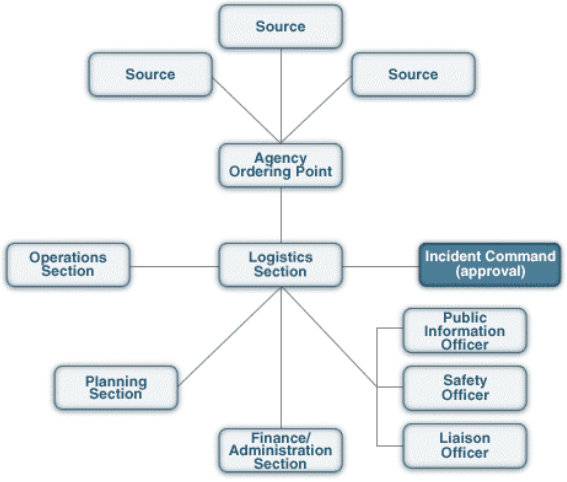
- A single ordering point, or
- Multiple ordering points.

Single-Point Resource Ordering

On smaller incidents, where only one jurisdiction or agency is primarily involved, the resource order is normally prepared at the incident, approved by the Incident Commander, and transmitted from the incident to the jurisdiction or agency ordering point. Methods for placing orders can include:

- Voice (by telephone or radio)
- FAX
- Computer modem or digital display terminal

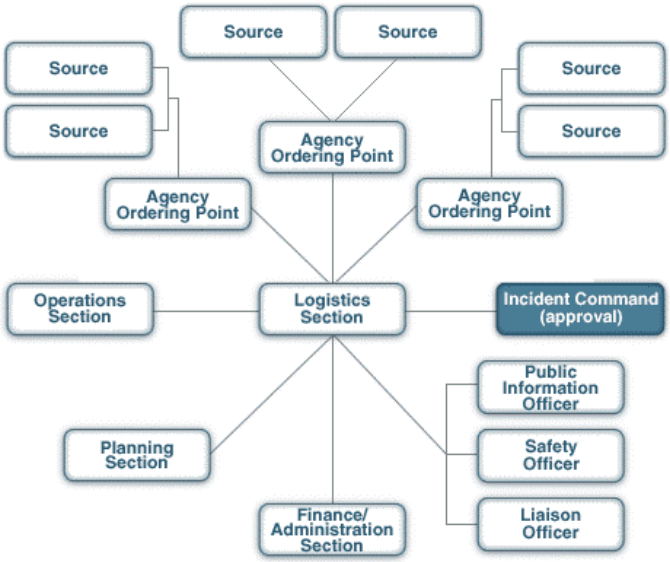
In single point ordering, the burden of finding the requested resources is placed on the responsible ordering point and not on the incident organization. From the standpoint of incident workload and ordering efficiency, single point ordering is by far the most preferred method.



Multi-Point Resource Ordering

Multi-point ordering is when the incident orders resources from several different ordering points and/or the private sector. Multi-point off-incident resource ordering should be done only when necessary.

Multi-point ordering places a heavier load on incident personnel by requiring them to place orders through two or more ordering points. It also requires tremendous coordination between and among ordering points, and increases the chances of lost or duplicated orders.



Check-In Process

The third activity in the resource management process involves resource check-in. ICS has a simple and effective resource check-in process to establish resource accountability at an incident.

The Resources Unit will establish and conduct the check-in function at designated incident locations. If the Resources Unit has not been activated, the responsibility for ensuring check-in will be with the Incident Commander or Planning Section Chief.

The incident locations where check-in can be done are:

- Incident Base.
- Camp.
- Staging Area.
- Resources Unit at the Incident Command Post.
- Helibase.

Check-In Procedures

Formal resource check-in may be done on an ICS Check-in List, Form 211. A Check-in Recorder will be assigned to each location where resources will check-in. Check-in Recorders must have an adequate supply of check-in forms, and be briefed on the frequency for reporting check-in information to the Resources Unit.

Information collected at check-in is used for tracking, resource assignment, and financial purposes, and includes:

- Date and time of check-in.
- Name of resource.
- Home base.
- Departure point.
- Order # and position filled (for personnel).
- Crew Leader name and personnel manifest (for crews).
- Other qualifications.
- Travel method.

Utilizing Resources

The fourth activity in the resource management process involves utilizing resources. In the ICS, there is both a chain of command (the organization) and a unity of command (each person reports to only one supervisor). These two factors provide the basis for effective resource management and personnel accountability.

Supervisory personnel direct, guide, monitor and evaluate the efforts of subordinates toward attaining specific objectives. A designated supervisor or leader, whether they are tactical resources assigned to the Operations Section, or personnel assigned to support the overall operation, always directs resources. All positions have the delegated authority of the position.

Resource Assignments

Incoming resources will initially be assigned in one of the following ways at an incident:

- Assignment of tactical resources to the incident base or camps is often done when the tactical resources are not scheduled for use during the current operational period. For resources that have traveled some distance, the assignment to the base or camps, in an out-of-service status, allows briefings and a rest period prior to taking on an active assignment in the next operational period.
- Personnel assigned to management or support positions may be ordered to fill specific organizational assignments. These resources will report to their designated check-in location, which will usually be the Resources Unit at the Incident Command Post, the Incident Base, or another designated facility.
- On fast moving or rapidly expanding incidents, tactical resources are often assigned to report immediately to Divisions or Groups to support the current Incident Action Plan. In these situations, the tactical resources must always report in with a designated Division or Group Supervisor. Formal check-in can take place later after resources are placed in staging areas or are out-of-service.
- Incoming tactical resources may be assigned to Staging Areas for one of three reasons:

1. Resources will be assigned during the current operational period.
2. Resources are needed to provide a reserve force for contingencies.
3. Single resources are sent to a Staging Area to be formed into Task Forces and/or Strike Teams prior to assignment.

The Operations Section Chief will decide what number, kind, and type of resources will be kept in Staging Areas. This decision is based on creating adequate reserves to meet expected contingencies.

After checking into a Staging Area, single resources will often be formed into Task Forces or Strike Teams for use on active assignments. These assignments may continue for the duration of the incident, or they may change based on incident needs. Task Forces and Strike Teams formed at the incident should always be disassembled prior to release from the incident. In order to ensure proper accountability, resources should leave the incident with the same resource designations they had upon arrival.

Tracking Resources

The fifth activity in the resource management process involves tracking resources. Tracking resources efficiently is essential for personnel safety, accountability, and fiscal control. A large percentage of accidents, injuries, and line of duty deaths on incidents can be directly attributed to the failure to track resources effectively.

Resource tracking responsibilities are shared between the:

- **Planning Section**, which is responsible for tracking all resources assigned to the incident and their status (assigned, available, out of service).
- **Operations Section**, which is responsible for tracking the movement of resources within the Operations Section itself.

There are many resource-tracking systems, ranging from simple status sheets to sophisticated computer-based systems. Regardless of the system used, it must account for the overall status of resources at the incident, as well as the movement of Operations resources into and out of the incident "hot zone."

Evaluating Resources

The sixth activity in the resource management process involves evaluating resources. While some poor performance is due to the lack of motivation on the part of assigned personnel, it is more likely that management actions have produced or contributed to the problem. Management actions which may cause poor performance include:

- Unrealistic or poorly defined incident objectives, strategies or tactics.
- The wrong resource was allocated for the assignment.
- There are inadequate tactical resources or logistical support for the assignment.
- The resource is not trained or equipped to carry out the assignment.
- Conflicting agency policies or procedures prevent the resource from carrying out the assignment.

Sometimes the reason for lack of performance can be identified and addressed at the incident. Other times it may be necessary to either change the objective or replace the resource and address the issue through the Liaison Officer and/or agency training and policy. Failure at the tactical level is likely to reflect a failure to appropriately manage the resource during the planning process. Evaluation needs to go on constantly and corrections made as necessary throughout the life of the incident.

Demobilizing Resources

The seventh and final activity in the resource management process involves demobilizing resources. At all times during an incident, the Incident Commander and General and Command Staff members must determine when assigned resources are no longer required to meet incident objectives. Signs that the incident may be winding down include:

- More resources are spending more time in staging.
- Excess resources are identified during the planning process.
- Incident objectives have been accomplished.

Excess resources must be released in a timely manner to reduce incident-related costs, and to "free up" resources for other assignments.

Resource Efficiency

On every incident, resource mobilization follows a predictable course compared to the lifecycle of the incident itself.

Initially, the incident may build faster than resources can get there. Eventually, the resources catch up to the incident, and begin to control it. Ultimately, the incident declines, and resources exceed the needs of the incident.

Process of Demobilization

The process of demobilizing resources generally begins at the Operations Section level, where the need for continued tactical resources will be determined. When tactical resources are no longer needed, other parts of the organization can also be reduced.

On single agency and/or smaller incidents, the planning and process of demobilization may be quite simple and will not require a formal written demobilization plan or a Demobilization Unit to prepare it.

On larger incidents, the planning for demobilization should begin almost immediately, and certainly well in advance of when demobilization actually takes place.

Even at the most basic level, demobilization should take into account two factors:

1. **Safety:** Organizations should watch for "first in, last out" syndrome. Resources that were first on scene should be considered for early release. They should also be evaluated for fatigue and the distance they will need to travel to their home base prior to release.

2. **Cost:** Expensive resources should be monitored carefully to ensure that they are released as soon as they are no longer needed, or if their task can be accomplished in a more cost effective manner.

Demobilization Plan

On large incidents, a Demobilization Unit within the Planning Section should be established early in the life of the incident. This is especially true when there are personnel and tactical resources from several jurisdictions or agencies, and where there has been a good integration of multi-jurisdiction or agency personnel into the incident organization. A written demobilization plan is essential on larger incidents.

As soon as a determination is made that the need for a resource no longer exists, the appropriate Section Chief should be notified. In coordination with the Operations Section, the Demobilization Unit, may recommend release priorities for the Incident Commander's approval based upon continuing needs both on and off the incident.

Key Resource Management Considerations

Safety, personnel accountability, managerial control, adequate reserves, and cost are all key considerations that must be taken into account when managing incident resources.

A basic principle of resource management is that resource actions at all levels of the organization must be conducted in a safe manner. This includes ensuring the safety of:

- Responders to the incident;
- Persons injured or threatened by the incident;
- Volunteers assisting at the incident;
- News media and the general public who are on scene observing the incident.

Current laws, liability issues, and future trends will continue to place additional emphasis on personnel safety.

ICS provides a unity of command structure that allows supervisors at every level to know exactly who is assigned and where they are assigned. If the management process is followed, and the principles of ICS maintained, personnel accountability can be maintained at all times.

ICS has a built-in process that allows resource managers at all levels to constantly assess performance and the adequacy of current action plans. If necessary, strategies and actions used to achieve objectives can and must be modified at any time. Information exchange is encouraged across the organization. Direction is always through the chain of command.

Assignment of resources to the Incident Base, Camps, and Staging Areas provides the means to maintain adequate reserves. Reserves can always be increased or decreased in Staging Areas to meet anticipated demands.

Incident-related costs must always be a major consideration. The Incident Commander must ensure that objectives are being achieved through cost-effective strategy selection, and selection of the right kind and right number of resources.

The Finance/Administration Section's Cost Unit has the responsibility to:

- Obtain and record all cost information,
- Prepare incident cost summaries,
- Prepare resource use cost estimates for planning, and
- Make recommendations for cost savings.

The Cost Unit can assist the Incident Commander in ensuring a cost-effective approach to incident resource management, and should be activated on any large or prolonged incident.

Resource managers must be constantly aware that the decisions they make regarding the use of personnel and equipment resources will not only affect the timely and satisfactory conclusion of the incident, but also may have significant cost implications.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Resource Management** lesson. This lesson discussed the stages of resource management and responsibilities related to resource ordering. The importance of staging areas in the management of resources was described. This lesson will also discussed demobilization of resources and considerations related to cost-effective resource management.

The next lesson will describe the purposes and advantages of Unified Command.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Lesson 4: Unified Command

Lesson Overview

The **Unified Command** lesson will describe the purposes and advantages of multi-jurisdiction and/or multi-agency Unified Command, and how Unified Command can be applied to incident situations. It will describe the Unified Command organization, how Unified Command is established, and the roles of its major elements. This lesson will also discuss a number of factors to be considered when implementing Unified Command.

This lesson should take approximately **25 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 4 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Define the advantages of Unified Command.
- Define the kinds of situations that may call for a Unified Command organization.
- Identify the primary features of a Unified Command organization.

Background on Unified Command

Early in the development of ICS, it was recognized that many incidents crossed jurisdictional boundaries or the limits of individual agency functional responsibility.

The standard ICS organizational framework with a single Incident Commander from one jurisdiction or agency did not lend itself to creating an effective organization for multi-jurisdictional incidents, or for incidents involving several agencies from the same political jurisdiction. In fact, the use of a single Incident Commander would, in some cases, not be legally possible or politically advisable.

On the other hand, it was also recognized that every incident must have one person with the responsibility and authority to direct tactical actions; otherwise, chaos would easily prevail on multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents.

Two solutions were considered:

The first solution that was considered involved dividing the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization in a well-defined geographical or functional area of responsibility. This was the simplest political solution, but there were obvious cost and effectiveness reasons why this solution was unacceptable.

The second solution that was considered involved creating a single ICS incident structure with a built-in process for an effective and responsible multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency approach. This was the challenge to the early ICS designers, and the solution was an incident management process called Unified Command. Since its conception, Unified Command has been used many times, and has become a major feature of the Incident Command System.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Description of Unified Command

Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with geographical or functional responsibility for an incident, to assign an Incident Commander to a Unified Command organization.

The Unified Command then establishes a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or giving up agency authority, responsibility or accountability.

Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.

Elements to Consider in Applying Unified Command

There are four basic elements to consider in applying Unified Command in ICS:

1. **Policy, Objectives, and Strategy:** Jurisdictional and agency administrators set policy. The Unified Command sets objectives and strategy.
2. **Organization:** The Unified Command organization consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene representatives (qualified agency Incident Commanders) operating within the Unified Command structure.
3. **Resources:** Resources, supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility or with whom responsible agencies have agreements, stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. However, operationally they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the Incident Action Plan.
4. **Operations:** After the objectives, strategies, and interagency agreements are decided, the Operations Section Chief is designated to develop tactical action plans and to direct tactical operations.

Advantages of Using Unified Command

Below are the principal advantages of using Unified Command:

- One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident objectives.
- Information flow and coordination is improved among all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's authority or legal requirements are compromised or neglected.
- Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions, and constraints of all others on the incident.
- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.
- Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.

Unified Command Applications

Unified Command is a practical and cost effective solution to multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. Let's look at some examples of how Unified Command might be applied to different kinds of incidents.

The first kind of application would involve an incident that impacted more than one jurisdiction. An example of this kind of incident would be an outbreak of livestock disease involving two or more jurisdictions, such as two counties.

The second kind of application would involve an incident that impacted multiple agencies, or departments, within the same jurisdiction. An example of this kind of incident would be a release of hazardous materials. The fire department has responsibility for fire control, containment of hazardous materials, and rescue; the police department has responsibility for evacuation and area security; and public works has the responsibility for site clean up.

The third kind of application would involve an incident that impacted several jurisdictions and functional agencies. An example of this kind of incident would be storms, earthquakes, and other major natural disasters. In these incidents, large numbers of local, State, and Federal agencies become immediately involved. These emergencies cross jurisdictional boundaries and involve multiple functional agencies. Roles, missions, and responsibilities are all intermixed.

Major commercial airplane crashes are another example of this kind of incident. Fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, the coroner's office, the FAA, and others all have legal responsibility. All may be active at the same time and in the same place. It is the functional role and the legal obligation that brings about the multiple involvement.

The fourth kind of application would involve an incident that impacted different levels of government, for example local, State and Federal agricultural agencies. An example of this kind of incident would be a major pest infestation. In these incidents, local, State and Federal governments would work closely together to decide how to treat impacted areas. The impacted jurisdiction, the Governor, and the Secretary of Agriculture might declare a state of emergency and establish a Unified Command to manage the event.

By using Unified Command, participating jurisdictions and agencies can improve overall incident management and achieve goals in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Primary Features of a Unified Command Organization

In ICS, organizations using Unified Command share key primary features. These include:

- A single, integrated incident organization.
- Collocated (shared) facilities.
- A single planning process and Incident Action Plan.
- Integrated staffing.
- A coordinated process for resource ordering.

Single Integrated Incident Organization

Under Unified Command, jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated, unified team. The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.

The proper mix of participants in a Unified Command organization will depend upon the:

- **Location of the incident**, which often determines the jurisdictions that must be involved.
- **Kind of incident**, which dictates the functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s), as well as other agencies that may be involved.

In a multi-jurisdictional situation, a Unified Command structure could consist of one responsible official from each jurisdiction. In other cases, Unified Command may consist of several functional department managers or assigned representatives from within a single political jurisdiction. Because of common ICS organization and terminology, personnel from other jurisdictions or agencies can easily be integrated into a single organization.

Collocated (Shared) Facilities

A single Command Post is essential to an effective Unified Command. Bringing the responsible Incident Commanders and Command and General Staff together in a single Incident Command Post can allow a coordinated effort for as long as the Unified Command structure is required.

One Base can serve the needs of multiple agencies. Similarly, resources from several agencies can be brought together in Staging Areas.

Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan

The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident. One important distinction is the need for all assigned Incident Commanders to meet before the first Operational Period planning meeting in a command meeting. The command meeting provides the Incident Commanders with an opportunity to discuss and agree on important issues that will become the foundation of a single planning process.

The end result of the planning process will be an Incident Action Plan that addresses multi-jurisdiction or multi-agency priorities, and provides tactical operations and resource assignments for the unified effort.

Command Meeting Agenda

The agenda for the Command Meeting should include the following:

- State jurisdictional/agency priorities and objectives.
- Present jurisdictional limitations, concerns, and restrictions.
- Develop a collective set of incident objectives.
- Establish and agree on acceptable priorities.
- Adopt an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives.
- Agree on the basic organizational structure.
- Designate the best-qualified and acceptable Operations Section Chief.
- Agree on General Staff personnel designations and planning, logistical and financial agreements and procedures.
- Agree on the resource ordering process to be followed.
- Agree on cost-sharing procedures.
- Agree on procedures for the release of information**.**
- Designate one agency official to act as the Unified Command spokesperson.

Command Meeting Requirements

Command Meeting requirements include:

- Prior to the meeting, the Incident Commanders must have reviewed the purposes and agenda items, and are prepared to discuss them.
- The Command Meeting should include **only** agency Incident Commanders.

The meeting should be brief, and important decisions and agreements should be documented.

Incident Action Planning Meetings

The results of the Command Meeting will be used in Incident Action Planning meetings to:

- Determine tactical operations for the next Operational Period.
- Establish resource requirements and determining resource availability and sources.
- Make resource assignments.
- Establish integrated Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration functions, as needed.

Integrated Staffing

The Unified Command incident organization can also benefit by integrating multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency personnel into various other functional areas.

- **Operations and Planning:** Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction or a functional agency, who may in future Operational Periods have primary responsibility for Operations and Planning functions.
- **Planning:** Placing other agencies' personnel in the Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units can result in significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.
- **Logistics:** A Deputy Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support, as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies' personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide Communications Plan.
- **Finance/Administration:** Although this Section often has detailed agency specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.
- **Command Staff:** An integrated Command Staff can result in more credible information dissemination, better interagency relations, and increased personnel safety.

Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering

Decisions on incident resource ordering procedures are made during the Command Meeting, while the Planning Meeting determines resource requirements for all levels of the organization.

If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be pre-designated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the Incident Commanders in the Unified Command meeting. If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency ordering point receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.

If clear resource ordering procedures are not established by the Unified Command, there is a very real possibility of lost or duplicated orders resulting in an ineffective logistical and financial organization. It is also critical that agreements relating to resources be clearly understood by off-incident agency representatives who will be filling the orders. These agreements may run counter to normal day-to-day resource management procedures, and failure to communicate incident-specific changes may result in delays in resource procurement and unnecessary costs.

Guidelines for the Use of Unified Command

There are six general guidelines for the use of Unified Command.

The first guideline is to Understand ICS Unified Command. It is essential to understand how ICS Unified Command functions. Knowledge of ICS principles and structure will enable managers to accept and easily adapt to a Unified Command mode of operation when it is required. Lack of knowledge about ICS can limit the willingness of some jurisdictions or agencies to participate in a Unified Command incident organization. It is impossible to implement Unified Command unless agencies have agreed to participate in the process.

The second guideline for the use of Unified Command is to collocate essential functions. Establishing a single Incident Command Post is essential to an effective Unified Command. Bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post can allow a coordinated effort for as long as the Unified Command structure is required. Establish other facilities, as needed, where all agencies can operate together. One Base can serve the needs of multiple agencies. Similarly, resources from several agencies can be brought together in Staging Areas.

The third guideline for the use of Unified Command is to implement Unified Command at an early stage of a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident. It is essential to begin joint planning as early as possible. Unified Command should be initiated as soon as two or more agencies having jurisdictional or functional responsibilities come together on an incident. This is especially important on those incidents where the authority needed to successfully manage the incident is vested in separate agencies or jurisdictions.

The fourth guideline for the use of Unified Command is to concur on an Operations Section Chief and other Command and General Staff members. The Unified Command must agree on the Operations Section Chief, as he or she will have full authority to implement the Operations portion of the Incident Action Plan on behalf of all the agencies involved. The Operations Section Chief will normally be from the jurisdiction or agency that has the greatest involvement in the incident, although that is not essential. The Operations Section Chief should be fully qualified and be the most experienced person available

It is also necessary to agree on other Command and General Staff personnel who will be implementing their portions of the Incident Action Plan. In a Unified Command, it should be clear that the Public Information Officer speaks for all agencies involved in the incident, not just for the agency of which the Public Information Officer is an employee.

The fifth guideline is to designate one of the Incident Commanders to be a spokesperson. The Incident Commanders may see the need to identify one member to act as a spokesperson for the Unified Command. This designation can provide a channel of communications from the Command and General Staff members into the Unified Command. The spokesperson does not make Unified Command decisions, but does provide a single point of contact for the Command and General Staff during each operational period.

The sixth guideline is to train often as a team. It is important to conduct training exercises in the use of Unified Command with adjacent jurisdictions and functional agencies, whenever possible.

Functioning in Unified Command

Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command have certain responsibilities at an incident. The members of the Unified Command:

- Must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations and must know any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions.
- Must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent.
- Have the responsibility to manage the incident.
- Must function together as a team and ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command.

Unified Command Member Responsibilities

- Must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations and must know any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions.
- Must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent. These activities could include:
    - Ordering additional resources in support of the Incident Action Plan.
    - Loaning or sharing resources with other jurisdictions.
    - Agreeing to financial cost-sharing arrangements with participating agencies.
- Have the responsibility to manage the incident. This includes:
    - Working closely with the other Incident Commanders in the Unified Command.
    - Providing sufficient qualified staff and resources.
    - Anticipating and resolving problems.
    - Delegating authority as needed.
    - Monitoring and evaluating performance.
    - Communicating with their own agencies on agreements, priorities, plans, problems, and progress.
- Must function together as a team and ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command. There are two distinct levels of coordination:
    - Coordination with other members of the Unified Command Team. It is essential that all participants be kept mutually informed, involved, and consulted.
    - Coordination with higher authorities, agency administrators, etc. It is important to keep their respective authorities well informed and confident that the incident is being competently managed.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Unified Command** lesson. This lesson discussed the purposes and advantages of multi-jurisdiction and/or multi-agency Unified Command, and how Unified Command can be applied to incident situations. It described the Unified Command organization, how Unified Command is established, and the roles of its major elements. This lesson also discussed a number of factors to be considered when implementing Unified Command.

The next lesson will describe the differences and similarities in organizing and planning for incidents and planned events.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Lesson 5: Incident Management

Lesson Overview

The **Incident Management** lesson will describe process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events. It will also describe the process of transfer of command, and the major elements of the incident briefing.

This lesson should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 5 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events.
- Describe the steps in transferring incident command.
- List the major elements included in the incident briefing.
- Develop a sample organization around a planned event.

Approaches to Incident Organization

There are two basic approaches to using ICS:

1. **Planning for a known event.** Using ICS for planned events allows the luxury of more time and fewer life safety issues (this makes the approach an excellent opportunity for training).
2. **Reacting to an unplanned incident.** Unplanned incidents are characterized by rapid change, time constraints, and public and responder safety issues.

The principles, features and processes of ICS are the same for both.

Organizing for Events

It is easiest to prepare for events. Managers can establish exactly what is required prior to the event, and ensure appropriate and efficient activation of the organization.

Examples of the kinds of events which lend themselves to an ICS application include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Organizing for a major field training exercise or simulated emergency.
- A planned public event such as a major parade or concert.
- A planned activity such as a prescribed fire, a law enforcement sweep, a major pest control effort, or a marine hazardous materials exercise.

Considerations for Planned Events

In order to plan effectively, the planner must know as much as possible about the intended event. Considerations include:

- Type of event.
- Location, size, and expected duration.
- Single or multi-jurisdiction/multi-agency involvement.
- Command Staff needs (Public Information, Safety, Liaison).
- Kind, type, and number of resources required.
- Projected aviation operations.
- Staging areas and other facilities required.
- Kind and type of logistical support needs, e.g., communications, food, medical considerations.
- Financial concerns.
- Known limitations or restrictions.
- Available communications.

With information about each of the above factors, the planning staff can develop the appropriate organizational structure to meet the essential needs of the incident.

Organizing for Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents require immediate attention and actions must be taken to ensure effective incident management and control. The first responding units to the incident **must** take the initial steps to provide organization for the incident. While that may appear obvious, the longer-term importance of these initial decisions is often overlooked.

Although unplanned incidents such as fires, searches, law enforcement, hazardous materials, pest or disease outbreaks, and emergency medical situations have different characteristics and require specially trained personnel, they are quite similar in how they are approached from an incident management standpoint. For any incident, the Incident Commander has certain designated responsibilities.

Incident Commander Responsibilities

- Assess situation and/or obtain a briefing from the previous Incident.
- Commander Receive delegation of authority from Agency Administrator.
- Establish immediate priorities.
- Determine incident objectives and strategy.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Establish and monitor incident organization.
- Ensure adequate safety measures are in place.
- Schedule planning meetings as required.
- Approve and authorize Incident Action Plan implementation.
- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Coordinate with key off-incident personnel (e.g. community leaders, elected officials).
- Approve requests for additional resources or release of resources.
- Keep Agency Administrator informed of incident status.
- Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize release of information to news media.
- Order the demobilization of incident when appropriate.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Characteristics of Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents often have the following characteristics:

- Time is of the essence.
- The situation is unstable.
- The incident presents a threat to safety and/or property.
- The incident has the potential to expand rapidly.
- Communications and information may be incomplete.
- Staff on-scene may be experienced in control measures, but are not necessarily experienced in managing expanding incidents.

Incident complexity increases as the situation deteriorates and the incident grows.

Organizing Incident Operations

The Operations Section organization generally develops from the bottom up. As more resources are assigned to the incident, it is necessary to find ways to effectively organize and manage them.

Organization is often accomplished initially by the Incident Commander establishing Divisions and/or Groups. This may be done before an Operations Section Chief is assigned. The primary consideration when expanding to a Division and/or Group structure is usually span of control, but functional considerations may also affect that decision.

Staffing the ICS Organization

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are totally dependent on the size and complexity of the incident. **There is no absolute standard to follow.**

Some general guidelines are:

- Deputies may be used at Incident Command, General Staff (Section), and Branch levels.
- Command Staff may have Assistants as required.
- The Incident Commander may establish Divisions and/or Groups prior to designating an Operations Section.
- The use of Unified Command is recommended in most multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency incidents. An Incident Commander from each responsible agency or jurisdiction should be included in the Unified Command.
- As the Operations organization expands, activation of Planning and Logistics functions should be considered. The decision to activate additional Sections will always be based on the present and anticipated needs of the incident.

Reasons for Transferring Command

The initial Incident Commander will remain in charge until transfer of command is accomplished. Command may be transferred when:

- A more qualified person is available to assume command.
- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- The incident complexity changes.
- There is turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents.
- Personnel are called home for any reason.
- Agency Administrators direct a change in command.
- Changing command makes good sense.

Transfer of Command

There are six important steps in effectively transferring command of an incident in progress.

The first step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander, if at all possible, to personally perform an assessment of the incident situation with the current Incident Commander.

The second step in the transfer of command is to adequately brief the incoming Incident Commander. This briefing must be by the current Incident Commander, and take place face-to-face, if possible.

The third step in the transfer of command is the delegation of authority. In some agencies and for some incidents the delegation of authority is required in writing, and may include, but not be limited to:

- Legal and fiscal authority;
- The ability to assign and reassign agency personnel; and
- The ability to develop interagency agreements necessary to manage the incident.

The Agency Administrator should clearly communicate to the Incident Commander his or her views on the following subjects:

- Legal and policy restraints and/or freedoms;
- Limitations on authority;
- Political and social concerns;
- Environmental issues; and
- Cost considerations.

All of these will affect the development of incident strategy and objectives. As time and agency policy dictate, these considerations should be documented and provided to the Incident Commander, preferably through a formal, written, delegation of authority.

The fourth step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander to determine an appropriate time for the official transfer of command.

The fifth step in the transfer of command is to notify staff and assigned personnel of a change in incident command.

Notice of a change should be made to:

- Agency headquarters;
- General Staff members;
- Command Staff members; and
- All incident personnel.

The sixth and final step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander to decide whether to give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident.

The incoming Incident Commander may give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident. The advantages of this are:

- Retaining first-hand knowledge at the incident site.
- Allowing the initial Incident Commander to observe the progress of the incident and to gain experience.

Transfer of command is a common practice. It does not reflect on the competency of the current Incident Commander. Using these six steps will make the process work smoothly.

Incident Briefing Major Elements

The incident briefing must cover the following elements:

- Incident history.
- Priorities, objectives, and current plan.
- Resource assignments and incident organization.
- Resources ordered and needed.
- Facilities established.
- Status of communications.
- Any constraints or limitations.
- Incident potential.

The ICS Form 201 is especially designed to assist in incident briefings. It should be used whenever possible because it provides a written record of the incident as of the time prepared. The Incident Briefing Form is particularly valuable during the first operational period of an incident, and in many cases it will be the Incident Action Plan for the first Operational Period.

Changing the Initial Incident Action Plan (IAP)

It is possible that the incoming Incident Commander will need to modify incident objectives. Changes could be required for the following reasons:

- Change in agency administrator goals.
- Change in available resources, kinds or types.
- Lack of success or completion of tactical assignments.
- Improved intelligence.
- Cost factors.
- Political considerations.
- Environmental considerations.

Guidelines for Making IAP Changes

Changes can cause disruptions and when possible should be implemented at the start of the next operational period. On the other hand, delaying changes may result in additional control problems, greater loss, and increased expense and risk.

Making a change does not imply that previous decisions and actions were wrong. Many things can influence the need for change. The Incident Commander must be assertive, but also aware of potential risk and safety considerations involved in changes. Four guidelines to changes are:

- Implement appropriate safety procedures for all changes.
- Make changes if you must.
- Make them sooner rather than later.
- Make sure the changes are communicated clearly throughout the organization.

Exercise: Developing an Organization

Planned Event Scenario:

Your work site has been scheduled for a visit from the Secretary of Agriculture, who will be accompanied by a counterpart from a foreign country (English speaking). The Secretaries will arrive at the airport at 0800 hours, travel to your work site and tour your facility. They must return to the airport for an 1100 hours departure.

You have been appointed as the Incident Commander for this planned event and established the following objectives:

1. Ensure efficient ground transportation for eight people to and from the airport.
2. Facilitate the tour of your facility.

You may assign up to 22 people to your staff and have been given a budget of $3,000 for materials and services for this event. Security for the Secretaries is being provided by the USDA Secretary's security detail. You can assume there will be media interest in the event, however, this is a low-profile visit. The security analysis performed for the trip has not identified any unusual risks or hazards associated with the event. There are no other agencies involved in this event.

Remember: There is no absolute standard to follow when developing an ICS organization. Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the event or incident. The organizational structure is dependent on the size and complexity of the event or incident and staffing decisions made by the Incident Commander. Organizational structure should relate to the established incident objectives.

Based on the scenario, which of the Command Staff positions would you activate?

❑ Public Information Officer
❑ Safety Officer
❑ Liaison Officer

Based on the scenario, which of the General Staff positions would you activate?

- ❑ Operations Section Chief
- ❑ Planning Section Chief
- ❑ Logistics Section Chief
- ❑ Finance/Administration Section Chief

Which of the following tactical resources should the Operations Section Chief assign in order to begin addressing the 1st incident objective?

- ❑ Drivers (4)
- ❑ Navigators (4)
- ❑ Traffic controllers (2)
- ❑ Vehicles (4)

Which of the following tactical resources should the Operations Section Chief assign in order to begin addressing the 2nd incident objective?

- ❑ Photographers (2)
- ❑ Security Guards (2)
- ❑ Tour Guides (2)
- ❑ Translators (2)

Name and describe the type of supervisory positions the Operations Section Chief should activate in order to organize operations and address span of control.

Which of the following positions should the Planning Section Chief activate in order to support the event?

- ❑ Resources Unit Leader
- ❑ Situation Unit Leader
- ❑ Documentation Unit Leader
- ❑ Demobilization Unit Leader
- ❑ Technical Specialist – Hazmat

Which positions should the Logistics Section Chief activate in order to support the event?

Position	Recommended	Not Recommended
Communication Unit Leader	○	○
Medical Unit Leader	○	○
Food Unit Leader	○	○
Supply Unit Leader	○	○
Facilities Unit Leader	○	○
Ground Support Unit Leader	○	○

Indicate which positions, if any, the Finance/Administration Section Chief should activate and why they should be activated for the planned event.

Exercise Summary

You have now completed the exercise and the recommended ICS organization for the planned event is illustrated in the graphic.

It is important to remember that there is no absolute standard to follow.

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the event or incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are dependent on the size and complexity of the event or incident.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Incident Management** lesson. This lesson discussed the process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events. It also described the process of transfer of command, and the major elements of the incident briefing.

The next lesson will provide a brief summary of the ICS 300 Course contents. After reviewing the summary information, you will then take the course posttest.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Lesson 6: Summary and Posttest

Summary and Posttest: Overview

This lesson provides a brief summary of the ICS 200 Course contents. After reviewing the summary information, you will then take the course posttest.

This lesson should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

The Incident Command System: Summary

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a proven management system based on successful business practices. ICS is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents. Designers of the system recognized that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.

A poorly managed incident response can be devastating to our economy, to our food supply, and to our health and safety. With so much at stake, we must effectively manage our response efforts. ICS allows us to do so. This course presents a more in depth look at ICS and the vital role that you can play.

ICS Organization: Summary

The ICS organization is built around five major functions that may be applied on any incident whether it is large or small.

A major advantage of the ICS organization is the ability to fill only those parts of the organization that are required. For some incidents, and in some applications, only a few of the organization's functional elements may be required. However, if there is a need to expand the organization, additional positions exist within the ICS framework to meet virtually any need.

Lines of Authority

ICS establishes lines of supervisory authority and formal reporting relationships. Within ICS, there is complete unity of command, meaning that each position and each person within the system has only one designated supervisor.

Direction and supervision follows established organizational lines at all times, however, information can be shared freely throughout the organization.

Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships

Chain of command means that there is an orderly line of authority and reporting relationships within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels

Chain of command is used to communicate direction and maintain management control. Although orders must flow through the chain of command, members of the organization may directly communicate with each other to ask for or share information.

ICS team members work within the ICS position descriptions and follow the designated reporting relationships, regardless of their non-emergency positions or everyday administrative chain of command.

Functional Delegation

The ICS organization may be expanded easily from a very small operation for routine incidents into a larger organization capable of handling catastrophic events. A basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible for a task until that responsibility is delegated to a subordinate position.

The ICS organizational chart is a graphic representation of the incident, including:

- Positions and functions activated.
- Chain of command.
- Reporting relationships.
- Responsibilities delegated.
- Information flow.

Incident Commander's Overall Role: Summary

The Incident Commander's responsibility is the overall management of the incident. On most incidents, the command activity is carried out by a single Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is selected by qualifications and experience. The Incident Commander may have a Deputy, who may be from the same agency, or from an assisting agency.

Deputies

The Incident Commander may have one or more Deputies. An individual assuming a Deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy Incident Commander must be able to assume the Incident Commander's role.

Following are three reasons to designate Deputies:

1. To perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.
2. To perform the Incident Command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period).
3. To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

ICS 300 – Incident Command System

Incident Commander's Overall Responsibilities

- Assess situation and/or obtain a briefing from the previous Incident Commander.
- Receive delegation of authority from Agency Administrator.
- Establish immediate priorities.
- Determine incident objectives and strategy.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Establish and monitor incident organization.
- Ensure adequate safety measures are in place.
- Schedule planning meetings as required.
- Approve and authorize Incident Action Plan implementation.
- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Coordinate with key off-incident personnel (e.g. community leaders, elected officials).
- Approve requests for additional resources or release of resources.
- Keep Agency Administrator informed of incident status.
- Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize release of information to news media.
- Order the demobilization of incident when appropriate.

Incident Commander's Major Responsibilities

The Incident Commander has a wide variety of responsibilities, some of which are complex and require explanation:

- **Establish Immediate Priorities**: this must include responder safety and incident stabilization.
- **Determine Incident Objectives and Strategy**: this must reflect agency policy; incident objectives; strategy; and tactical direction.
- **Establish an Incident Command Post:** the coordination point from which the Incident Commander operates.
- **Establish and Monitor Incident Organization:** this may require expansion or contraction of the incident.
- **Ensure Adequate Safety Measures**: safety at the scene of an incident is always the top priority.
- **Schedule Planning Meetings as Required**: essential to achieving incident objectives.
- **Approve/Authorize Implementation of Incident Action Plan:** plans can be verbal or written.
- **Approve Requests for Additional/Release of Resources:** determine resource requirements and ensure adequate resources.
- **Authorize Release of Information to News Media:** release of information and responding to media inquiries.

Characteristics of an Effective Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is normally the most visible person on the incident. The following are just some of the characteristics associated with an effective Incident Commander:

- Command presence
- Understands ICS
- Proven manager
- Puts safety first
- Proactive and decisive
- Calm and objective
- Quick thinking
- Effective communicator
- Adaptable and flexible
- Realistic about personal limitations
- Politically astute

Command Staff: Summary

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to provide public information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, these personnel make up the Command Staff. Each of the Command Staff members may also have an Assistant.

In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the Command Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations. Only one Public Information Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Public Information Officer may have Assistants, as necessary, and the Assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions.

Reasons to designate a Public Information Officer include:

- The presence of an obvious high visibility or sensitive incident.
- Media demands for information are reducing Incident Commander effectiveness.
- Media capabilities to acquire their own information are increasing.
- Reduces the risk of multiple sources releasing information.
- Need to alert, warn or instruct the public.

Safety Officer

All agencies stress the importance of safety as both a management and an individual responsibility. In addition, the Command Staff position of Safety Officer may be assigned to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety, and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations.

Only one Safety Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Safety Officer will correct unsafe situations by working through the chain of command. However, the Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to **directly stop** unsafe acts. HAZMAT incidents require the assignment of a Safety Officer. The Safety Officer may assign Assistant Safety Officers, as needed.

Liaison Officer

Incidents that are multi-jurisdictional, or have several agencies involved, may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff. The Liaison Officer is the contact for agency representatives assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. The Liaison Officer may have one or more Assistants, as needed.

Reasons to establish the Liaison Officer position at an incident include:

- When several agencies send, or plan to send, Agency Representatives to an Incident in support of their resources.
- When the IC can no longer provide the time for individual coordination with each Agency Representative.
- When it appears that two or more jurisdictions may become involved in the incident and the incident will require on-site liaison.

Information and Intelligence Functions

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence are important elements of ICS. In this context, intelligence includes not only national security or other types of classified information but also other operational information, such as risk assessments, medical intelligence (i.e., surveillance), weather information, geospatial data, structural designs, toxic contaminant levels, utilities and public works data, etc., that may come from a variety of different sources.

Traditionally, information and intelligence functions are located in the Planning Section. However, in exceptional situations, the IC may need to assign the information and intelligence functions to other parts of the ICS organization. In any case, information and intelligence must be appropriately analyzed and shared with personnel, designated by the Incident Commander, who have proper clearance and a "need-to-know" to ensure they support decision-making.

The intelligence function may be organized in one of the following ways:

- Within the Command Staff. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with little need for tactical or classified intelligence, and in which incident-related intelligence is provided by supporting Agency Representatives, through real-time reach-back capabilities.
- As a Unit within the Planning Section. This option may be most appropriate in an incident with some need for tactical intelligence, and when no law enforcement entity is a member of the Unified Command.

- As a Branch within the Operations Section. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence (particularly classified intelligence), and when law enforcement is a member of the Unified Command.
- As a separate General Staff Section. This option may be most appropriate when an incident is heavily influenced by intelligence factors, or where there is a need to manage and/or analyze a large volume of classified or highly sensitive intelligence or information. This option is particularly relevant to a terrorism incident, for which intelligence plays a crucial role throughout the incident life cycle.

Regardless of how it is organized, the information and intelligence function is also responsible for developing, conducting, and managing information-related security plans and operations as directed by the Incident Commander. These can include information security and operational security activities, as well as the complex task of ensuring that sensitive information of all types (e.g., classified information, sensitive law enforcement information, proprietary or personnel information, or export controlled information) is handled in a way that not only safeguards the information, but also ensures that it gets to those who need access to it in order to effectively and safely conduct their missions. The information and intelligence function also has the responsibility for coordinating information- and operational-security matters with public awareness activities that fall under the responsibility of the Public Information Officer, particularly where such public awareness activities may affect information or operations security.

Assistants

The Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer may have assistants, as necessary. The assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions, or simply assist in managing the workload associated with the position. An Assistant must be as qualified as the Officer and be able to assume the Officer's role.

Assistant Public Information Officers may be assigned to the field or Joint Information Center or assigned to handle internal information.

Assistant Safety Officers may have specific responsibilities, such as aviation, hazardous materials, etc.

Assistant Liaison Officers may coordinate with specific agency representatives or groups of representatives.

Agency Representatives

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated **full authority** to make decisions on all matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer, or to the Incident Commander in the absence of a Liaison Officer.

Assisting Agency

An agency that is assisting on an incident is directly contributing **tactical resources** to the agency or jurisdiction that is responsible for the incident. Thus, fire, police, or public works equipment sent to Department of Agriculture incident would be considered assisting agency resources.

Cooperating Agency

An agency, which supports the incident or supplies assistance **other than tactical resources** would be considered a cooperating agency. Examples include the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, utility companies, etc. On some law enforcement incidents a fire agency may not send fire equipment, but may supply an Agency Representative for coordination purposes. In this case, the fire agency would be considered a cooperating agency.

General Staff: Summary

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may also be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to perform the other four management functions. These personnel are designated as the General Staff. Each of the General Staff members may also have one or more Deputies. In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the General Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

Deputies

The Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief may have one or more Deputies. An individual assuming a Deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy must be able to assume the General Staff member's role.

Following are three reasons to designate Deputies:

1. To perform specific tasks as requested by the General Staff member.
2. To perform the function of the General Staff member in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period).
3. To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Operations Section: Summary

There is no precise guideline for when the Operations Section Chief will be established on an incident. In some cases, it may be the first staff position to be established. In other situations, the Incident Commander may elect to maintain control of Operations.

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The build-up of the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and span of control considerations. The Operations Section consists of ground or surface-based tactical resources, aviation or air resources, and Staging Areas. Incidents will use any or all of these components, depending on the need.

Branches, Division and Groups

A Branch is the organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations Section or Logistics Section.

In the Operations Section, Branches are established when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. Divisions have geographic responsibility and Groups have functional responsibility.

The Air Operations Branch may be established to manage aircraft assigned to provide logistical or tactical support to the incident. An optional Information and Intelligence Branch may be established in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence.

Directors, Managers and Supervisors

The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. The person in charge of each Staging Area is designated as a Manager. The person in charge of each Division or Group is designated as a Supervisor.

In the Operations Section, Branch Directors and Staging Managers report to the Operations Section Chief. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization and the Supervisors report to Branch Directors or the Operations Section Chief.

General Staff Units: Summary

Organization of the remaining General Staff functions includes subdivisions called Units supervised by Unit Leaders. While most Unit responsibilities are specific to the function, some are common to all.

Common responsibilities include:

- Obtaining briefings from the Section Chief.
- Participating in incident planning meetings as required.
- Determining current status of Unit activities.
- Confirming dispatch and estimated time of arrival of staff and supplies.
- Assigning specific duties to staff; supervise staff.
- Developing and implementing accountability, safety, and security measures for personnel and resources.
- Supervising demobilization of Units, including storage of supplies.
- Providing Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished.
- Maintaining Unit records, including Unit Log.

Planning Section: Summary

The Planning Section is responsible for managing all information relevant to an incident. The Planning Section collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the incident. Dissemination can be in the form of the written Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status display boards. This Section is managed by the Planning Section Chief. In addition, information and intelligence functions are traditionally located in the Planning Section.

Resources Unit

The Resources Unit is responsible for maintaining the status of all resources assigned to an incident. This includes both tactical and support resources. The Resources Unit achieves this through:

- Overseeing the check-in of all resources,
- Maintaining a status-keeping system that indicates the current location and status of all resources, and
- Maintaining of a master list of all resources assigned to the incident, for example, supervisory personnel, tactical and support resources, etc.

Situation Unit

The collection, processing, and organizing of all incident information takes place within the Situation Unit. The Situation Unit may prepare future projections of incident growth, maps, and intelligence information.

Two positions report directly to the Situation Unit Leader:

- **Display Processor** - maintains incident status information. Incident status information is posted on maps and status boards as appropriate.
- **Field Observer** - collects and reports on situation information from the field.

Technical Specialists, such as Weather Observers, may also report directly to the Situation Unit Leader.

Documentation Unit

The Documentation Unit is responsible for the maintenance of accurate, up-to-date incident files. Incident files are then stored for legal, analytical, and historical purposes. Duplication services are also provided by the Documentation Unit.

Demobilization Unit

The Demobilization Unit is responsible for developing the Incident Demobilization Plan. On large incidents, demobilization can be quite complex, requiring a separate planning activity.

Planning for demobilization should begin at the early stages of an incident, particularly in the development of rosters of personnel and resources, thus ensuring the efficient and safe demobilization of all resources.

After generating an approved plan, the Demobilization Unit is responsible for distributing the plan at the incident and off-incident, as necessary.

Technical Specialists

Some incidents may require personnel with specialized skills or knowledge to be temporarily assigned to the Planning Section. These persons are called Technical Specialists.

Technical Specialists may function within the Planning Section, or be assigned wherever their services are required. In the Planning Section, Technical Specialists may report to the:

- Planning Section Chief,
- Situation Unit Leader, or
- Technical Specialist Unit Leader

In some cases, they may be reassigned to other parts of the organization. For instance Resource Use Specialists may be assigned to the Logistics Section.

If several specialists are assigned to the same task, a separate Unit may be established in the Planning Section. For example, if hazardous materials are a major ongoing factor within an incident, a Toxic Hazards Analysis Unit comprised of toxic substance specialists such as chemists and pathologists may be created. This is also the principle behind the establishment of the Information and Intelligence Unit.

While each incident dictates the need for Technical Specialists, some examples of commonly used specialists are:

- Meteorologist
- Environmental Impact Specialist
- Flood Control Specialist
- Pathologist
- Hazardous Substance Specialist
- Entomologist
- Structural Engineer
- Training Specialist

Logistics Section: Summary

With the exception of aviation support, all incident support needs are provided by the Logistics Section. The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistics Section is responsible for facilities, transportation, communications, equipment maintenance and fueling, food services, medical services, and ordering and distributing resources and supplies.

Service Branch

The Service Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all service activities at the incident, including food, communications, and medical support.

The Service Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units the:

- Communication Unit.
- Food Unit.
- Medical Unit.

The Communications Unit is responsible for developing plans that ensure that all elements of the incident organization can communicate with each other. This includes installing and testing communications equipment; supervising the Incident Communications Center, if established; and distributing and maintaining communications equipment. Communications planning is particularly important in ICS, where an incident may grow to include numerous agencies.

The Food Unit is responsible for supplying the food needs for the entire incident, including all remote locations, such as Camps and Staging Areas. The Food Unit works with the Planning Section Resources Unit to anticipate the number of personnel to be fed and develop plans for supplying food to all incident areas. The Food Unit also interacts with other Logistics Units to locate fixed-feeding sites; and to order and transport food.

The Medical Unit is responsible for all medical services for incident personnel. Medical assistance to the public or victims of the emergency is provided by the Operations Section, and not by the Logistics Section Medical Unit. The Medical Unit is responsible for developing an Incident Medical Plan; developing procedures for managing major medical emergencies; providing medical aid; and assisting the Finance/Administration Section with processing injury-related claims.

Support Branch

The Support Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all support activities at the incident, including facilities, resource ordering, and ground support.

The Support Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units the:

- Supply Unit.
- Facilities Unit.
- Ground Support Unit.

The Supply Unit is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing, storing, and distributing all incident-related resources and supplies. The ordering process includes personnel, tactical and support resources, as well as all expendable and non-expendable supplies.

The Facilities Unit is responsible for set-up, maintenance, and demobilization of all incident support facilities except Staging Areas. These facilities may include:

- The Incident Command Post,
- The Incident Base,
- Camps, and
- Other facilities to be used for feeding, sleeping, and sanitation services.

Existing structures in the vicinity of the incident may be used as incident facilities, as appropriate. The Facilities Unit will also provide security services to the incident as needed.

The Ground Support Unit is primarily responsible for the maintenance, service, and fueling of all mobile equipment and vehicles, with the exception of aviation resources. The Ground Support Unit also has responsibility for the ground transportation of personnel, supplies, and equipment, and the development of the Incident Traffic Plan.

Finance/Administration Section: Summary

The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. This Section is managed by the Finance/Administration Section Chief. Due to the specialized nature of the Finance/Administration Section, the Finance/Administration Section Chief is usually an employee of the jurisdiction or agency requiring financial services.

Procurement Unit

All financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements are managed by the Procurement Unit. The Procurement Unit establishes local sources for equipment and supplies; manages all equipment rental agreements; and processes all rental and supply fiscal document billing invoices. This Unit is also responsible for maintaining equipment time records.

The Procurement Unit works closely with local fiscal authorities to ensure efficiency and compliance with local regulations. In some agencies, certain procurement activities will be filled by the Supply Unit in the Logistics Section. Therefore, it is necessary that these two Units closely coordinate their activity.

Time Unit

The Time Unit is responsible for ensuring the accurate recording of daily personnel time, compliance with specific agency time recording policies, and managing commissary operations, if established at the incident.

As applicable, personnel time records will be collected and processed for each operational period. In many cases, the Time Unit Leader may find it helpful to select Time Recorders familiar with participating agency time recording policies.

Cost Unit

The Cost Unit provides all incident cost analyses. It ensures the proper identification of all equipment and personnel requiring payment; records all cost data; analyzes and prepares estimates of incident costs; and maintains accurate records of incident costs.

The Cost Unit is becoming increasingly important, with frequent requests by the Planning Section for cost estimates related to strategies for achieving Incident Objectives. Accurate information on the actual costs of all assigned resources is essential.

Compensation/Claims Unit

The Compensation/Claims Unit is responsible for administering financial matters arising from injuries, property damage or deaths occurring on an incident. As part of this responsibility, the Unit gathers evidence and prepares claims documentation for any event involving damage to public or private property, which could result in a claim on behalf of or against the Government. In addition, the Unit ensures proper documentation and tracking of any personnel injured on the incident.

Information Exchange and Transfer: Summary

As the incident organization grows to meet the needs of the incident, care must be taken to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively. The ICS organizational framework is open for individuals to freely supply and exchange information. Orders and directives within the ICS Organization must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Information Transfer Principles

There are essentially two principles to be followed to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively:

1. There is complete freedom within the organization to exchange information among and between personnel.
2. Orders, directives, resource requests, and status changes must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Examples of Information Exchange

Three examples of information exchange are:

1. The Food Unit Leader may directly contact the Planning Section's Resources Unit to determine the number of persons requiring feeding.
2. The Cost Unit Leader may directly discuss and share financial information on alternative strategies with the Planning Section Chief.
3. Division A Supervisor may contact the Situation Unit to share information on an unusual environmental hazard in the Division.

Examples Illustrating the Flow of Orders

Three examples illustrating the flow of orders are:

1. Division B Supervisor requests fuel for resources within the Division. This request will be passed through the Branch or Operations Section Chief to ensure that fuel requests can be consolidated before going to Logistics.
2. In an organization using Branches and Divisions, the Operations Section Chief will pass directives to change the resource assignments within a particular Division through the appropriate Branch Director. This ensures that the Branch Director is aware of any changes.
3. The Situation Unit Leader will request additional personnel to work in the Unit through the Planning Section Chief. This ensures that personnel already assigned to the Planning Section will be used if available.

Principles of Resource Management: Summary

There are three basic principles of resource management:

1. **Planning**: Planning involves evaluating the situation, determining objectives, selecting a proper strategy, and deciding which resources should be used to achieve those objectives in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.
2. **Organizing**: Organizing involves the Incident Commander and other members of the Command and General Staff grouping resources into an organization designed to meet incident objectives.
3. **Supervising**: Supervising is the process of directing and controlling the efforts of resources toward the attainment of specified incident objectives. Directing hinges on delegation of authority through the ranks of the organization. Controlling involves evaluating the performance of an organization against changing conditions and the Incident Action Plan, making necessary corrections so that incident objectives are accomplished.

Incident Resource Management: Summary

At any incident or event, the situation must be assessed and response planned. Resources must be organized, assigned and directed to accomplish the incident objectives. As they work, resources must be managed to adjust to changing conditions.

Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration at an incident. The formalized resource management process in ICS ensures that the management principles translate into practice at the incident.

Role of Management Functions in Resource Management

All five ICS functions play important roles in resource management. In a simplified way, these roles are:

- **Command:** Develops incident objectives, approves resource orders and demobilization.
- **Operations:** Identifies, assigns and supervises resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives.
- **Planning:** Tracks resources, and identifies resource shortages.
- **Logistics:** Orders and supports resources.
- **Finance/Administration:** Pays for resources.

Resource Management Activities

The seven activities in the incident resource management process are:

1. **Determining resource needs:** Determining resource needs involves five steps:

    - Conduct assessment and develop incident objectives;
    - Identify strategies;
    - Develop detailed tactics;
    - Assign resources; and
    - Evaluate outcomes.

2. **Resource Ordering**: As incidents grow in size and/or complexity, more tactical resources may be required:

    - If the Logistics Section Chief position has been filled, then he/she has the delegated authority to place the resource order after the order has been approved by the Incident Commander.
    - On larger incidents, where the Logistics Section contains a Supply Unit, the Supply Unit has the authority to place the approved resource order.
    - Final approval for ordering additional resources is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. In addition, the Incident Commander will define who on the incident can place orders with Logistics or the Supply Unit.
    - The Finance/Administration Section may also play a significant role in resource procurement, especially if the resource request requires a contracted obligation.
    - The Resource Order is used to document resource requests. Most resource orders will be communicated by computer, voice, or FAX from the incident to an agency ordering point. Incident resource orders may be placed with either a single ordering point or multiple ordering points.

3. **Check-In Process**: ICS has a simple and effective resource check-in process to establish resource accountability at an incident. The Resources Unit will establish and conduct the check-in function at designated incident locations. If the Resources Unit has not been activated, the responsibility for ensuring check-in will be with the Incident Commander or Planning Section Chief. The incident locations where check-in can be done are:

    - Incident Base,
    - Camp,
    - Staging Area,
    - Resources Unit at the Incident Command Post, and
    - Helibase.

4. **Utilizing Resources**: Supervisory personnel direct, guide, monitor and evaluate the efforts of subordinates toward attaining specific objectives. A designated supervisor or leader always directs resources. All positions have the delegated authority of the position. Incoming resources will initially be assigned in one of the following ways at an incident:

   - Assignment of tactical resources to the incident base or camps;
   - Personnel assigned to management or support positions;
   - Tactical resources are often assigned to report immediately to Divisions or Groups; or
   - Incoming tactical resources may be assigned to Staging Areas.

5. **Tracking Resources**: Resource tracking responsibilities are shared between the:

   - **Planning Section**, which is responsible for tracking all resources assigned to the incident and their status (assigned, available, out of service).
   - **Operations Section**, which is responsible for tracking the movement of resources within the Operations Section itself.

   There are many resource-tracking systems, ranging from simple status sheets to sophisticated computer-based systems.

6. **Evaluating Resources:** While some poor performance is due to the lack of motivation on the part of assigned personnel, it is more likely that management actions have produced or contributed to the problem. Management actions which may cause poor performance include:

   - Unrealistic or poorly defined incident objectives, strategies or tactics.
   - The wrong resource was allocated for the assignment.
   - There are inadequate tactical resources or logistical support for the assignment.
   - The resource is not trained or equipped to carry out the assignment.
   - Conflicting agency policies or procedures prevent the resource from carrying out the assignment.

   Sometimes the reason for lack of performance can be identified and addressed at the incident. Other times it may be necessary to either change the objective or replace the resource and address the issue through the Liaison Officer and/or agency training and policy. Failure at the tactical level is likely to reflect a failure to appropriately manage the resource during the planning process. Evaluation needs to go on constantly and corrections made as necessary throughout the life of the incident.

7. **Demobilizing Resources**: At all times during an incident, the Incident Commander and General and Command Staff members must determine when assigned resources are no longer required to meet incident objectives. Signs that the incident may be winding down include:

   - More resources are spending more time in staging.
   - Excess resources are identified during the planning process.
   - Incident objectives have been accomplished.

   Excess resources must be released in a timely manner to reduce incident-related costs, and to "free up" resources for other assignments.

Resource Efficiency

On every incident, resource mobilization follows a predictable course compared to the lifecycle of the incident itself.

Initially, the incident may build faster than resources can get there. Eventually, the resources catch up to the incident, and begin to control it. Ultimately, the incident declines, and resources exceed the needs of the incident.

Process of Demobilization Summary

On large incidents, a Demobilization Unit within the Planning Section should be established early in the life of the incident. A written demobilization plan is essential on larger incidents.

As soon as a determination is made that the need for a resource no longer exists, the appropriate Section Chief should be notified. In coordination with the Operations Section, the Demobilization Unit, may recommend release priorities for the Incident Commander's approval based upon continuing needs both on and off the incident.

Even at the most basic level, demobilization should take into account two factors:

- **Safety** and
- **Cost.**

Background on Unified Command: Summary

The standard ICS organizational framework with a single Incident Commander from one jurisdiction or agency often did not lend itself to creating an effective organization for multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. Two solutions were considered:

1. Divide the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization. This was unacceptable for cost and effectiveness reasons.
2. Create a single ICS structure with a built-in process for an effective and responsible multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency approach. This solution was called Unified Command.

Unified Command

Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with geographical or functional responsibility for an incident, to assign an Incident Commander to a Unified Command organization.

The Unified Command then establishes a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or giving up agency authority, responsibility or accountability.

Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.

Elements to Consider in Applying Unified Command

There are four basic elements to consider in applying Unified Command in ICS:

1. **Policy, Objectives, and Strategy:** Jurisdictional and agency administrators set policy. The Unified Command sets objectives and strategy.
2. **Organization:** The Unified Command organization consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene representatives (qualified agency Incident Commanders) operating within the Unified Command structure.
3. **Resources:** Resources, supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility or with whom responsible agencies have agreements, stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. However, operationally they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the Incident Action Plan.
4. **Operations:** After the objectives, strategies, and interagency agreements are decided, the Operations Section Chief is designated to develop tactical action plans and to direct tactical operations.

Advantages of Using Unified Command

Below are the principal advantages of using Unified Command:

- One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident objectives.
- Information flow and coordination is improved among all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's authority or legal requirements are compromised or neglected.
- Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions, and constraints of all others on the incident.
- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.
- Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.

Unified Command Applications

Unified Command is a practical and cost effective solution to multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. Some examples of how Unified Command might be applied to different kinds of incidents include, incidents that impact:

- More than one jurisdiction.
- Multiple agencies or departments within the same jurisdiction.
- Several jurisdictional and functional agencies.
- Different levels of government.

Primary Features of a Unified Command Organization

In ICS, organizations using Unified Command share key primary features. These include:

- **A Single, Integrated Incident Organization:** Under Unified Command, jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated, unified team. The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.
- **Collocated (Shared) Facilities**: A single Command Post is essential to an effective Unified Command. Bringing the responsible Incident Commanders and Command and General Staff together in a single Incident Command Post can allow a coordinated effort for as long as the Unified Command structure is required. One Base can serve the needs of multiple agencies. Similarly, resources from several agencies can be brought together in Staging Areas.
- **A Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan**: The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident. One important distinction is the need for all assigned Incident Commanders to meet before the first Operational Period planning meeting in a command meeting. The command meeting provides the Incident Commanders with an opportunity to discuss and agree on important issues that will become the foundation of a single planning process. The end result of the planning process will be an Incident Action Plan that addresses multi-jurisdiction or multi-agency priorities, and provides tactical operations and resource assignments for the unified effort.
- **Integrated Staffing**: The Unified Command incident organization can also benefit by integrating multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency personnel into various other functional areas.

    - **Operations and Planning:** Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction or a functional agency, who may in future Operational Periods have primary responsibility for Operations and Planning functions.
    - **Planning:** Placing other agencies' personnel in the Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units can result in significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.
    - **Logistics:** A Deputy Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support, as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies' personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide Communications Plan.
    - **Finance/Administration:** Although this Section often has detailed agency specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.
    - **Command Staff:** An integrated Command Staff can result in more credible information dissemination, better interagency relations, and increased personnel safety.

- **A Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering**: Decisions on incident resource ordering procedures are made during the Command Meeting, while the Planning Meeting determines resource requirements for all levels of the organization. If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be pre-designated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the Incident Commanders in the Unified Command meeting. If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency ordering point receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.

Guidelines for the Use of Unified Command

There are six guidelines for the use of Unified Command:

1. Understand ICS Unified Command.
2. Collocate essential functions.
3. Implement Unified Command at an early stage.
4. Concur on an Operations Section Chief and other Command and General Staff members.
5. Designate one of the Incident Commanders to be a spokesperson.
6. Train often as a team.

Functioning in Unified Command: Summary

Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command have certain responsibilities at an incident. The members of the Unified Command:

- Must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations and must know any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions.
- Must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent.
- Have the responsibility to manage the incident.
- Must function together as a team and ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command.

Organizing for Events and Incidents: Summary

It is easiest to prepare for events. Managers can establish exactly what is required prior to the event, and ensure appropriate and efficient activation of the organization.

Unplanned incidents require immediate attention and actions must be taken to ensure effective incident management and control. The first responding units to the incident **must** take the initial steps to provide organization for the incident. While that may appear obvious, the longer-term importance of these initial decisions is often overlooked.

Although unplanned incidents such as fires, searches, law enforcement, hazardous materials, pest or disease outbreaks, and emergency medical situations have different characteristics and require specially trained personnel, they are quite similar in how they are approached from an incident management standpoint.

Examples of Planned Events

Examples of the kinds of events which lend themselves to an ICS application include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Organizing for a major field training exercise or simulated emergency.
- A planned public event such as a major parade or concert.
- A planned activity such as a prescribed fire, a law enforcement sweep, a major pest control effort, or a marine hazardous materials exercise.

Considerations for Planned Events

In order to plan effectively, the planner must know as much as possible about the intended event. Considerations include:

- Type of event.
- Location, size, and expected duration.
- Single or multi-jurisdiction/multi-agency involvement.
- Command Staff needs (Public Information, Safety, Liaison).
- Kind, type, and number of resources required.
- Projected aviation operations.
- Staging areas and other facilities required.
- Kind and type of logistical support needs, e.g., communications, food, medical considerations.
- Financial concerns.
- Known limitations or restrictions.
- Available communications.

With information about each of the above factors, the planning staff can develop the appropriate organizational structure to meet the essential needs of the incident.

Characteristics of Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents often have the following characteristics:

- Time is of the essence.
- The situation is unstable.
- The incident presents a threat to safety and/or property.
- The incident has the potential to expand rapidly.
- Communications and information may be incomplete.
- Staff on-scene may be experienced in control measures, but are not necessarily experienced in managing expanding incidents.

Incident complexity increases as the situation deteriorates and the incident grows.

Staffing the ICS Organization: Summary

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are totally dependent on the size and complexity of the incident. **There is no absolute standard to follow.**

Some general guidelines are:

- Deputies may be used at Incident Command, General Staff (Section), and Branch levels.
- Command Staff may have Assistants as required.
- The Incident Commander may establish Divisions and/or Groups prior to designating an Operations Section.

- The use of Unified Command is recommended in most multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency incidents. An Incident Commander from each responsible agency or jurisdiction should be included in the Unified Command.
- As the Operations organization expands, activation of Planning and Logistics functions should be considered. The decision to activate additional Sections will always be based on the present and anticipated needs of the incident.

Reasons for Transferring Command: Summary

The initial Incident Commander will remain in charge until transfer of command is accomplished. Command may be transferred when:

- A more qualified person is available to assume command.
- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- The incident complexity changes.
- There is turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents.
- Personnel are called home for any reason.
- Agency Administrators direct a change in command.
- Changing command makes good sense.

Transfer of Command

The six important steps in effectively transferring command of an incident in progress are:

1. The incoming Incident Commander should, if at all possible, personally perform an assessment of the incident situation with the existing Incident Commander.
2. The incoming Incident Commander must be adequately briefed.
3. Delegation of authority initiated or updated to reflect change in command.
4. The incoming Incident Commander should determine an appropriate time for the official transfer of command.
5. At the appropriate time, notice of a change in incident command should be made to incident and off-incident personnel.
6. The incoming Incident Commander may give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident.

Incident Briefing Major Elements: Summary

The incident briefing must cover the following elements:

- Incident history.
- Priorities, objectives, and current plan.
- Resource assignments and incident organization.
- Resources ordered and needed.
- Facilities established.
- Status of communications.
- Any constraints or limitations.
- Incident potential.

The ICS Form 201 is especially designed to assist in incident briefings. It should be used whenever possible because it provides a written record of the incident as of the time prepared. The Incident Briefing Form is particularly valuable during the first operational period of an incident, and in many cases it will be the Incident Action Plan for the first Operational Period.

Changing the Initial Incident Action Plan (IAP): Summary

It is possible that the incoming Incident Commander will need to modify incident objectives. Changes could be required for the following reasons:

- Change in agency administrator goals.
- Change in available resources, kinds or types.
- Lack of success or completion of tactical assignments.
- Improved intelligence.
- Cost factors.
- Political considerations.
- Environmental considerations.

Guidelines for Making IAP Changes

Changes can cause disruptions and when possible should be implemented at the start of the next operational period. On the other hand, delaying changes may result in additional control problems, greater loss, and increased expense and risk.

Making a change does not imply that previous decisions and actions were wrong. Many things can influence the need for change. The Incident Commander must be assertive, but also aware of potential risk and safety considerations involved in changes. Four guidelines to changes are:

- Implement appropriate safety procedures for all changes.
- Make changes only if you must.
- Make them sooner rather than later.
- Make sure the changes are communicated clearly throughout the organization.

Taking the Posttest

You should now be ready to take the ICS 300 posttest. The purpose of the test is to make sure that you have learned the course content. The posttest includes 25 multiple-choice items. To receive credit for this course, you must answer 70% of the questions correctly.

Tips for Taking the Posttest

- Review the printable version of this course. You may refer to your notes and materials printed from this course.
- When you are ready, begin the test by reading the directions carefully.
- Read each question and then review ALL possible answers before selecting one. Do NOT click on the first answer that looks good! Click on the single best answer from the options presented.
- Answer every test item. If you do not know the answer, review your reference materials.
- Review your work. Before clicking on the Submit button, check your answers.