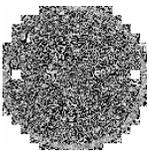




Introduction to the Incident Command System for Federal Workers (IS-100)

Student manual

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FEMA

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Course Purpose

This course introduces you to the Incident Command System (ICS).

Course Objectives

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe how ICS became the standard for emergency management across the country.
 - Provide examples of how ICS is interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.
 - Identify five major management functions.
 - Determine whether the principle of span of control has been applied properly in a scenario.
 - Describe the purpose of unique position titles in ICS.
 - Determine the roles and responsibilities of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
 - Determine the roles and responsibilities of the General Staff.
 - Determine when it is appropriate to expand and contract the ICS organization.
 - Identify the facilities used in ICS.
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Estimated Time

90 minutes

Contents

This course includes the following sections:

- The Incident Command System
 - ICS Organization
 - Command Staff Positions
 - General Staff Positions
 - Operations Section
 - Planning Section
 - Logistics Section
 - Finance and Administrative Section
 - Communications within the ICS
 - Incident Facilities
 - Common Responsibilities
 - Course Summary
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What Is an Incident?

An incident is an occurrence, either caused by humans or a natural phenomenon, which requires or may require action by emergency service personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or the environment.

Examples of incidents include:

- Fire, both structural and wildfire.
- Hazardous materials incidents.
- Search and rescue missions.
- Oil spills.
- Natural disasters.
- Terrorist/WMD events.
- Planned events, such as parades, conventions, or political rallies.

The Incident Command System

Because of today's budget constraints and limited staffing of local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, it's not possible for any one agency to handle all of the management and resource needs for the increasing numbers of incidents nationwide. Local, state, tribal, and federal agencies must work together in a smooth, coordinated effort under the same management system.

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations.

ICS is a proven management system based on successful business practices, and includes decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents.

This system represents organizational "best practices," and has become the standard for emergency management across the country.

History of the Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires in California's urban interface. Property damage ran into the millions, and many people died or were injured. The personnel assigned to determine the causes of this disaster studied the case histories and discovered that response problems were rarely attributed to lack of resources or failure of tactics.

Surprisingly, studies found that response problems were far more likely to result from inadequate management than from any other single reason. ICS was developed to provide a standardized management structure to help eliminate problems related to management during incident response.

Weaknesses addressed by the Incident Command System

Weaknesses in incident management were often due to:

- Lack of accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Poor communication, because of inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process.
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure to enable delegation of responsibilities and manage workloads efficiently.
- No predefined methods to integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process effectively.

A poorly managed incident response can be devastating to our economy, the food supply, and our health and safety. With so much at stake, we must effectively manage our response efforts. The Incident Command System, or ICS, allows us to do so. ICS is a proven management system based on successful business practices. This course introduces you to basic ICS concepts and terminology.

What ICS Is Designed To Do

Designers 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.
- Allow personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provide logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Be cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

ICS has been tested in more than 30 years of emergency and non-emergency applications, by all levels of government and the private sector.

Applications for the Use of ICS

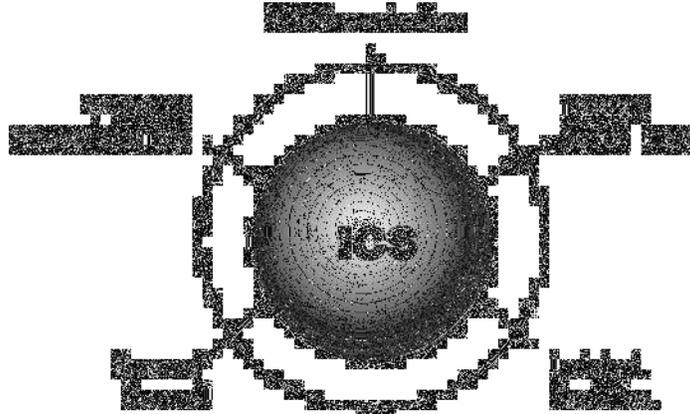
Applications for the use of ICS include:

- Routine or planned events (e.g., celebrations, parades, and concerts).
- Fires, hazardous materials, and multicasualty incidents.
- Multijurisdiction and multiagency disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and winter storms.
- Search and rescue missions.
- Biological outbreaks and disease containment.
- Acts of terrorism.

ICS Features

In this course, you will learn about the following ICS features:

- ICS Organization
- Incident Facilities
- Incident Action Plan
- Span of Control
- Common Responsibilities



Understanding the ICS Organization

There is no correlation between the ICS organization and the administrative structure of any single agency or jurisdiction. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and organizational structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past.

For example, the Incident Commander may be a Police Lieutenant, while a fire Battalion Chief serves as the Operations Section Chief.

Performance of Management Functions

Every incident or event requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for. Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions still will apply.

Five Major Management Functions

There are five major management functions that are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops. These functions apply whether you are handling a routine emergency, organizing for a major non-emergency event, or managing a response to a major disaster. The five major management functions are shown in the table below.



Management Function Descriptions

Below is a brief description of each ICS function:

- **Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- **Operations:** Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan. Develops the tactical objectives and organization, and directs all tactical resources.
- **Planning:** Prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status, and maintains documentation for incident records.
- **Logistics:** Provides support, resources, and all other services needed to meet the operational objectives.
- **Finance/Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Incident Commander

During small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all five management functions. In fact, the Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications. Larger incidents or events may require that these functions be set up as separate Sections within the organization.



ICS Sections

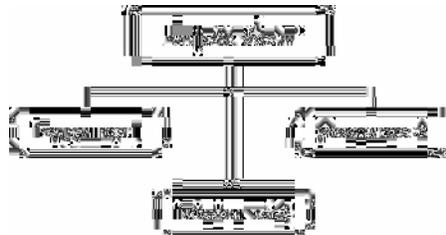
Each of the primary ICS Sections may be subdivided as needed. The ICS organization has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident.

A basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible until the authority is delegated to another qualified person. Thus, on smaller incidents when these additional persons are not required, the Incident Commander will personally accomplish or manage all aspects of the incident organization.

ICS Span of Control

Another basic operating guideline concerns the supervisory structure of the organization.

Span of control pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during emergency response incidents or special events. Maintaining an effective span of control is particularly important on incidents where safety and accountability are a top priority.



Maintaining Span of Control

Maintaining adequate span of control throughout the ICS organization is very important.

Effective span of control on incidents may vary from three (3) to seven (7), but **a ratio of one (1) supervisor to five (5) reporting elements is recommended.**

If the number of reporting elements falls outside of these ranges, expansion or consolidation of the organization may be necessary. There may be exceptions, usually in lower-risk assignments or where resources work in close proximity to each other.



ICS Position Titles

To maintain span of control, the ICS organization can be divided into many levels of supervision. At each level, individuals with primary responsibility positions have distinct titles. Using specific ICS position titles serves three important purposes:

- Titles provide a common standard for all users. For example, if one agency uses the title Branch Chief, another Branch Director, etc., this lack of consistency can cause confusion at the incident.
- The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by seniority.
- Standardized position titles are useful when requesting qualified personnel. For example, in deploying personnel, it is important to know if the positions needed are Unit Leaders, clerks, etc.

ICS Organizational Components

Review the following definitions of the ICS organizational components.

Section	The organizational levels with responsibility for a major functional area of the incident (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration). The person in charge of each Section is designated as a Chief.
Division	Used to divide an incident geographically. The person in charge of each Division is designated as a Supervisor.
Group	Used to describe functional areas of operations. The person in charge of each Group is designated as a Supervisor.
Branch	Used when the number of Divisions or Groups extends the span of control. Can be either geographical or functional. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director.
Task Force	A combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Task Force Leader.
Strike Team	A set number of resources of the same kind and type with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader.
Single Resource	May be individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor that can be used at an incident.

**Incident Commander's
Overall Role**

The Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident. The Incident Commander must be fully briefed and should have a written delegation of authority. Initially, assigning tactical resources and overseeing operations will be under the direct supervision of the Incident Commander.

Personnel assigned by the Incident Commander have the authority of their assigned positions, even if it's not the same authority that they have at home.

Below is a narrative account of the Incident Commander's overall role:

"My job is to provide the overall leadership for incident response. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. Like any other organization, I have bosses too. I take general direction and receive my delegation of authority from the responsible agency administrator, and I am accountable to him or her. It's important to note that the agency administrator may or may not include my real-life boss.

**Incident Commander
Responsibilities**

In addition to having overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander:

- Has responsibility for ensuring incident safety, providing information services to internal and external stakeholders, and establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.
- May have one or more Deputies from the same agency or from other agencies or jurisdictions. Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.

Narrative description of the Incident Commander's responsibilities:

"As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I staff them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long-term, I will need more staff and possibly a deputy.

Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the agency director. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. During a complex incident, I'll direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. One benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need."

**Selecting and Changing
Incident Commanders**

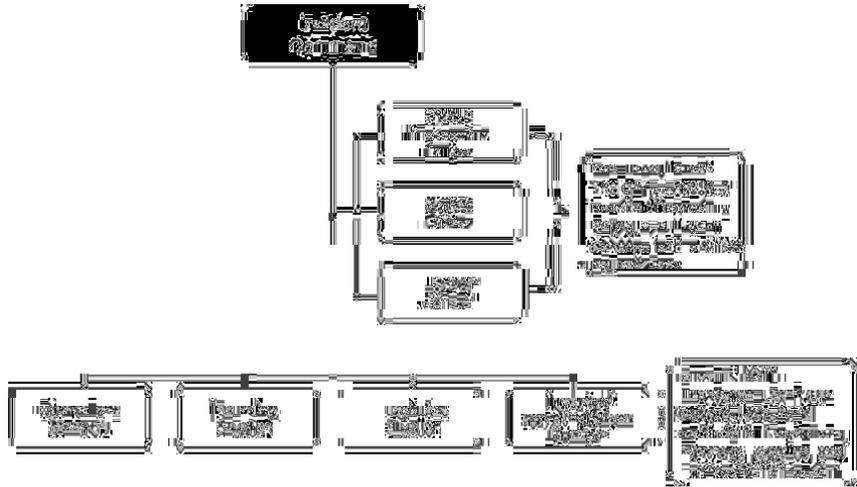
As incidents expand in size, change in jurisdiction or discipline, or become more complex, command may change to a more experienced Incident Commander.

Rank, grade, and seniority are not the factors used to select the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response.

Formal transfer of command at an incident always requires that there be a full briefing for the incoming Incident Commander and notification to all personnel that a change in command is taking place.

Expanding the Organization

As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff.



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 information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, the following personnel make up the Command Staff:

- **Public Information Officer** serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event.
- **Safety Officer** monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.
- **Liaison Officer** serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assisting at an incident.

Command Staff: Public Information Officer

Some of the responsibilities of the Public Information Officer include:

- Advising the Incident Commander on issues related to information dissemination and media relations.
- Serving as the primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident and the response to it.
- Serving both an external audience through the media, and an internal audience including both incident staff and agency personnel.
- Coordinating with other public information staff to ensure that confusing or conflicting information is not issued.
- Obtaining information from the Planning Section, since the Planning Section is gathering intelligence and other information pertinent to the incident.
- Obtaining information from the community, the media, and others, and providing that information to the Planning Section Chief and the Incident Commander.

Accurate information is essential. In the end, the Incident Commander will approve all information that the Public Information Officer releases. During a complex incident, several Assistant Public Information Officers will assist the lead Public Information Officer.

Command Staff: Safety Officer

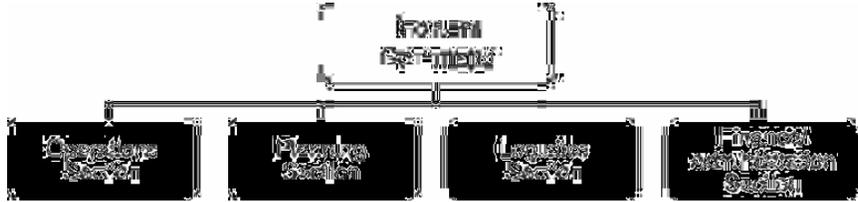
My job is to make sure everyone does the job safely and gets home in one piece. I advise the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety, but I would like to emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility. I work very closely with Operations to make sure that our people in the field are as safe as possible under the circumstances, including wearing appropriate protective equipment and implementing the safest tactical options. I conduct risk analyses and implement safety measures. I normally do this through the planning process, but I do have the authority to stop any unsafe activity that I observe. I minimize other employee risks by promoting safe driving habits, eliminating tripping hazards, ensuring safe food handling, things like that. I spend a lot of time out of the command post looking at what's going on. During a complex incident, I may need a few assistants to be my eyes and ears.

Command Staff: Liaison Officer

I'm the go between. I assist the Incident Commander by gathering information about agencies that are supporting our efforts on this incident. The Incident Commander's time is devoted to managing the incident, so my job is to serve as a coordinator for agencies at all levels of government that are not represented in the command structure. I provide briefings to agency representatives and work with them to address their questions and concerns about the operation. I ask agency representatives about restrictions on their resources that may impact how we can use them or special support requirements that they might have. I also ask about availability of any other specialized resources they might have that may prove useful. What I don't do is try to coordinate their tactical activities, Operations does that. During a complex incident, I may have a lot of agency representatives, but I can usually handle the job myself.

Understanding the General Staff

Expansion of the incident may also require the delegation of authority for the performance of the other management functions. The people who perform the other four management functions are designated as the **General Staff**. The General Staff is made up of four **Sections**: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

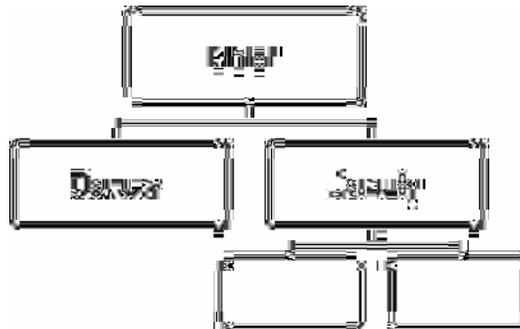


ICS Section Chiefs and Deputies

The person in charge of each Section is designated as a **Chief**. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their Section to meet the needs of the situation. Each of the Section Chiefs may have a Deputy, or more than one, if necessary. The Deputy:

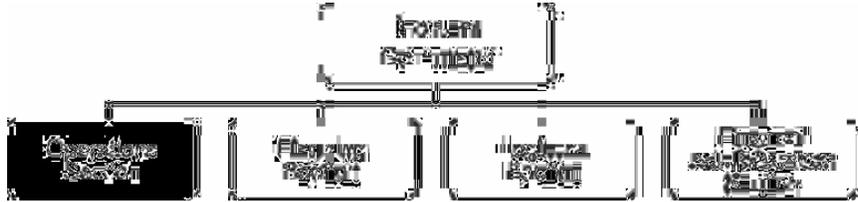
- May assume responsibility for a specific portion of the primary position, work as relief, or be assigned other tasks.
- Must be qualified to the same ICS level as the person for whom he or she works.

In large incidents, especially where multiple disciplines or jurisdictions are involved, the use of Deputies from other organizations can greatly increase interagency coordination.



Understanding the Operations Section

Until Operations is established as a separate Section, the Incident Commander has direct control of tactical resources. The Incident Commander will determine the need for a separate Operations Section at an incident or event. When the Incident Commander activates the Operations Section, he or she will assign an individual to be the Operations Section Chief.



Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is normally the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand.

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for developing and implementing strategies and tactics to carry out the incident objectives. The Operations Section Chief's responsibilities include organizing, assigning, and supervising all of the tactical field resources assigned to an incident, including air operations and resources in staging areas.

The Operations Section Chief works very closely with other members of the Command and General Staff to coordinate activities.

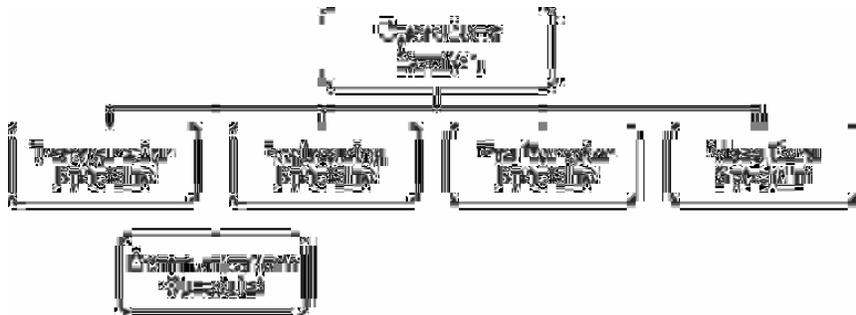
The Operations function is where the tactical fieldwork is done. Therefore, most incident resources are assigned to the Operations Section. Often, the most hazardous activities are carried out there. Because of this, it is necessary to monitor carefully the number of resources that report to any one supervisor. The following supervisory levels can be added to help manage span of control:

**Operations Section:
Expanding and
Contracting**

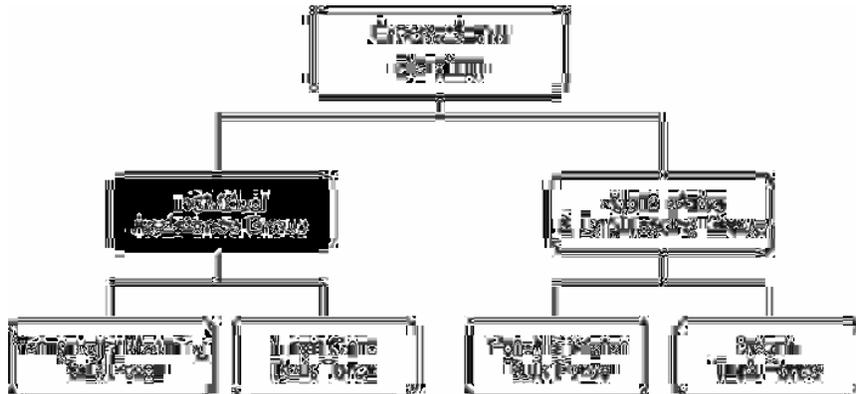
The Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief at an incident may work initially with only a few single resources or staff members.



The Operations Section usually develops from the bottom up. The organization will expand to include needed levels of supervision as more and more resources are deployed.



As we covered earlier, it is important to maintain an effective span of control. Maintaining span of control can be done easily by grouping resources into Divisions or Groups.



At some point, the Operations Section and the rest of the ICS organization will contract. The decision to contract will be based on the achievement of tactical objectives. Demobilization planning begins upon activation of the first personnel and continues until the ICS organization ceases operation.

The Planning Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section and designate a Planning Section Chief. If no Planning Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all planning functions. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any needed additional staffing.

Role of the Planning Section Chief

Responsibilities of the Planning Section Chief include:

- Gathering and analyzing information.
- Gathering, analyzing, and disseminating of intelligence and information.
- Managing the planning process.
- Compiling the Incident Action Plan.
- Developing a written Incident Action Plan (usually done for large incidents, and when the Incident Commander has directed).
- Managing the activities of Technical Specialists.
- Working closely with the Incident Commander and other members of the General Staff to be sure that information is shared effectively and results in an efficient planning process to meet the needs of the Incident Commander and Operations.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident intelligence and information.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Conducting long-range and/or contingency planning.
- Developing plans for demobilization as the incident winds down.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.



Planning Section: Units

The Planning Section can be further staffed with Units. Examples include:

- Resources
- Situation
- Documentation
- Demobilization

In addition, Technical Specialists who provide special expertise useful in incident management and response may also be assigned to work in the Planning Section. Depending on the needs, Technical Specialists may also be assigned to other Sections in the organization.



Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have either a verbal or written **Incident Action Plan**. The purpose of this plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with direction for actions to be implemented during the operational period identified in the plan.

Incident Action Plans include the measurable tactical operations to be achieved and are prepared around a timeframe called an **Operational Period**.

Incident Action Plan Elements

At the simplest level, all Incident Action Plans must have four elements:

- **What** do we want to do?
- **Who** is responsible for doing it?
- **How** do we communicate with each other?
- **What** is the procedure if someone is injured?

The Logistics Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Logistics Section at the incident, and designate an individual to fill the position of the Logistics Section Chief. If no Logistics Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all logistical functions. The size of the incident, complexity of support needs, and the incident length will determine whether a separate Logistics Section is established. Additional staffing is the responsibility of the Logistics Section Chief.

Role of the Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief assists the Incident Commander by providing the resources and services required to support incident activities. He or she will coordinate activities very closely with the other members of the Command and General Staff.

The Logistics Section develops several portions of the written Incident Action Plan and forwards them to the Planning Section. Logistics and Finance have to work closely to contract for and purchase goods and services needed at the incident.

Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs, including:

- Obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing support transportation.
- Providing medical services to incident personnel.



**Logistics Section:
Branches and Units**

The Logistics Section can be further staffed by Branches and Units.

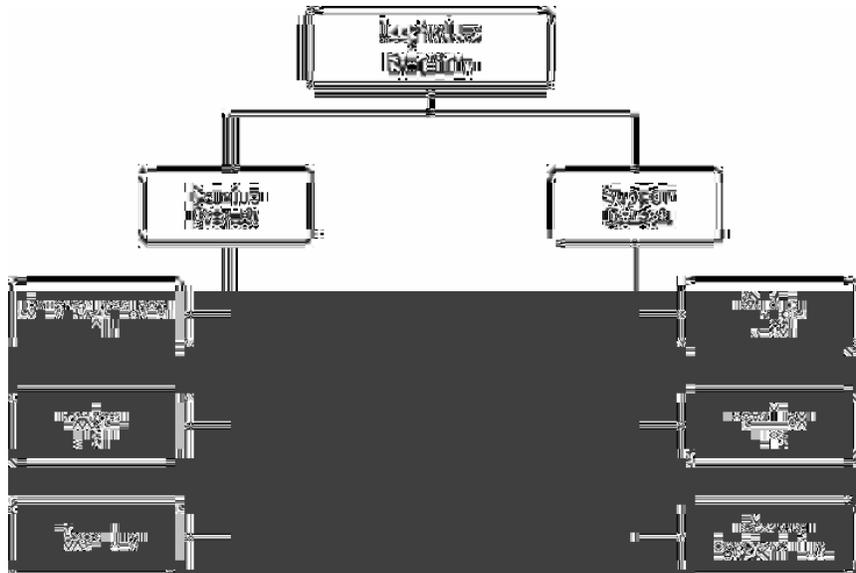
The units under the Services Branch include:

- Communications.
- Medical (for response personnel only).
- Food.

The units under the Support Branch include:

- Supply.
- Facilities.
- Ground Support.

Not all of the Units may be required; they will be established based on need. The titles of the Units are descriptive of their responsibilities.



The Finance/Administration Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident and designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Role of the Finance/Administration Section Chief

The **Finance/Administration Section Chief** is the one who worries about paying for the response efforts. He or she is responsible for all of the financial and cost analysis aspects of an incident. These include contract negotiation, tracking personnel and equipment time, documenting and processing claims for accidents and injuries occurring at the incident, and keeping a running tally of the costs associated with the incident.

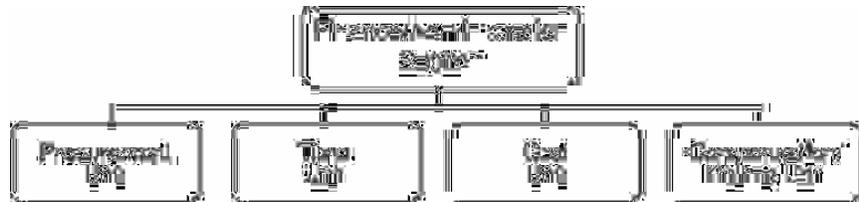
The Finance/Administration Chief will coordinate with all members of the Command and General Staff, but works most closely with Logistics to be sure that all resources needed to manage the incident are contracted and procured.

Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

Because of the large scope of some incidents, the number of agencies involved, and the amount of financial activity it will generate, the Finance/Administration Section Chief might need to activate all four units that report to him or her. These include the Time, Cost, Compensation and Claims, and Procurement Units.

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Personnel check in and check out of incident.
- Contract negotiation and monitoring.
- Timekeeping.
- Cost analysis.
- Compensation for injury or damage to property.



Finance/Administration Section: Increasing Use

Larger incidents typically use a Finance/Administration Section to monitor costs. Smaller incidents may also require certain Finance/Administration support.

For example, the Incident Commander may establish one or more Units of the Finance/Administration Section for such things as procuring special equipment, contracting with a vendor, or making cost estimates for alternative response strategies.

Expanding and Contracting the ICS Organization

One of the great strengths of ICS is the ability to expand and contract the organization as needed to fit the activity level at the incident. Deputies can be added as needed to maintain span of control, Sections can be subdivided, and the organization can grow to include other agencies and jurisdictions as needed.

Common Terminology

The ability to communicate within ICS is absolutely critical. Using standard or common terminology is essential to ensuring efficient, clear communication. ICS requires the use of common terminology, meaning standard titles for facilities and positions within the organization.

Common terminology also includes the use of "clear text"—that is, communication without the use of agency-specific codes or jargon. **In other words, use plain English.**

Uncommon Terminology: "Response Branch, this is HazMat 1, we are 10-24."

Common Terminology: "Response Branch, this is HazMat 1, we have completed our assignment."

Integrated Communications

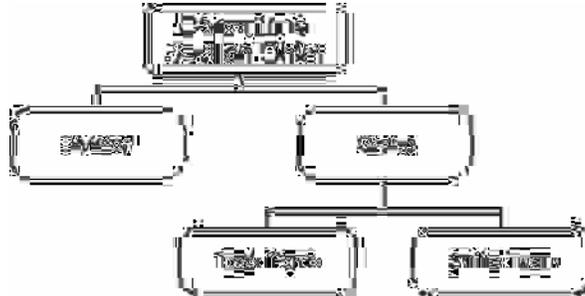
Every incident requires a Communications Plan. Communications includes:

- The "hardware" systems that transfer information.
- Planning for the use of all available communications resources.
- The procedures and processes for transferring information internally and externally.

Communications needs for large incidents may exceed available radio frequencies. Some incidents are conducted entirely without radio support. In such situations, other communications resources (cell phones, alpha pagers, e-mail, and secure phone lines) may be the only communication methods used to coordinate communication and to transfer large amounts of data efficiently.

Organizational Elements and Resources

As you learned earlier, organizational elements require a consistent pattern for designating each level within the ICS organization. Resources are also assigned common designations. Many kinds of resources may also be classified by type, which will indicate their capabilities (e.g., types of helicopters, sprayers, etc.).

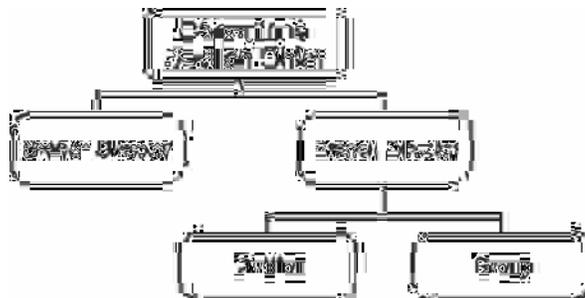


Use of Position Titles

As mentioned previously, ICS Command and General Staff positions have distinct titles.

- Only the **Incident Commander** is called **Commander**.
- Only the heads of the **Sections** in the General Staff are called **Chiefs**.

Learning and using this standard terminology helps reduce confusion between the day-to-day position occupied by an individual and his or her position at the incident.



Communications Discipline

Important considerations related to communications include:

- Observing strict radio/telephone procedures.
- Using plain English in all communications. Codes should not be used in radio transmissions. Limit the use of discipline-specific jargon, especially on interdisciplinary incidents.
- Limiting radio and telephone traffic to essential information only. Plan what you are going to say.
- Follow procedures for secure communications as required.

Understanding Incident Facilities

Common terminology is also used to define incident facilities, help clarify the activities that take place at a specific facility, and identify what members of the organization can be found there.

Incident activities may be accomplished from a variety of facilities. Facilities will be established depending on the kind and complexity of the incident or event. ICS facilities are not fixed facilities and may change locations during an event. It is important to know and understand the names and functions of the principal ICS facilities.

Only those facilities needed for any given incident may be activated. Some incidents may require facilities not included in the standard list.

Incident Facilities

Only those facilities needed for any given incident will be activated. The standard ICS incident facilities include:

- **Incident Command Post (ICP)**
- **Staging Areas**
- **Base**
- **Camps**
- **Helibase/Helispot.**

Incident Command Post, or ICP, is the location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident operations. There is generally only one ICP for each incident or event, but it may change locations during the event. Every incident or event must have some form of an Incident Command Post. The ICP may be located in a vehicle, trailer, tent, or within a building. The ICP will be positioned outside of the present and potential hazard zone but close enough to the incident to maintain command.

Staging Areas are temporary locations at an incident where personnel and equipment are kept while waiting for tactical assignments. Staging Areas should be located close enough to the incident for a timely response, but far enough away to be out of the immediate impact zone. There may be more than one Staging Area at an incident. Each Staging Area should have a Staging Area Manager who reports to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if an Operations Section has not been established.

Base is the location from which primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered. The Base may be collocated with the Incident Command Post. There is generally only one Base per incident.

Camp is the location where resources may be kept to support incident operations if a Base is not accessible to all resources. Not all incidents will have Camps.

Helibase is the location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted. Helibases are generally used on a more long-term basis and include such services as fueling and maintenance.

Helispots are more temporary facilities used for loading and unloading personnel and cargo. Large incidents may require more than one Helibase and several Helispots.

Tips for Preparing for ICS Assignments

The following tips have been provided by **Van Bateman, USDA, Forest Service**:

"Make sure you know exactly what your responsibility is, exactly what's expected of you. Make sure that whoever you are working for on that given day sits down and gives you a very complete briefing on what to expect that day and what you are going to be doing and where you are going to be doing it at."

General Guidelines—Lengthy Assignments

Many incidents last only a short time, and may not require travel. Other deployments may require a lengthy assignment away from home. General guidelines for what to take on incidents requiring extended stays or travel are listed below:

- Assemble a travel kit containing any special technical information (e.g., maps, manuals, contact lists, and reference materials).
- Prepare personal items needed for your estimated length of stay, including medications, cash, credit cards, etc.
- Take your passport and birth certificate for OCONUS assignments.

Other information you will need includes:

- Travel and transportation arrangements.
- Return mode of transportation.
- Payroll procedures.

Ensure that you family knows your destination and how to get in touch.

General Guidelines—Roles and Authorities

In addition to preparing for your travel arrangements, it is important to understand your role and authorities.

- Review your emergency assignment. Know who you will report to and what your position will be.
- Establish a clear understanding of your decision making authority.
- Determine communications procedures for contacting your headquarters or home office (if necessary).
- Identify purchasing authority and procedures.
- Determine how food and lodging will be provided (incident, personal, and agency).

Actions Prior to Departure

Upon receiving an incident assignment, your deployment briefing should include, but may not be limited to, the following information:

- Incident type and name or designation
- Incident check-in location
- Specific assignment
- Reporting date and time
- Travel instructions
- Communications instructions
- Special support requirements (facilities, equipment transportation and off-loading, etc.)
- Travel authorization for air, rental car, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses

Common Responsibilities

Check-In at the Incident

Check-in officially logs you in at the incident. The check-in process and information helps to:

- Ensure personnel accountability.
- Track resources.
- Prepare personnel for assignments and reassignments.
- Locate personnel in case of an emergency.
- Establish personnel time records and payroll documentation.
- Plan for releasing personnel.
- Organize the demobilization process.

Initial Incident Briefing

After check-in, locate your incident supervisor and obtain your **initial briefing**. The briefing information helps you plan your tasks and communicate with others. Briefings received and given should include:

- Current situation assessment.
- Identification of your specific job responsibilities.
- Identification of coworkers.
- Location of work area.
- Identification of eating and sleeping arrangements, as appropriate.
- Procedural instructions for obtaining additional supplies, services, and personnel.
- Operational periods/work shifts.
- Required safety procedures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as appropriate.

Incident Recordkeeping

All incidents require some form of **recordkeeping**. Requirements vary depending upon the agencies involved and the nature of the incident. Detailed information on using ICS forms will be covered in other training sessions, or may be found in the Forms Manual.

Below are general guidelines for incident recordkeeping:

- Print or type all entries.
- Enter dates by month/day/year format.
- Enter date and time on all forms and records. Use local time.
- Fill in all blanks. Use N/A as appropriate.
- Use military 24-hour time.
- Section Chiefs and above assign record keeper (scribe).

Incident Demobilization

Agency requirements for demobilization may vary considerably. General demobilization guidelines for all personnel are to:

- Complete all work assignments.
- Brief replacements, subordinates, and supervisor.
- Follow incident and agency check-out procedures.
- Provide adequate follow-up contact information.
- Return any incident-issued equipment or other nonexpendable supplies.
- Complete post-incident reports, critiques, evaluations, and medical follow-up.
- Complete all payment and/or payroll issues or obligations.

Course Summary

This course explained:

- ICS is used as a standardized management tool designed to allow its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure flexible enough to meet the demands of small or large emergency or non-emergency situations.
- Identification of areas of management weakness during emergency response resulted in the development of ICS.
- ICS represents organizational “best practices,” and has become the standard for emergency management across the country.
- ICS is designed to be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.
- Applications of ICS include planned events, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism.
- Organizational structure of ICS.
- Five major management functions are Incident Command, Operations Section, Planning Section, Logistics Section, Finance/Administrative Section.
- Optimum span of control is “5” with a range of “3-7” suggested.
- Unique position titles are used to avoid confusion with response organizations.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for the Incident Commander, the Command Staff, and the General Staff.
- The ICS organization can be easily expanded and contracted as needed throughout the incident.
- The need for common terminology in all incident communications. Using standard or common terminology (clear text) is essential to ensuring efficient, clear communication.
- Incident facilities will be established depending on the kind and complexity of the incident or event. Only those facilities needed for any given incident will be activated.
- Common ICS responsibilities include preparing travel arrangements, understanding your role and authorities, the check-in process, incident recordkeeping, and preparing for demobilization.

Taking the Post Test

You should now be ready to take the ICS 100 post test. The purpose of the test is to make sure that you have learned the course content. The post test includes 25 multiple-choice items. To receive credit for this course, you must answer 70% of the questions correctly.