

STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

APPROVED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

FIELD COURSE

MODULE 1

ICS ORIENTATION

AUGUST 1995

STUDENT REFERENCE MANUAL

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STUDENT INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION TO REFERENCE TEXT

ICS Orientation is designed to help you learn the principles of the Incident Command System and to briefly acquaint you with the basic ICS structure and terminology.

The majority of the reference text is to be used as a note-taking guide, but other practical information and exercises are included that replicate situations you may encounter in any incident. Many of these concepts are applicable in planning and conducting planned events as well.

To measure how well you received and retained this information, there will be an examination covering the module material.

We hope you will have a good learning experience which helps you accomplish your job more effectively.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This module is intended for personnel assigned to an incident or event who are required to have a minimal understanding of ICS. This module reviews the ICS organization, basic terminology, and common responsibilities. It will provide enough information about the Incident Command System to enable you to work in a support role at an incident or event, or to support an incident from an off-site location.

This module may also be used as a pre-course study program by personnel who will be continuing their ICS training.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This is an orientation for entry-level personnel assisting at an incident or event, persons working in support roles, and off-incident personnel who require a minimum understanding of ICS.

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITE MODULES

This is the first of seventeen modules of the SEMS Field Training Curriculum. It is recommended that the SEMS Introduction course be taken prior to the Field Course. Modules 1-15 have been adopted from the ICS National Training Curriculum.

There are other ICS National Training Curriculum materials which will help you understand this course material more easily. You may wish to obtain copies of the following documents:

- ICS Development Paper
- ICS Glossary
- ICS Forms Manual
- ICS Position Descriptions & Responsibilities

Contact the person assigned to administer and assist you with completing this self-paced instruction for help in acquiring copies of the documents listed above, or other support documents unique to your discipline.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this self-study module, you should be able to do the following:

1. List the five major organizational activities within the Incident Command System and explain their primary functions.
2. Give the titles, and explain the duties of Command and General Staff members.
3. Match organizational units to appropriate Operations, Logistics, Planning/Intelligence, or Finance/Administration Sections.
4. Match supervisory titles with appropriate levels within the organization.
5. Describe the terms used to name major incident facilities, and state the function of each.
6. Describe what an Incident Action Plan is and how it is used at an incident.

7. Describe how the concept of "span of control" functions within the incident organization.
8. Describe the common responsibilities (general instructions) associated with incident or event assignments.
9. Describe several applications for the use of ICS.

DELIVERY METHOD

This module is self paced.

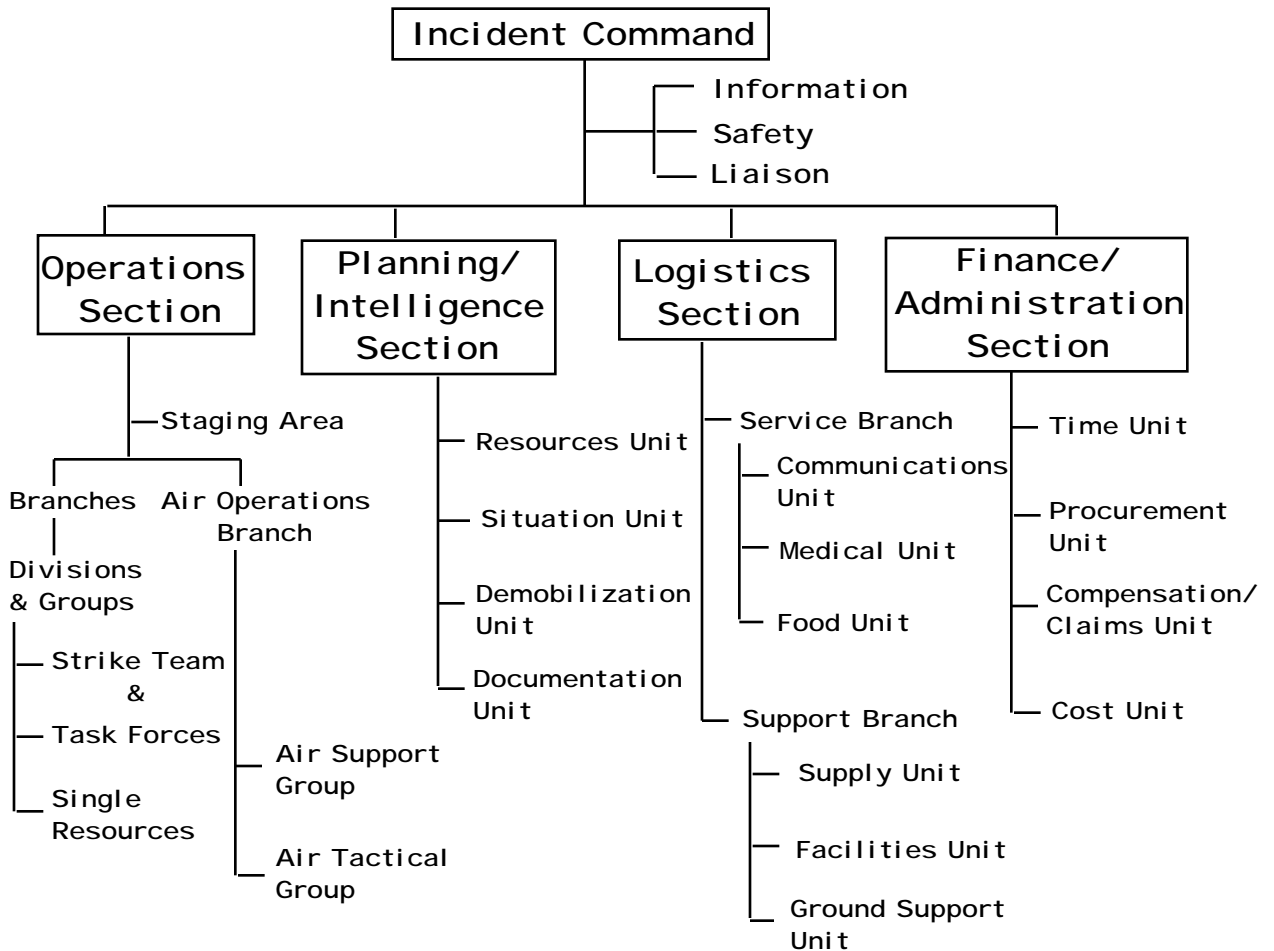
TESTING

A self-study examination is located at the back of the module, as a personal comprehension check.

DURATION

This module can be completed in two to four hours of self-paced study time.

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM ORGANIZATION



Incident Command System Organization (Figure 1-1)

(Please note that in California there may be slight variations to this model to facilitate the use of ICS.)

ICS ORIENTATION

I. Introduction

The Incident Command System is used to manage an emergency incident or a non-emergency event. It can be used for both small and large situations.

The system has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet differing needs. This makes it a very cost-effective and efficient management system. The system can be applied to a wide variety of emergency and non-emergency situations. Listed below are some examples of the kinds of incidents and events that can use the ICS:

APPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

- Fires, HAZMAT, and multi-casualty incidents
- Multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency disasters
- Wide-area search and rescue missions
- Pest eradication programs
- Oil spill response and recovery incidents
- Single and multi-agency law enforcement incidents
- Air, rail, water, or ground transportation accidents
- Planned events; e.g., celebrations, parades, concerts
- Private sector emergency management programs
- State or local major natural hazards management

Application for the Use of the Incident Command System (Figure 1-2)

ICS has a number of features which will be covered in this module. Major areas to be covered include:

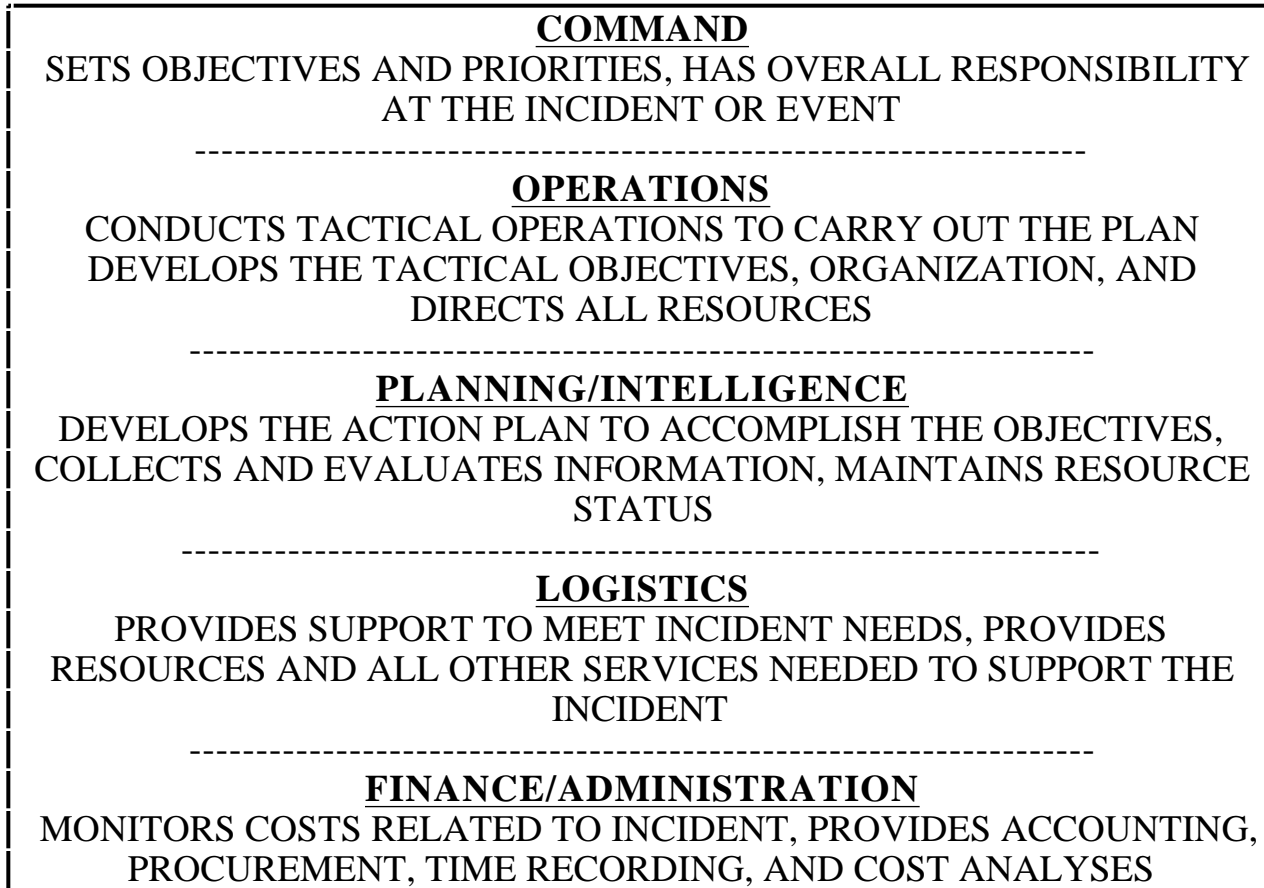
- ICS Organization
- Incident Facilities
- The Incident Action Plan
- Span of Control

- Common Responsibilities
- Applications

II. ICS Organization

Every incident or event has certain major management activities or actions that must be performed. Even if the event is very small, and only one or two people are involved, these activities will still always apply to some degree.

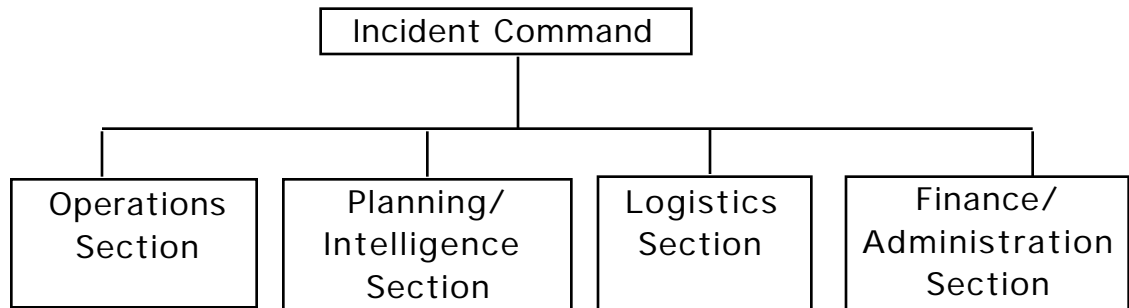
The organization of the Incident Command System is built around five major management activities. These are depicted in Figure 1-3.



Incident Command System Major Activities (Figure 1-3)

These five major management activities are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops. They apply whether you are handling a routine emergency, organizing for a major event, or managing a major response to a disaster.

On small incidents, these major activities may all be managed by one person, the Incident Commander (IC). Large incidents usually require that these activities be set up as separate Sections within the organization as shown in Figure 1-4 below.



ICS Sections (Figure 1-4)

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

A basic guideline of ICS is, that the person in charge of the organization is responsible until the authority is delegated to another person. Thus, on smaller situations where additional persons are not required, the Incident Commander will directly manage all aspects of the incident organization.

Now we will look at each of the major functional entities of the ICS organization starting with the Incident Commander and the Command Staff.

A. Incident Commander and the Command Staff

Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is the person in charge at the incident, and must be fully qualified to manage the incident. As incidents grow in size or become more complex, a more highly qualified Incident Commander may be assigned by the responsible jurisdiction or agency. The Incident Commander may have one or more deputies from the same agency or from other agencies or jurisdictions. Deputies must always be as qualified as the person for whom they work.

The Incident Commander may assign personnel for both a Command Staff and a General Staff. The Command Staff provides Information, Safety, and Liaison services for the entire organization. The General Staff are assigned major functional authority for Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

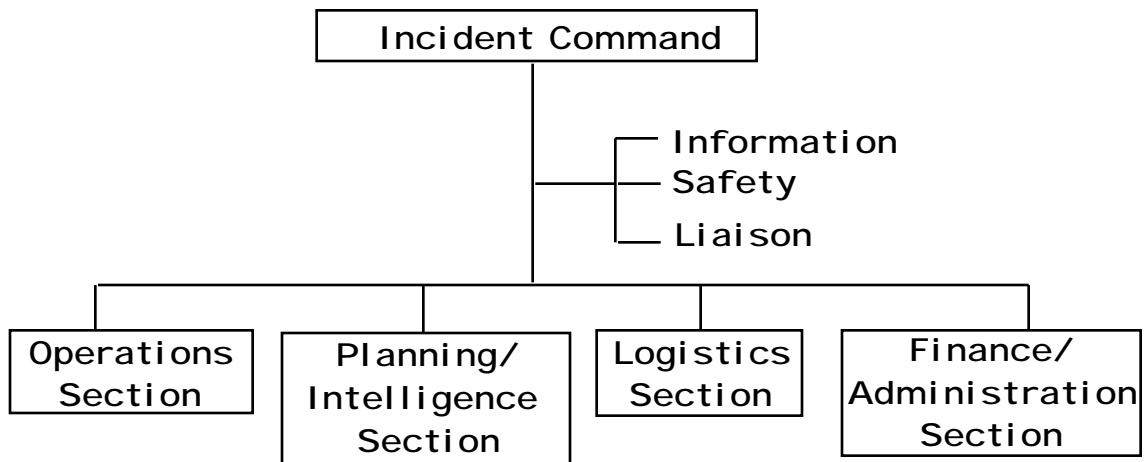
Initially, assigning tactical resources and overseeing operations will be under the direct supervision of the Incident Commander. As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to others as required.

Taking over command at an incident always requires that there be a full briefing for the incoming Incident Commander, and notification that a change in command is taking place.

Command Staff

In addition to the primary incident response activities of Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration, the Incident Commander has responsibility for several other important services. Depending on the size and type of an incident or event, it may be necessary to designate personnel to handle these additional activities.

Persons filling these positions are designated as the Command Staff and are called Officers. The Command Staff is shown in Figure 1-5. There is only one Command Staff position for each of these functions. The Command Staff does not have deputies. However, each of these positions may have one or more assistants if necessary. On large incidents or events, it is not uncommon to see several assistants working for Command Staff Officers.



ICS Command Staff (Figure 1-5)

- **Information Officer** - The Information Officer will be the point of contact for the media, or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event. Although several agencies may assign personnel to an incident or event as Information Officers, there will only be one Incident Information Officer. Others will serve as assistants.
- **Safety Officer** - This individual monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.
- **Liaison Officer** - On larger incidents or events, representatives from other agencies (usually called Agency Representatives) may be assigned to the incident to coordinate their agency's involvement. The Liaison Officer will be their primary contact.

B. The General Staff

The people who perform the four major activities of Operations, Logistics, Planning/Intelligence, and Finance/Administration are designated as the General Staff.

THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM GENERAL STAFF

- **Operations Section Chief**
- **Planning/Intelligence Section Chief**
- **Logistics Section Chief**
- **Finance/Administration Section Chief**

ICS General Staff (Figure 1-6)

Each of the General Staff positions may have one or more Deputy positions if necessary. The role of the deputy position is flexible. The deputy can work with the primary position, work in a relief capacity, or be assigned specific tasks. Deputies should always be as qualified as the person for whom they work.

In large events, especially where multiple agencies or jurisdictions are involved, assigning Deputies from other agencies can greatly increase interagency coordination.

At the Section level, the person in charge will be designated as a Chief. For example, in the Logistics Section, the person in charge will always be called the Logistics Section Chief.

Within the ICS organization, there are a number of organizational elements which can be activated as necessary. Each of the major Sections has the ability to expand internally to meet the needs of the situation.

Let's start with the Operations Section of the ICS organization.

1. Operations Section

The Incident Commander will determine the need for a separate Operations Section at an incident or event. Until Operations is established as a separate Section, the IC will have direct control of tactical resources.

When activating an Operations Section, the IC will assign an individual as the Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section

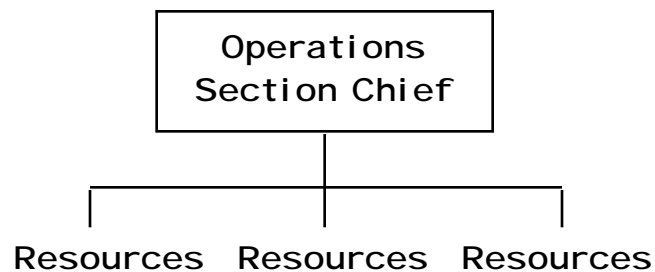
Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives.

There is only one Operations Section Chief for each operational period. That person is normally (but not always) from the jurisdiction or agency which has the greatest involvement either in terms of resources assigned or area of concern. The Operations Section Chief may assign a Deputy from the same agency, or from other agencies or jurisdictions. Using Deputies from other agencies often helps in the coordination of actions.

Within the Operations Section, two additional levels of organization can be used as necessary. These are Divisions and/or Groups, and Branches.

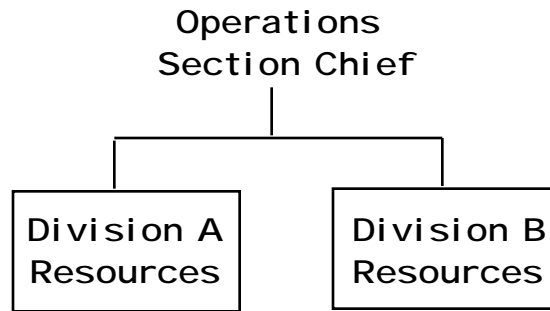
Divisions

The Operations organization usually develops from the bottom up. This is due to the need to expand supervision as more and more resources are applied. For example, the Incident Commander or the Operations Section Chief on an incident may initially work with only a few single resources. This is shown in Figure 1-7.



Single Resources in Operations (Figure 1-7)

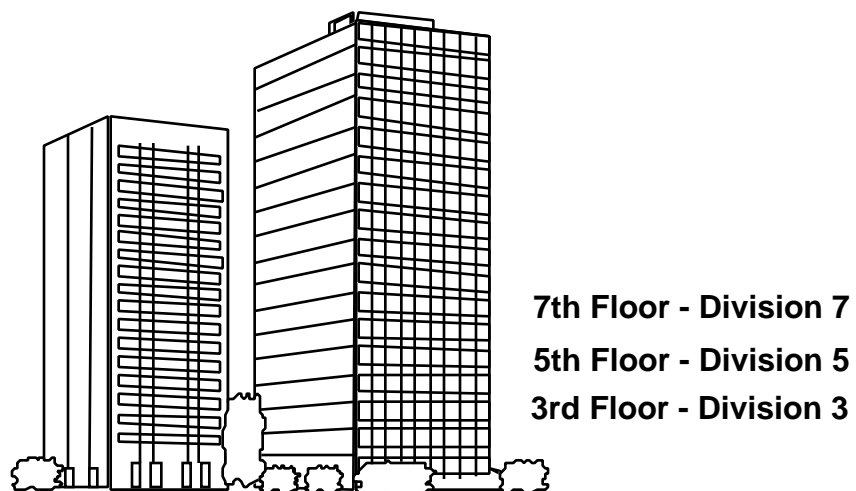
As more resources are added to the incident, another layer of organization may be needed within the Operations Section to maintain proper span of control. Normally, this will be done at the Division or Group level as shown in Figure 1-8.



Examples of Two Divisions Within Operations Section (Figure 1-8)

The goal is to keep the organization as simple and as streamlined as possible, and not to overextend the span of control.

A Division is established to divide an incident geographically. How that will be done will be determined by the needs of the incident. Divisions covering an area on the ground are usually labeled by letters of the alphabet. Within a building, divisions are often designated by floor numbers, i.e., the seventh floor would be Division 7, (see illustration below). The important thing to remember about ICS divisions is that they describe some geographical area related to incident operations.



Example of Divisions Within a Building

Groups

Groups are established to describe functional areas of operation. The kind of group to be established will be determined by the needs of an incident. For example, in an earthquake incident with widespread structural damage, search and rescue activity would be organized geographically, using divisions.

A specialized resource team, using dogs or electronic equipment in an earthquake, or a salvage group in a maritime incident may be designated as functional groups. Groups will work wherever they are needed, and will not be assigned to any single division.

Divisions and Groups can be used together on an incident. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization. One does not supervise the other. When a functional group is working within a division on a special assignment, division and group supervisors must closely coordinate their activities. Division and group supervisors always report to the Incident Commander unless the Operations Section Chief and/or Branch Director positions have been established. Deputies are not used at the Division and Group level.

Branches

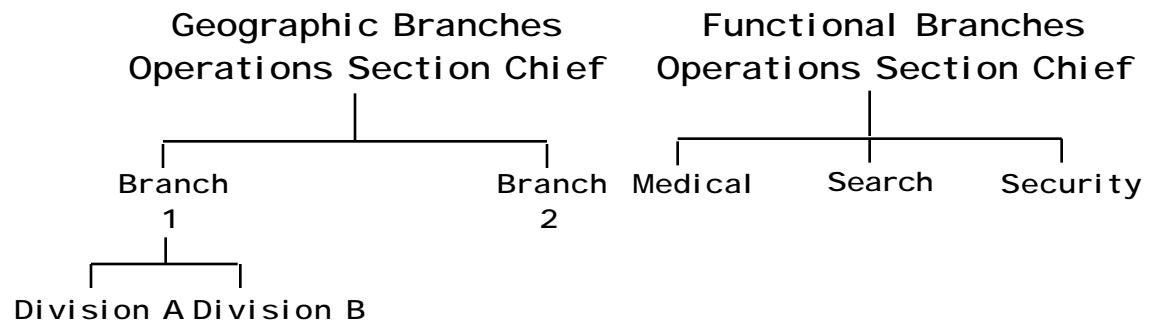
On some incidents, it may be necessary to establish another level of organization within the Operations Section called Branches.

There are generally three reasons to use Branches on an incident or an event.

- **Span of Control** - If the number of Divisions and Groups exceeds the recommended Span of Control, another level of management is necessary. Span of Control will be discussed in more detail later in this module.
- **Need for a Functional Branch Structure** - Some kinds of incidents have multiple disciplines involved, e.g., police, fire, search and rescue, and medical, that may create the need to set up incident operations around a functional branch structure.
- **Multi-jurisdictional Incidents** - In some incidents it may be better to organize the incident around jurisdictional lines. In these

situations, Branches may be set up to reflect differences in the agencies involved. For example, in flooding, earthquake, or wildfire incidents, federal, county, and city property all could be simultaneously affected. One way of organizing operations in these kinds of incidents is to designate a separate Branch for each of the agencies involved.

Various kinds of Branch alignments are shown in Figure 1-9 below.



Options for Establishing Branches Within ICS (Figure 1-9)

Each branch that is activated will have a Branch Director.

Deputies may be used at the Branch level.

There are two other parts of the Operations Section that you may need to understand.

Air Operations

If established separately at an incident, Air Operations will be activated at the Branch level within the Operations Section. Usually this is done on incidents which may have complex needs for the use of aircraft in both tactical and logistical operations.

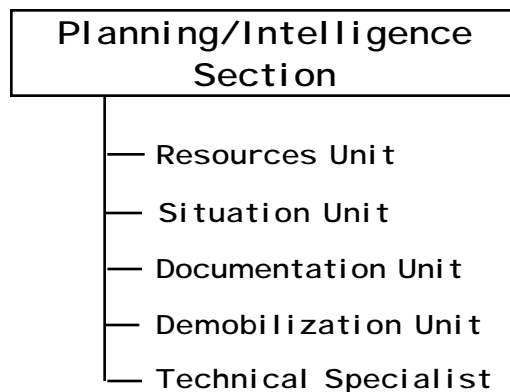
Staging Areas

Staging Areas may be established wherever necessary to temporarily locate resources awaiting assignment. Staging Areas and the resources within them will always be under the control of the Operations Section Chief. Staging Areas will be discussed later under incident facilities.

Summary

There is no one “best” way to organize an incident. The organization should develop to meet the functions required. The characteristics of the incident and the management needs of the Incident Commander will determine what organization elements should be established. The incident organization may change over time to reflect the various phases of the incident.

2. Planning/Intelligence Section



Planning Section (Figure 1-10)

Briefly stated, the major activities of the Planning/Intelligence Section are to:

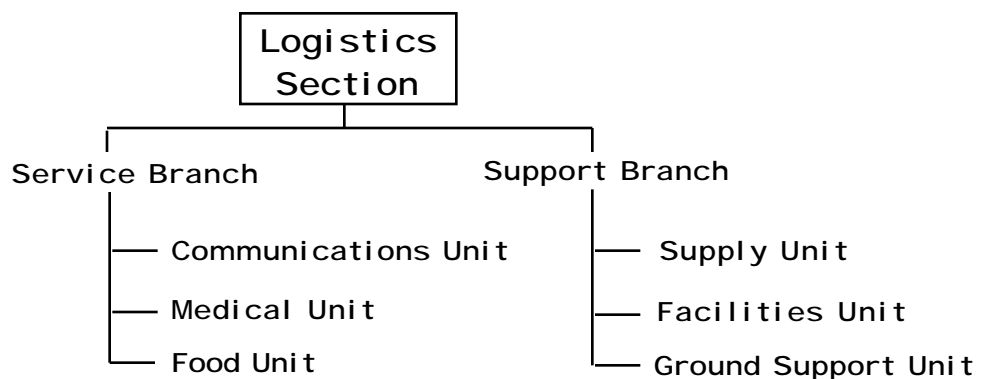
- Collect, evaluate, and display information about the incident.
- Develop Incident Action Plans for each operational period, conduct long-range planning, and develop plans for demobilization at the end of the incident.
- Maintain resource status information on all equipment and personnel assigned to the incident.
- Maintain incident documentation.

Technical Specialists assigned to the incident should report to the Planning/Intelligence Section if established. Depending on their assignment, Technical Specialists may work within the

Planning/Intelligence Section, or be reassigned to other incident areas.

Several Planning/Intelligence Section Units may be established. Duties of each Unit are covered in other modules. Not all of the Units may be required, and they will be activated based upon need. Planning/Intelligence Section Units are shown in Figure 1-10.

3. Logistics Section



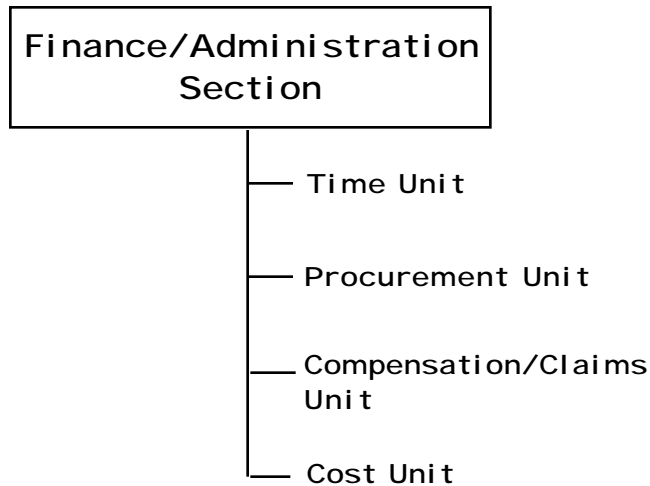
Branches and Units in the Logistics Section (Figure 1-11)

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs of an incident, including obtaining and maintaining essential personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies.

The Incident Commander will determine the need to establish a Logistics Section on the incident. This is usually determined by the size of the incident, complexity of support, and how long the incident may last. Once the IC determines that there is a need to establish a separate Logistics function, an individual will be assigned as the Logistics Section Chief.

Six functional units can be established within the Logistics Section. If necessary, a two-branch structure can be used to facilitate span of control. The titles of the units are self descriptive. Detailed duties of each unit are covered in other modules. Not all of the units may be required, and they will be established based upon need. Branches and Units in the Logistics Section are shown in Figure 1-11.

4. Finance/Administration Section



Finance/Administration Section Units (Figure 1-12)

The IC will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section, and designate an individual to perform that role. If the Finance/Administration Section is not established, the IC will perform all finance functions.

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that may require on-site financial management. Larger incidents are using a Finance/Administration Section to monitor costs.

Smaller incidents may also require certain Finance/Administration functions. 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 for making cost estimates of alternative strategies.

The Finance/Administration Section may establish four units as necessary. Duties of each unit are covered in other modules. Not all of the units may be required, and they will be established based upon need.

Finance/Administration Section Units are shown in Figure 1-12.

C. Organization Terminology

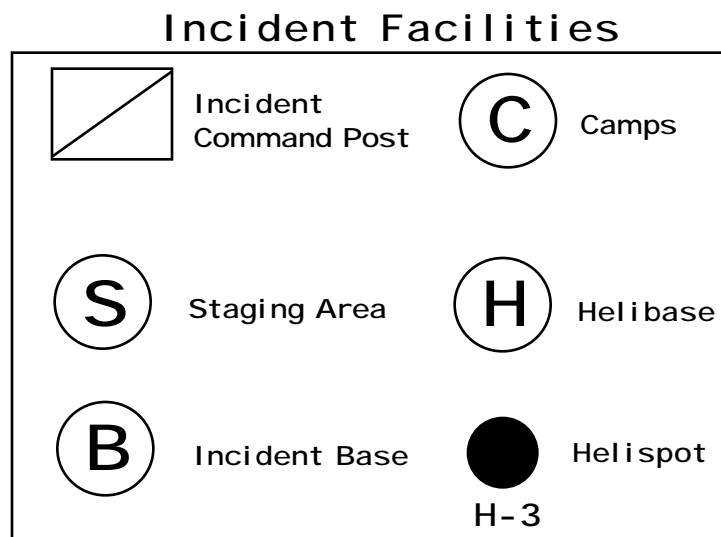
At each level in the ICS organization, individuals with primary responsibility positions have distinctive titles, as shown in Figure 1-13.

Primary Position	Title	Support Position
Incident Commander	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
Section	Chief	Deputy
Branch	Director	Deputy
Division/Group	Supervisor	N/A
Strike Team/Task Force	Leader	N/A
Unit	Leader	Manager
Single Resource	Use Unit Designation	N/A

ICS Organizational Terminology (Figure 1-13)

D. Incident Facilities

Facilities will be established depending on the kind and complexity of the incident or event. It is important to know and understand the names and functions of the principal ICS facilities. Not all of those listed below will necessarily be used.



ICS Facilities (Figure 1-14)

Each of the facilities is briefly described below:

- **Incident Command Post (ICP)** - The location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident operations. There is only one ICP for each incident or event. Every incident or event must have some form of an Incident Command Post.
- **Staging Areas** - Locations at which resources are kept while awaiting incident assignment. Most large incidents will have a Staging Area, and some incidents may have several. Staging Areas will be managed by 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** - The location at the incident at which primary service and support activities are performed. Not all incidents will have a Base. There will only be one Base for each incident.
- **Camps** - Incident locations where resources may be kept to support incident operations. Camps differ from Staging Areas in that essential support operations are done at Camps, and resources at Camps are not always immediately available for use. Not all incidents will have camps.
- **Helibase** - A location in and around an incident area at which helicopters may be parked, maintained, fueled, and equipped for incident operations. Very large incidents may require more than one Helibase.
- **Helispots** - Helispots are temporary locations where helicopters can land and load and off-load personnel, equipment, and supplies. Large incidents may have several Helispots.

E. Incident Action Plan

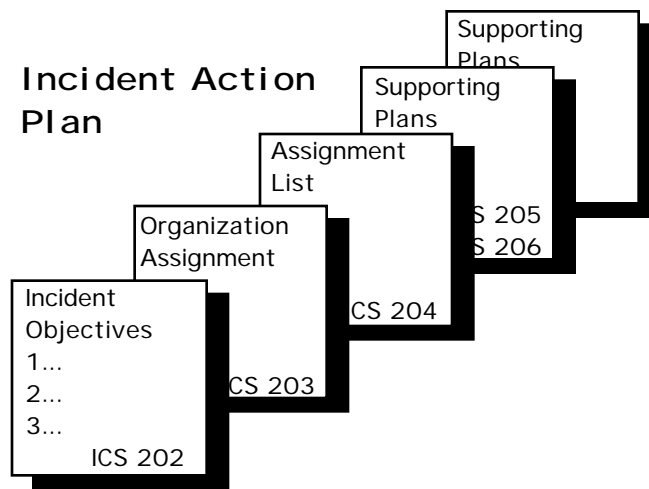
Every incident must have an oral or written action plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with direction for future actions. Action plans which include the measurable tactical operations to be achieved, are always prepared around a time-frame called an Operational Period.

Operational Periods can be of various lengths, but should be no longer than twenty-four hours. Twelve-hour Operational Periods are common on many large incidents. It is not unusual, however, to have much shorter Operational Periods covering, for example, two- or four-hour time periods. The length of an Operational Period will be based on the needs of the incident, and these can change over the course of the incident.

The planning for an Operational Period must be done far enough in advance to ensure that requested resources are available when the Operational Period begins.

Large incidents, which involve a partial or full activation of the ICS organization, should have a written Incident Action Plan. Incidents extending through an Operational Period should also have a written Incident Action Plan to ensure continuity due to personnel changes. The decision to have a written action plan will be made by the Incident Commander.

Several forms have been developed to help in preparing the Incident Action Plan. These are shown in Figure 1-15. They will be discussed in other modules.



Forms Commonly Used in Incident Action Plan (Figure 1-15)

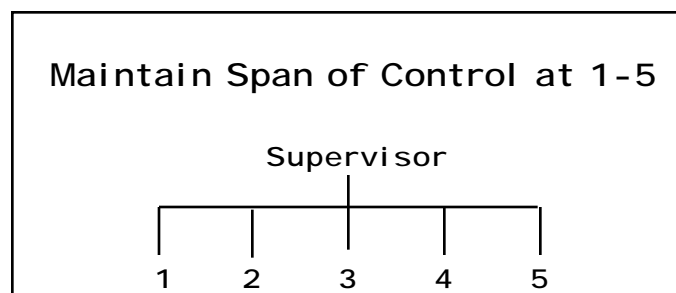
Essential elements in any written or oral Incident Action Plan are:

- Statement of Objectives - Appropriate to the overall incident.
- Organization - Describes what parts of the ICS organization will be in place for each Operational Period.
- Assignments to Accomplish the Objectives - These are normally prepared for each Division or Group and include the strategy, tactics, and resources to be used.
- Supporting Material - Examples can include a map of the incident, communications plan, medical plan, traffic plan, etc.

The Incident Action Plan must be made known to all incident supervisory personnel. This can be done through briefings, by distributing a written plan prior to the start of the Operational Period, or by both methods.

F. Span of Control

Span of Control is a critical management concept in ICS. It refers to the maximum number of resources a person can effectively manage. Effective supervision can be provided in a ratio of one supervisor to 3 to 7 reporting units. However a ratio of 1 to 5 is recommended. If the number of reporting elements falls outside of those ranges, expansion or consolidation of the organization may be necessary. There will be exceptions, for example in some applications specially trained resources, (i.e.; hand crews, squads or teams) may utilize a larger Span of Control.



Recommended ICS Span of Control Guideline (Figure 1-16)

G. Common Responsibilities

There are certain common responsibilities or instructions associated with an incident assignment that everyone assigned to an incident should follow. Following these simple guidelines will make your job easier and result in a more effective operation.

1. Receive your incident assignment from your organization. This should include, at a minimum, a reporting location and time, likely length of assignment, brief description of assignment, travel information, and communication methods. Each responding agency may have additional requirements.
2. Bring any specialized supplies or equipment required for your job. Be sure you have adequate personal supplies to last you for the expected stay.
3. Upon arrival, follow the Check-in procedure for the incident. Check-in locations may be found at:
 - Incident Command Post (at the Resources Unit)
 - Staging Areas
 - Base or Camps
 - Helibases
 - Division or Group Supervisors (for direct assignments)
4. Radio communications on an incident should use clear text, that is, no radio codes. Refer to incident facilities by the incident name, for example, Rossmoor Command Post, or 42nd Street Staging Area. Refer to personnel by ICS title not numeric code or name.
5. Obtain a briefing from your immediate supervisor. Be sure you understand your assignment.
6. Acquire necessary work materials, locate, and set up your work station.
7. Organize and brief any subordinates assigned to you.
8. Brief your relief at the end of each Operational Period and, as necessary, at the time you are demobilized from the incident.

9. Complete required forms and reports and give them to your supervisor or to the Documentation Unit before you leave.
10. Demobilize according to plan.

III. Conclusion

The information you have learned through this short self-study module will provide you with sufficient general background to understand the principles and primary organizational elements of the ICS.

You are encouraged to expand your understanding of ICS by taking other modules or courses.

Please complete the self-study examination starting on the next page.

5. Deputies must always be as qualified as the person for whom they work.

_____ True

_____ False

6. Deputies may be used at which of the following levels of the ICS organization? (check all that apply)

_____ Unit

_____ Section

_____ Command Staff

_____ Divisions/Groups

_____ Branch

7. For each of the organizational elements listed below on the left, designate the number for the appropriate ICS title.

Branch	_____	1. Leader
Section	_____	2. Officer
Division	_____	3. Supervisor
Command Staff	_____	4. Chief
Group	_____	5. Director
		6. Manager

8. Groups and Divisions are at the same organizational level.

_____ True

_____ False

9. List the principal facilities which may be located at an incident.

10. Groups have _____ responsibility.

Divisions have _____ responsibility.

11. The decision to have a written Incident Action Plan is made by:

_____ Operations Section Chief

_____ Incident Commander

_____ Planning/Intelligence Section Chief

_____ Safety Officer

12. Select four essential elements of any written Incident Action Plan.

_____ List of total resources assigned to incident

_____ Objectives

_____ List of agencies involved

_____ Assignments

_____ Supporting plans and material

_____ Organization

_____ Technical Specialist locations

13. Check-in at an incident takes place at: (check all that apply)

- Incident Command Post (at the Resources Unit)
- Facilities Unit
- Staging Areas
- Base or Camps
- Safety Officer
- Procurement Unit
- Helibases
- Division or Group Supervisors (for direct assignments)

14. Operational Periods are how long?

- One hour
- Two hours
- Not over twenty-four hours
- Twelve hours
- No fixed length

15. Air Operations if activated at an incident will be at what organizational level?

- Division Branch
- Unit Group
- Section

16. Span of control at an incident may vary within what range?

- _____ One to five
- _____ Three to seven
- _____ One to three

17. Listed below are the names of various organizational elements found within the ICS organization. Place the letter of the element on the row adjacent to the appropriate ICS Section.

Operations Section = O
Planning/Intel. Section = P
Logistics Section = L
Finance/Admin. Section = F

- a. _____ Cost Unit
- b. _____ Branch
- c. _____ Food Unit
- d. _____ Resources Unit
- e. _____ Communications Unit
- f. _____ Technical Specialists
- g. _____ Division
- h. _____ Documentation Unit
- i. _____ Facilities Unit
- j. _____ Compensation/Claims Unit
- k. _____ Air Operations
- l. _____ Ground Support Unit
- m. _____ Staging Areas
- n. _____ Situation Unit
- o. _____ Time Unit
- p. _____ Medical Unit
- q. _____ Procurement Unit
- r. _____ Demobilization Unit
- s. _____ Group
- t. _____ Supply

18. Name five applications for the use of ICS.

19. Which of the following are general responsibilities associated with an assignment to an incident? (check all that apply)

- Use clear text in all radio communications at an incident.
- Know the names of all Command and General Staff.
- Bring any specialized supplies or equipment required for your job.
- Organize and brief any subordinates assigned to you.
- Prepare an information release for your agency.
- Upon arrival, follow the Check-in procedure for the incident.
- Report directly to a Staging Area.
- Obtain a briefing from your immediate supervisor.
- Ensure that all personnel assigned to you are from the same agency/jurisdiction.
- Demobilize according to plan.
- Attend all planning meetings.
- Brief your relief at the end of each Operational Period.
- Hold a strategy meeting with personnel from your agency.
- Complete required forms and reports and give them to your supervisor or to the Documentation Unit before you leave.
- Acquire necessary work materials, locate, and set up your work station.

20. Name the appropriate ICS organizational element that if activated directs the activities listed below.

- _____ Responsible for Staging Areas.
- _____ Provide support and services to meet incident needs.
- _____ Set objectives and priorities.
- _____ Collects and evaluates information, maintain status.
- _____ Prepares information releases.
- _____ Monitor costs, provide accounting, procurement, and time recording services.
- _____ Develops measures for assuring safety of all personnel.
- _____ Conduct tactical operations, develop tactical objectives, and direct all tactical resources.
- _____ Primary contact for Agency Representatives.