



Incident Command System Operational Description

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INTRODUCTION

The Incident Command System is a standardized on site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

ICS has three primary purposes:

- To provide for the orderly and predictable division of labour
- To provide for the overall safety at the incident or event
- To ensure that the work at the incident or event is performed efficiently and effectively

The system has considerable internal flexibility; it can grow or shrink to meet the changing needs of the incident or event. ICS has been tested in more than 30 years of applications, in emergency and non emergency situations ranging from small to large incidents, by all levels of government as well as the private sector.

In 2002 the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) and member agencies implemented the Incident Command System (ICS) Canadian Version. Several ICS documents and a complete training curriculum were developed and adopted by wildland fire agencies across the country. The CIFFC documentation focused on the organizational structure and processes for managing wildland fires. Through this document, the use of the ICS has been expanded beyond wildland fire response, to provide a system that will enable organizations to manage any incident or event, regardless of cause, size, location or complexity.

ICS presents standardized organizational structure, functions, processes, and terminology. Standardized processes allow all who respond to the same incident to formulate a unified plan to manage the incident. The use of standardized ICS plain-language terminology reduces the risk of miscommunication among the many responders.

The system allows response organizations to utilize only those aspects that are practically suited to a given incident. While the full expansion of the ICS structure may appear complex, this would occur only during complex incidents, and would serve to maintain the optimum span of control by injecting appropriate supervisory levels.

Incidents typically begin and end locally, and are managed on a daily basis at the lowest possible geographical, organizational, and jurisdictional level. However, there are instances in which successful incident management operations depend on the involvement of multiple jurisdictions, levels of government, functional agencies, and/or



first responder disciplines. These instances require effective and efficient coordination across this broad spectrum of organizations and activities.

The ICS framework forms the basis for interoperability and compatibility that will, in turn, enable a diverse set of public and private organizations to conduct well-integrated and effective incident response operations.

Most incidents are managed locally and are typically handled at a local level by emergency response personnel within a single jurisdiction. The majority of responses need go no further. In other instances, incidents that begin with a single response within a single jurisdiction rapidly expand to multidisciplinary, multi-jurisdictional levels requiring significant additional resources and operational support. ICS provides a flexible core mechanism for coordinated and collaborative incident management, whether for incidents where additional resources are required or are provided from different organizations within a single jurisdiction or outside the jurisdiction, or for complex incidents with national, provincial or territorial implications (such as an emerging infectious disease or a bioterrorism attack). When a single incident covers a large geographical area, multiple local emergency management and incident response agencies may be required. The responding “agencies” are defined as the governmental agencies, though in certain circumstances nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private-sector organizations may be included. Effective cross-jurisdictional coordination using processes and systems is absolutely critical in this situation.

ICS is a fundamental form of management established in a standard format, with the purpose of enabling incident managers to identify the key concerns associated with the incident—often under urgent conditions—without sacrificing attention to any component of the command system. ICS is used to organize on-scene operations for a broad spectrum of emergencies from small to complex incidents, both natural and manmade. The field response level is where emergency management / first response personnel, under the command of an appropriate authority, carry out tactical decisions and activities in direct response to an incident. Resources from the Federal, Provincial, Municipal, First Nations, or other local levels, when appropriately deployed, become part of the field ICS as prescribed by the local authority.

As a system, ICS is extremely useful; not only does it provide an organizational structure for incident management, but it also guides the process for planning, building, and adapting that structure. Using ICS for every incident or planned event helps hone and maintain skills needed for the large-scale incidents.



SECTION A: ICS OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS

1 ICS PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES

ICS is based on a series of proven management features tested and proven effective in industry, various levels of government and response agencies. Each of the following ICS features contributes to the strength and efficiency of the overall system.

1.1 Common Terminology

ICS establishes common terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of incident management functions and hazard scenarios. This common terminology covers the following:

1.1.1 Organizational Functions

Major functions and functional units with incident management responsibilities are named and defined. Terminology for the organizational elements is standard and consistent.

1.1.2 Resource Descriptions

Major resources—including personnel, facilities, and major equipment and supply items—that support incident management activities are given common names and are “typed” with respect to their capabilities, to help avoid confusion and to enhance interoperability.

1.1.3 Incident Facilities

Common terminology is used to designate the facilities in the vicinity of the incident area that will be used during the course of the incident.

1.2 Modular Organization

The ICS organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident. When needed, separate functional elements can be established, each of which may be further subdivided to enhance internal organizational management and external coordination. Responsibility for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization ultimately rests with Incident Command, which bases the ICS organization on the requirements of the situation. As incident complexity increases, the organization expands from the top down as functional responsibilities are delegated. Concurrently with structural expansion, the number of management and supervisory positions expands to address the requirements of the incident adequately.

1.3 Management by Objectives



Management by objectives is communicated throughout the entire ICS organization and includes:

- Establishing incident objectives.
- Developing strategies based on incident objectives.
- Developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols.
- Establishing specific, measurable tactics or tasks for various incident management functional activities, and directing efforts to accomplish them, in support of defined strategies.
- Documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective actions.

1.4 Incident Action Planning

Centralized, coordinated incident action planning should guide all response activities. An Incident Action Plan (IAP) provides a concise, coherent means of capturing and communicating the overall incident priorities, objectives, strategies, and tactics in the context of both operational and support activities.

Every incident must have an action plan. However, not all incidents require written plans. The need for written plans and attachments is based on the requirements of the incident and the decision of the Incident Commander (IC) or Unified Command (UC). Most initial response operations are not captured with a formal IAP. However, if an incident is likely to extend beyond one operational period, become more complex, or involve multiple jurisdictions and/or agencies, preparing a written IAP will become increasingly important to maintain effective, efficient, and safe operations.

1.5 Manageable Span of Control

Span of control is key to effective and efficient incident management. Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision. The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span-of-control considerations.

1.6 Incident Facilities and Locations

Various types of operational support facilities are established in the vicinity of an incident, depending on its size and complexity, to accomplish a variety of purposes. The IC will direct the identification and location of facilities based on the requirements of the situation. Typically designated facilities include Incident Command Posts, Bases, Camps, Staging Areas, mass casualty triage areas, point-of-distribution sites, and others as required.



1.7 Comprehensive Resource Management

Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of incident management and emergency response. Resources to be identified in this way include personnel, teams, equipment, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation.

1.8 Integrated Communications

Incident communications are facilitated through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes and architectures. The ICS 205 form is available to assist in developing a common communications plan.

This integrated approach links the operational and support units of the various agencies involved and is necessary to maintain communications connectivity and discipline and to enable common situational awareness and interaction. Preparedness planning should address the equipment, systems, and protocols necessary to achieve integrated voice and data communications.

1.9 Establishment and Transfer of Command

The command function must be clearly established from the beginning of incident operations. The agency with primary jurisdictional authority over the incident designates the individual at the scene responsible for establishing command. When command is transferred, the process must include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.

1.10 Chain of Command and Unity of Command

Chain of command refers to the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Unity of command means that all individuals have a designated supervisor to whom they report at the scene of the incident. These principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate the confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives. Incident managers at all levels must be able to direct the actions of all personnel under their supervision.

1.11 Unified Command

In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement, Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.



1.12 Personnel Accountability

Effective accountability of resources at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas during incident operations is essential. To that end, Check-In/Check-Out, Incident Action Planning, Unity of Command, Personal Responsibility, Span of Control, and Resource Tracking are the principles of personnel accountability, which must be adhered to.

1.13 Dispatch/Deployment

Resources should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority through established resource management systems. Resources not requested must refrain from spontaneous deployment to avoid overburdening the recipient and compounding accountability challenges.

1.14 Information and Intelligence Management

The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.



2 ICS Structure

All incidents or events involve similar management tasks. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with the problem developed and implemented, and the necessary resources acquired and paid for.

ICS provides the structure for effectively managing the following common incident tasks;

- Providing leadership and developing an organizational structure
- Setting goals, objectives, strategies and tactics
- Developing plans and clearly communicating those plans to all involved
- Ensuring the proper equipment and tools are available
- Ensuring the work is done safely
- Tracking the status of the incident
- Evaluating the plan and making adjustments
- Maintaining effective span of control and ordering additional resources as needed
- Tracking costs and ensuring accountability for equipment and personnel
- Managing information and keeping agencies updated
- Authorizing payroll and contract payments
- Processing claims
- Documenting the incident or event

Most incidents or events require a division of labour to accomplish these tasks. The organization of the Incident Command system is built around five major management activities.

Command

Sets objectives and priorities, has overall responsibility at the incident or event

Operations

Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan develops the tactical objectives, organization, and directs all resources

Planning

Develops the action plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates information. Maintains resource status

Logistics

Provides support to meet incident needs, provides resources and all other services needed to support the incident

Finance / Administration

Monitors costs related to incident, provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.



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.

There is no correlation between the organization of ICS and the administrative structure of any single agency or jurisdiction. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and management structures caused significant problems with incident management in the past.

In a single-site emergency, the governing agency with jurisdictional authority responds to the scene, and an Incident Commander (IC) is designated to manage all operations. As the incident grows, the IC begins delegating tasks and filling other command staff and general staff positions as needed.

2.1 INCIDENT COMMAND, COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF

Incident Command is responsible for overall management of the incident. Overall management includes Command Staff assignments required to support the command function. The Command and General Staffs are typically located and direct operations at the Incident Command Post (ICP), which is generally located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site. Normally, one ICP is established for each incident.

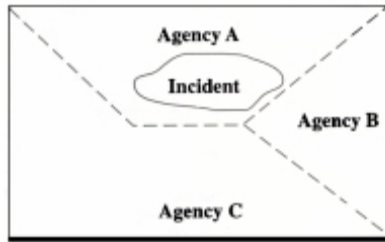
2.2 Incident Command

The command function may be conducted in one of two general ways:

2.2.1 Single Incident Commander

When an incident occurs within a single jurisdiction and there is no jurisdictional or functional agency overlap, a single IC should be designated with overall incident management responsibility by the appropriate jurisdictional authority. (In some cases where incident management crosses jurisdictional and/or functional agency boundaries, a single IC may be designated if agreed upon.) Jurisdictions should consider designating ICs for established Incident Management Teams (IMTs).

Figure 1 Single Command Structure

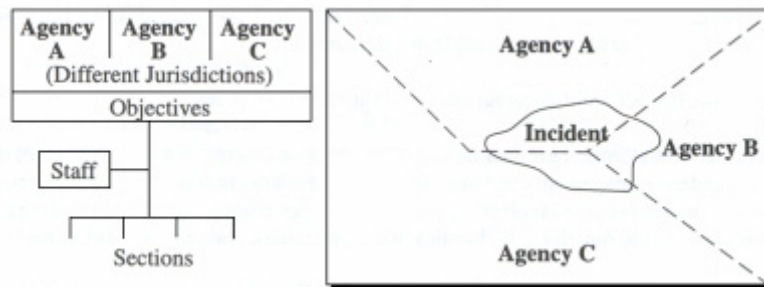


The designated IC will develop the incident objectives on which subsequent incident action planning will be based. The IC will approve the IAP and all requests pertaining to ordering and releasing incident resources.

2.2.2 Unified Command

UC is an important element in multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incident management. It provides guidelines to enable agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively. As a team effort, UC allows all agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for the incident to jointly provide management direction through a common set of incident objectives and strategies and a single IAP. Each participating agency maintains its authority, responsibility, and accountability.

Figure 2 Multiagency Command Structure



Advantages of Using Unified Command

- A single set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is used to develop strategies to achieve incident objectives.
- Information flow and coordination are improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of joint priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's legal authorities will be compromised or neglected.



- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single IAP.

UC functions as a single integrated management organization, which involves:

- Co-located command at the ICP.
- One Operations Section Chief to direct tactical efforts.
- A coordinated process for resource ordering.
- Shared planning, logistical, and finance/administration functions, wherever possible.
- Coordinated approval of information releases.

All agencies in the UC structure contribute to the process of:

- Selecting objectives.
- Determining overall incident strategies.
- Ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities is accomplished in accordance with approved incident objectives.
- Ensuring the integration of tactical operations.
- Approving, committing, and making optimum use of all assigned resources.

The exact composition of the UC structure will depend on the location(s) of the incident (i.e., which geographical jurisdictions or organizations are involved) and the type of incident (i.e., which functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s) or organization(s) are required). The designation of a single IC for some multijurisdictional incidents, if planned for in advance, may be considered in order to promote greater unity of effort and efficiency.

The designated agency officials participating in the UC represent different legal authorities and functional areas of responsibility and use a collaborative process to establish, identify, and rank incident priorities and to determine appropriate objectives consistent with the priorities. Agencies that are involved in the incident but lack jurisdictional responsibility or authorities are defined as supporting and/or assisting agencies. They are represented in the command structure and effect coordination on behalf of their parent agency through the Liaison Officer. Jurisdictional responsibilities of multiple incident management officials are consolidated into a single planning process that includes:

- Responsibilities for incident management.
- Incident objectives.
- Resource availability and capabilities.
- Limitations.
- Areas of agreement and disagreement between agency officials.



Incidents are managed under a single collaborative approach that includes:

- Common organizational structure.
- Single Incident Command Post.
- Unified planning process.
- Unified resource management.

Under UC, the IAP is assembled by the Planning Section and is approved by the UC. A single individual, the Operations Section Chief, directs the tactical implementation of the IAP. The Operations Section Chief will usually come from the organization with the greatest jurisdictional involvement. UC participants will agree on the designation of the Operations Section Chief.

UC works best when the participating members of the UC co-locate at the ICP and observe the following practices:

- Select an Operations Section Chief for each operational period.
- Keep each other informed of specific requirements.
- Establish consolidated incident objectives, priorities, and strategies.
- Establish a single system for ordering resources.
- Develop a consolidated written or oral IAP to be evaluated and updated at regular intervals.
- Establish procedures for joint decision making and documentation.

Comparison of Single IC and UC

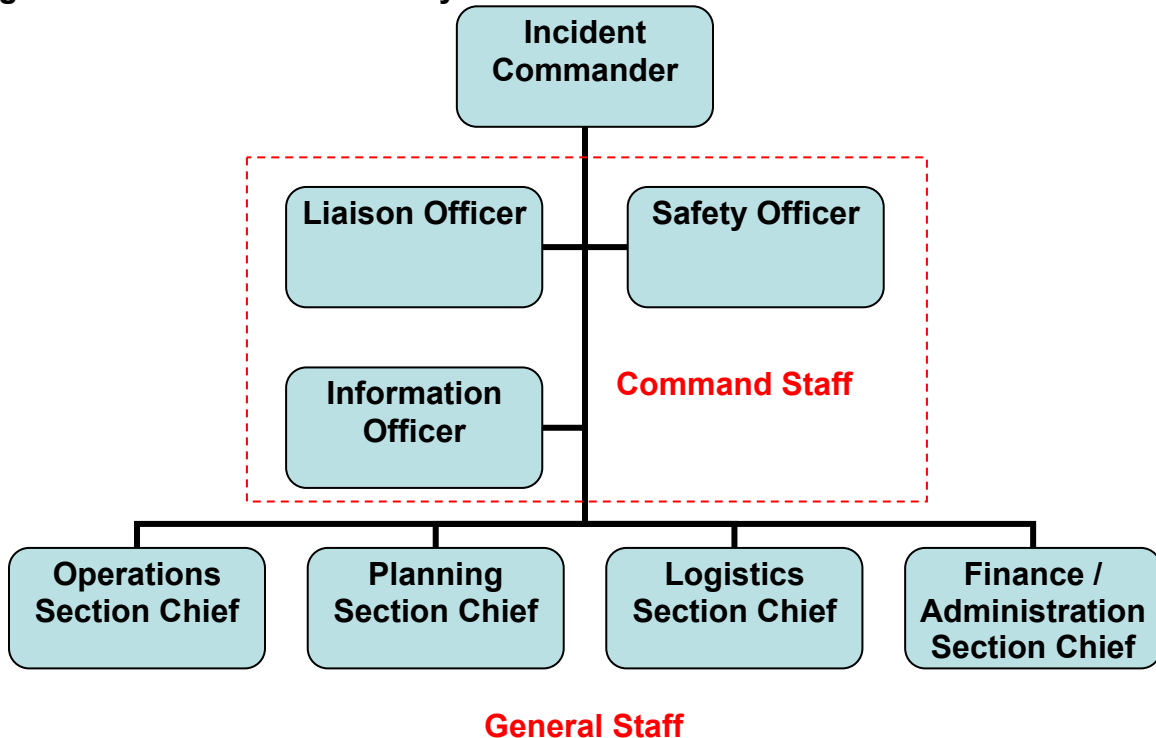
Single Incident Commander:	Unified Command:
<p>The IC is solely responsible (within the confines of his or her authority) for establishing incident objectives and strategies. The IC is directly responsible for ensuring that all functional area activities are directed toward accomplishment of the strategy.</p>	<p>The individuals designated by their jurisdictional or organizational authorities (or by departments within a single jurisdiction) must jointly determine objectives, strategies, plans, resource allocations, and priorities and work together to execute integrated incident operations and maximize the use of assigned resources.</p>

2.3 Command Staff

In an incident command organization, the Command Staff typically includes an Information Officer, a Safety Officer, and a Liaison Officer, who report directly to the IC/UC and may have assistants as necessary (see Figure 3). Additional positions may be required, depending on the nature, scope, complexity, and location(s) of the incident(s), or according to specific requirements established by the IC/UC.



Figure 3. Incident Command System: Command Staff and General Staff



2.4 GENERAL STAFF

The General Staff is responsible for the functional aspects of the incident command structure. The General Staff typically consists of the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Section Chiefs. The Section Chiefs may have one or more deputies assigned, with the assignment of deputies from other agencies encouraged in the case of multi-jurisdictional incidents.

2.5 FUNCTIONAL SECTIONS

2.5.1 Operations Section

This Section is responsible for all tactical activities focused on reducing the immediate hazard, saving lives and property, establishing situational control, and restoring normal operations. Lifesaving and responder safety will always be the highest priorities and the first objectives in the IAP.



2.5.2 Planning Section

The Planning Section collects, evaluates, and disseminates incident situation information and intelligence to the IC/UC and incident management personnel. This Section then prepares status reports, displays situation information, maintains the status of resources assigned to the incident, and prepares and documents the IAP, based on Operations Section input and guidance from the IC/UC.

2.5.3 Logistics Section

The Logistics Section is responsible for all service support requirements needed to facilitate effective and efficient incident management, including ordering resources from off-incident locations. This Section also provides facilities, security (of the incident command facilities and personnel), transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fuel, food services, communications and information technology support, and emergency responder medical services, including inoculations, as required.

2.5.4 Finance and Administration Section

A Finance/Administration Section is established when the incident management activities require on-scene or incident-specific finance and other administrative support services. Some of the functions that fall within the scope of this Section are recording personnel time, maintaining vendor contracts, administering compensation and claims, and conducting an overall cost analysis for the incident. If a separate Section is established, close coordination with the Planning Section and Logistics Section is also essential so that operational records can be reconciled with financial documents.

2.5.5 Intelligence and Investigative Function

Incident management organizations must also establish a system for the collection, analysis, and sharing of information developed during intelligence/investigation efforts. The collection, analysis, and sharing of incident-related intelligence are important elements of ICS. Normally, operational information and situational intelligence are management functions located in the Planning Section. ICS allows for organizational flexibility, so the Intelligence/Investigations Function can be embedded in several different places within the organizational structure. In some circumstances, intelligence and investigations may be added as a sixth functional area.



3 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS

An Incident management team (IMT) is an incident command organization made up of the Command and General Staff members and other appropriate personnel in an ICS organization and can be deployed or activated, as needed. Provincial, Territorial and some local IMTs have formal certification and qualification, notification, deployment, and operational procedures in place. In other cases, IMTs are formed at an incident or for specific events. The level of training and experience of the IMT members, coupled with the IMT's identified formal response requirements and responsibilities, are factors in determining an IMT's type, or level.



4 INCIDENT COMPLEX: MULTIPLE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WITHIN A SINGLE ICS ORGANIZATION

An Incident Complex refers to two or more individual incidents located in the same general area that are assigned to a single IC or a UC. When an Incident Complex is established over several individual incidents, the general guideline is that the previously identified incidents become Branches within the Operations Section of the IMT. This provides greater potential for future expansion if required. Each Branch thus has the increased flexibility to establish Divisions or Groups. Additionally, because Divisions and Groups may already have been established at each of the incidents, the same basic structure can be propagated. If any of the incidents within a complex has the potential to become a large-scale incident, it is best to establish it as a separate incident with its own ICS organization.

The following are examples where a complex may be appropriate:

- An earthquake, tornado, flood, or other situation where many separate incidents are occurring in close proximity.
- Several similar incidents are occurring in close proximity to one another (such as large wildland fires).
- One incident underway with an IMT assigned, with other smaller incidents occurring in the same area.

A complex may be managed under a single IC or a UC. The following are additional considerations for the use of a complex:

- The incidents are close enough to be managed by the same IMT.
- A combined management approach could achieve some staff or logistical support economies.
- The number of overall incidents within the jurisdiction requires consolidations wherever possible to conserve staff and reduce costs.
- A single Incident Command can adequately provide Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration activities to the complex.



5 AREA COMMAND

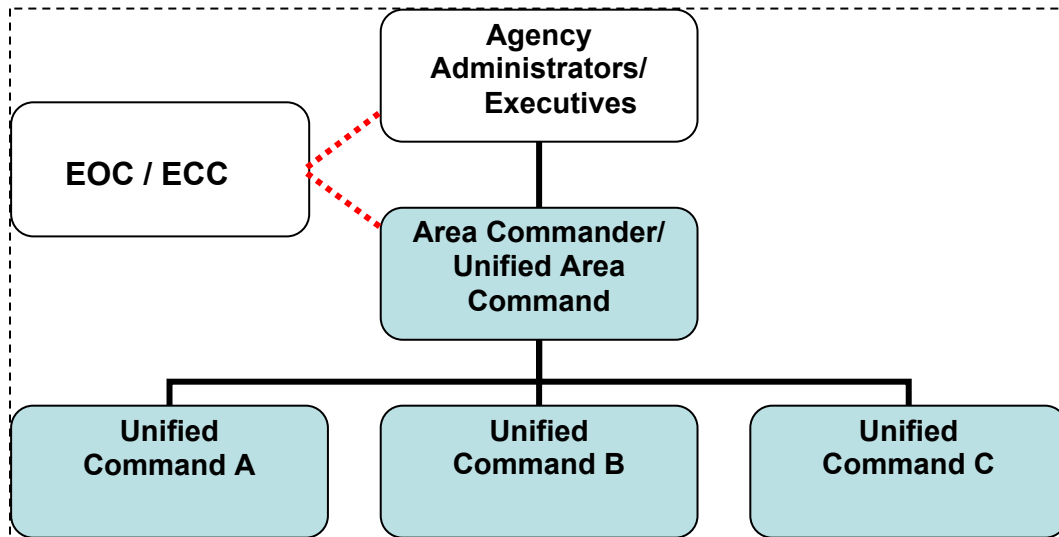
Area Command is an organization to oversee the management of multiple incidents handled individually by separate ICS organizations or to oversee the management of a very large or evolving incident engaging multiple IMTs. An Agency Administrator/Executive or other public official with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. An Area Command is activated only if necessary, depending on the complexity of the incident and incident management span-of-control considerations.

Area Commands are particularly relevant to incidents that are typically not site specific, are not immediately identifiable, are geographically dispersed, and evolve over longer periods of time (e.g., public health emergencies, earthquakes, tornadoes, civil disturbances, and any geographic area where several IMTs are being used and these incidents are all requesting similar resources). Incidents such as these require a coordinated intergovernmental, NGO, and private-sector response, with large-scale coordination typically conducted at a higher jurisdictional level. Area Command is also used when a number of incidents of the same type in the same area are competing for the same resources, such as multiple hazardous material incidents, spills, or fires.

When incidents are of different types and/or do not have similar resource demands, they are usually handled as separate incidents or are coordinated through an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) . If the incidents under the authority of the Area Command span multiple jurisdictions, a Unified Area Command should be established (see Figure 8). This allows each jurisdiction to have appropriate representation in the Area Command.

Area Command oversees management coordination of the incident(s), while the communications/dispatch centre or EOC/ECC, coordinates support.

Figure 4. Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships



The dotted line connecting the EOC/ECC with the Agency administrators/Executives and Area Commander/Unified Area Command represents the coordination and communication link between an EOC/ECC and the Command structure.



SECTION B: ICS ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

ICS is used for a broad spectrum of incidents, from routine to complex, both naturally occurring and human caused, by all levels of government—federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, First Nations, and other local—as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. It is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in incident management activities.

Some of the more important “transitional steps” that are necessary to apply ICS in the incident scene environment include the following:

- Recognizing and anticipating the requirement that organizational elements be activated and taking the necessary steps to delegate authority, as appropriate.
- Establishing incident facilities as needed, located to support field operations.
- Establishing the use of common terminology for organizational elements, position titles, facilities, and resources.
- Rapidly evolving from oral direction to the development of a written Incident Action Plan (IAP).

The major elements of ICS are organized into the following 10 areas:

1. ICS Organization
2. The Operations Section
3. The Planning Section
4. The Logistics Section
5. The Finance/Administration Section
6. Establishing an Area Command
7. Facilities and Locations
8. The Planning Process and the IAP
9. ICS Forms
10. Summary of Major ICS Positions



1 ICS ORGANIZATION

1.1 FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

The Incident Command System comprises five major functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. (A sixth functional area, Intelligence/Investigations, may be established if required.)

1.2 MODULAR EXPANSION

The ICS organizational structure is modular, extending to incorporate all elements necessary for the type, size, scope, and complexity of an incident. It builds from the top down; responsibility and performance begin with Incident Command. When the need arises, four separate Sections can be used to organize the General Staff. Each of these Sections may have several subordinate units, or Branches, depending on the incident's management requirements. If one individual can simultaneously manage all major functional areas, no further organization is required. If one or more of the functions requires independent management, an individual is assigned responsibility for that function.

To maintain a manageable span of control, the initial responding Incident Commander (IC) may determine it necessary to delegate functional management to one or more Section Chiefs. The Section Chiefs may further delegate management authority for their areas, as required. A Section Chief may establish Branches, Groups, Divisions, or Units, depending on the Section. Similarly, each functional Unit Leader will further assign individual tasks within the Unit, as needed.

The use of deputies and assistants is a vital part of both the organizational structure and the modular concept. The IC may have one or more deputies, who may be from the same or an assisting agency. Deputies may also be used at Section and Branch levels of the organization. A deputy, whether at the Command, Section, or Branch level, must be fully qualified to assume the position.

The primary reasons to designate a Deputy IC are:

- To perform specific tasks as requested by the IC.
- To perform the incident command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period; in this case, the deputy will then assume the primary role).
- To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Assistants are used as subordinates to the Command Staff, which includes the Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They have a level of technical capability, qualifications, and responsibility subordinate to the primary positions. The modular concept described above is based on the following considerations:



- Developing the organization’s structure to match the function or task to be performed.
- Staffing only the functional elements required to perform the task.
- Implementing recommended span-of-control guidelines.
- Performing the function of any non-activated organizational element at the next highest level.
- Deactivating organizational elements no longer required.

For reference, Table 2 describes the distinctive title assigned to each element of the ICS organization at each corresponding level, as well as the leadership title corresponding to each individual element.

Table 1. ICS Organization

Organizational Element	Leadership Position Title	Support Positions
Incident Command	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
Section	Section Chief	Deputy
Branch	Branch Director	Deputy
Divisions and Groups	Supervisors	N/A
Unit	Unit Leader	Manager, Coordinator
Strike Team/Task Force	Leader	NA
Single Resource Boss	Boss	N/A
Technical Specialist	Specialist	N/A

1.2.1 Command Staff

In an ICS organization, Incident Command consists of the Incident Commander and various Command Staff positions. The Command Staff are specifically designated, report directly to the Incident Commander, and are assigned responsibility for key activities that are not a part of the General Staff functional elements. Three staff positions are typically identified in ICS: Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. Additional positions may be required, such as technical specialists, depending on the nature, scope, complexity, and location(s) of the incident(s), or according to specific requirements established by the IC.



1.2.1.2 Information Officer

The Information Officer is responsible for interfacing with the public and media and with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The Information Officer assembles accurate, accessible, and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; the resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external audiences. The Information Officer may also perform a key public information-monitoring role, such as implementing measures for rumour control. Whether the command structure is single or unified, only one Information Officer should be designated per incident. Assistants may be assigned from other involved departments or agencies. The IC must approve the release of all incident-related information. In large-scale incidents or where multiple command posts are established, the Information Officer should participate in or lead the Joint Information Centre in order to ensure consistency in the provision of information to the public.

1.2.1.3 Safety Officer

The Safety Officer monitors incident operations and advises Incident Command on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel. The ultimate responsibility for the safe conduct of incident management operations rests with the IC or Unified Command (UC) and supervisors at all levels of incident management. In turn, the Safety Officer is responsible for developing the Incident Safety Plan—the set of systems and procedures necessary to ensure ongoing assessment of hazardous environments, coordination of multiagency safety efforts, and implementation of measures to promote emergency management/incident personnel safety, as well as the general safety of incident operations. The Safety Officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts during incident operations.

In a UC structure, a single Safety Officer should be designated regardless of the involvement of multiple jurisdictions or functional agencies. The Safety Officer, Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, and Logistics Section Chief must coordinate closely regarding operational safety and emergency responder health and safety issues. The Safety Officer must also ensure the coordination of safety management functions and issues across jurisdictions, across functional agencies, and with NGOs and the private sector.

It is important to note that the agencies, organizations, or jurisdictions that contribute to joint safety management efforts do not lose their individual identities or responsibility for their own programs, policies, and personnel. Rather, each contributes to the overall effort to protect all responder personnel involved in incident operations.

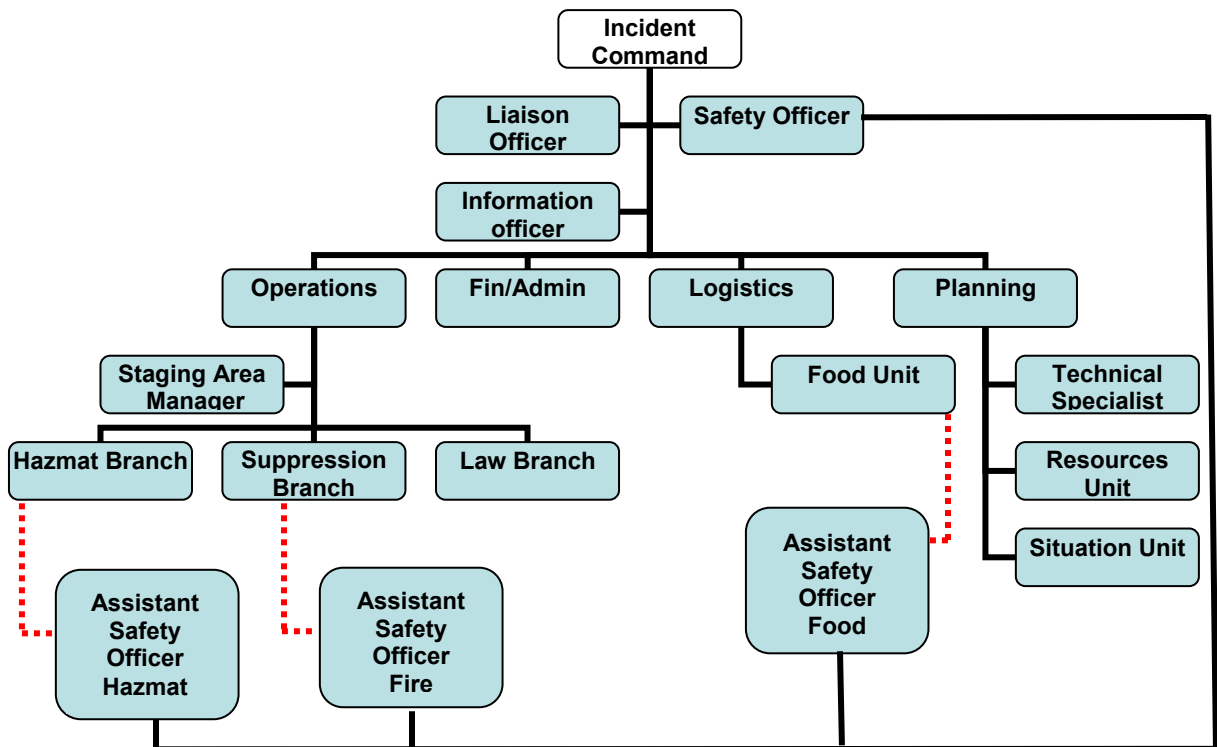
Assistant Safety Officers may be assigned from departments or agencies constituting the UC. Some types of incidents, such as a hazardous materials incident, require Assistant Safety Officers to have special skill sets. The Assistant Safety Officer positions described below are examples of such positions, and Figure 9 illustrates how the Safety Officer and example Assistant Safety Officers could be positioned in an



incident.

- The Assistant Safety Officer for hazardous materials would be assigned to ensure that legislation and guidelines for the disposal of hazardous materials or waste is followed. This person should have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide oversight for specific hazardous material operations at the field level.
- The Assistant Safety Officer for fire would be assigned to assist the Branch Director providing oversight for specific fire operations. This person would have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide this function.
- The Assistant Safety Officer for food would be assigned to the Food Unit to provide oversight of food handling and distribution. This person would have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide this function. An example would be a food specialist from a local health department.

Figure 5. Example of the Role of Safety Officer and Assistant Safety Officers in ICS in a Multi-branch Incident



1.2.1.4 Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is Incident Command's point of contact for representatives of other governmental departments and agencies, NGOs, and/or the private sector (with no jurisdiction or legal authority) to provide input on their organization's policies, resource



availability, and other incident-related matters. In either a single or unified command structure, representatives from assisting or cooperating organizations coordinate through the Liaison Officer. Organizational representatives assigned to an incident must have the authority to speak for their parent agencies and/or organizations on all matters, following appropriate consultations with their agency leadership. Assistants and personnel from NGOs and the private sector involved in incident management activities may be assigned to the Liaison Officer to facilitate coordination.

1.2.1.5 Additional Command Staff

Additional Command Staff positions may also be necessary depending on the nature and location(s) of the incident, or specific requirements established by Incident Command. For example, a legal counsel may be assigned to the Planning Section as a technical specialist or directly to the Command Staff to advise Incident Command on legal matters, such as emergency proclamations, legality of evacuation orders, isolation and quarantine, and legal rights and restrictions pertaining to media access. Similarly, a medical advisor may be designated and assigned directly to the Command Staff to provide advice and recommendations to Incident Command in the context of incidents involving medical and mental health services, mass casualty response, acute care, vector control, epidemiology, or mass prophylaxis considerations, particularly in the response to a bioterrorism incident.



2 THE OPERATIONS SECTION

The Operations Section is responsible for managing operations directed toward reducing the immediate hazard at the incident site, saving lives and property, establishing situation control, and restoring normal conditions. Incidents can include, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous material spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, acts of terrorism, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other incidents requiring an emergency response.

Because of its functional management structure, ICS is applicable across a spectrum of incidents differing in size, scope, and complexity. The types of agencies that could be included in the Operations Section include fire, law enforcement, public health, public works, and emergency services. Depending on the situation, these agencies may work together as a unit or in various combinations. Many incidents may involve government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector as partners in the Operations Section.

Incident operations can be organized and executed in many ways. The specific method selected will depend on the type of incident, the agencies involved, and the objectives and strategies of the incident management effort. The following discussion presents several different methods of organizing tactical operations in response to an incident. In some cases, the approach will be strictly functional. In other cases, a method will be selected to accommodate jurisdictional boundaries. In still others, a mix of functional and geographical approaches may be appropriate. While ICS organizational management is directly correlated with the size and complexity of the incident, the need to maintain a manageable span of control for all resources means that the number of subordinate units or single resources is what drives the functions of ICS. ICS offers extensive flexibility in determining the appropriate approach using the factors described above.

2.1 OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

The Operations Section Chief (OSC) directly manages all incident tactical activities and implements the IAP. The OSC may have one or more deputies, preferably from other agencies in multijurisdictional incidents. An OSC should be designated for each operational period and will have direct involvement in the development of the IAP for the next operational period of responsibility.

2.2 BRANCHES

Branches may be established to meet several challenges:

2.2.1 Maintaining Recommended Span of Control for the OSC

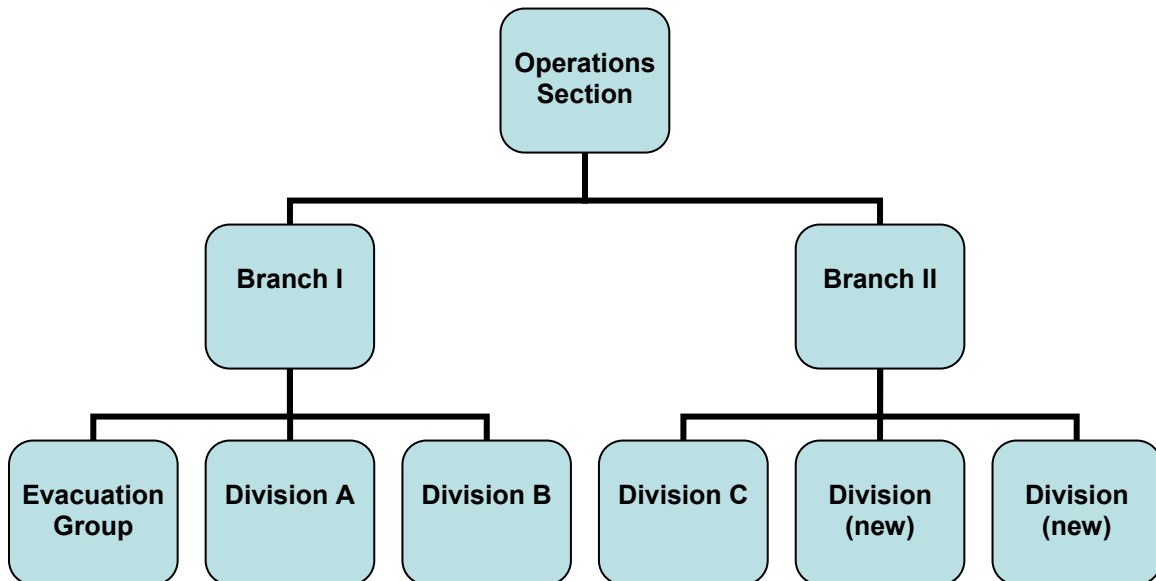
The operations Section develops from the bottom up by first establishing Divisions,



Groups and, if necessary Branches, The recommended span of control for the OSC is 1:5—as for all managers and supervisory personnel—or as high as 1:10 for larger scale law enforcement operations. When this is exceeded, the OSC should set up two Branches (see Figure 10) allocating the Divisions and Groups between them. For example, if one Group and four Divisions are reporting to the OSC, and two Divisions and one Group are to be added, a two-Branch organization may be formed.

The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all have an influence on span-of-control considerations.

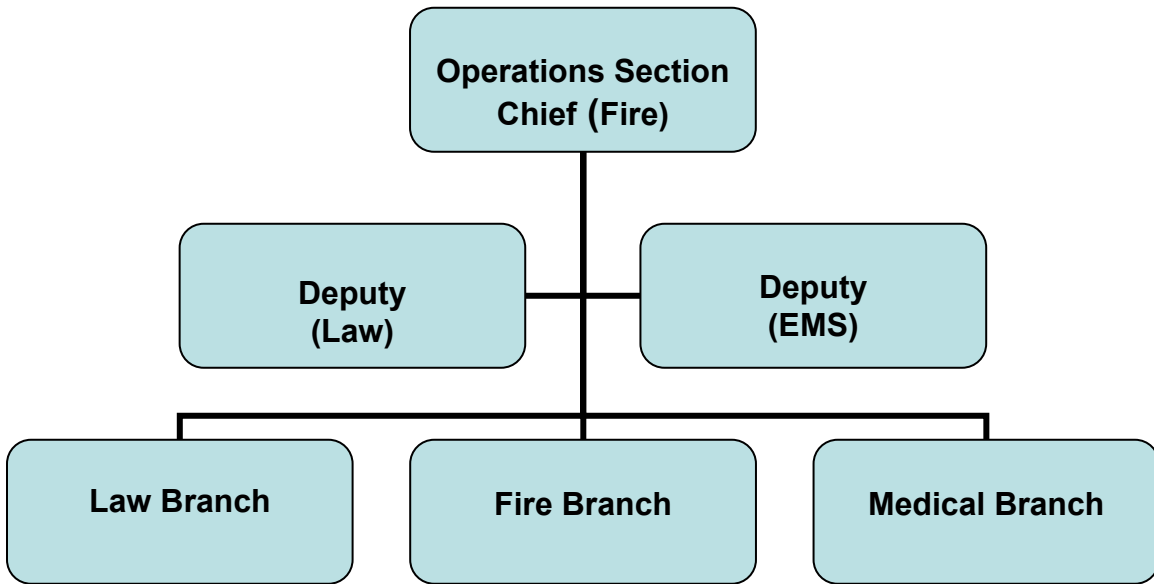
Figure 6. Geographic Branch Organization



2.2.2 Incident Calls for a Functional Branch Structure

A functional Branch structure can be illustrated through an example: If a large aircraft crashes in a city, various departments within the city (including police, fire, emergency services, and public health services) might each have a functional Branch operating under the direction of a single Operations Section Chief. In this example (shown in Figure 7), the Operations Section Chief is from the fire department, with deputies from police and emergency medical services (EMS). Other alignments could be made, depending on the city plan and type of emergency. Note that, in this situation, the command structure could be either single or unified, depending on the jurisdiction.

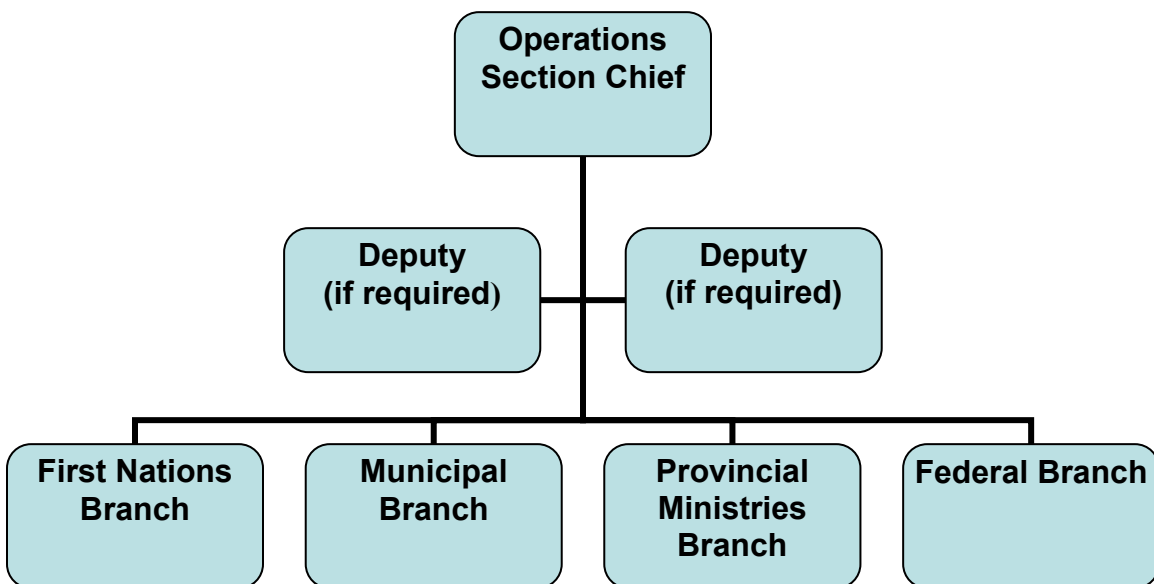
Figure 7. Deputy Operations with Functional Branch Structure



2.2.3. Incident Calls for a Multijurisdictional Branch Structure

The response to a major flood might require combining Federal, Provincial, First Nations, and local resources. In this case, resources are best managed under the agencies that normally control them, creating a multijurisdictional Branch structure, as illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Multijurisdictional Incident





2.3 DIVISIONS AND GROUPS

Divisions and Groups are established when the number of resources exceeds the Operations Section Chief's manageable span of control. Divisions separate physical or geographical areas of operation within the incident area. Groups separate functional areas of operation for the incident.

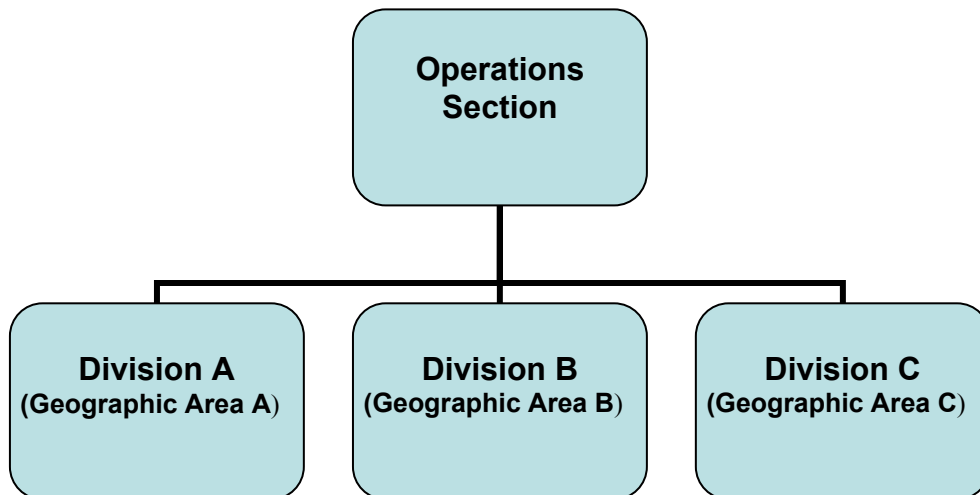
The use of the two terms is necessary, because *Division* always refers to a geographical assignment and *Group* always refers to a functional assignment. Both Divisions and Groups may be used in a single incident. Maintaining proper coordination is vital to the success of these operations.

As additional types of resources are added to the organization, resources should be assigned into a Division structure.

2.3.1 Geographical Divisions

One way to create geographical Divisions is to separate an area according to natural terrain boundaries or other prominent geographical features, such as rivers. When geographical features are used for determining boundaries, the size of the Division should correspond to appropriate span-of-control guidelines (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Use of Geographical Divisions

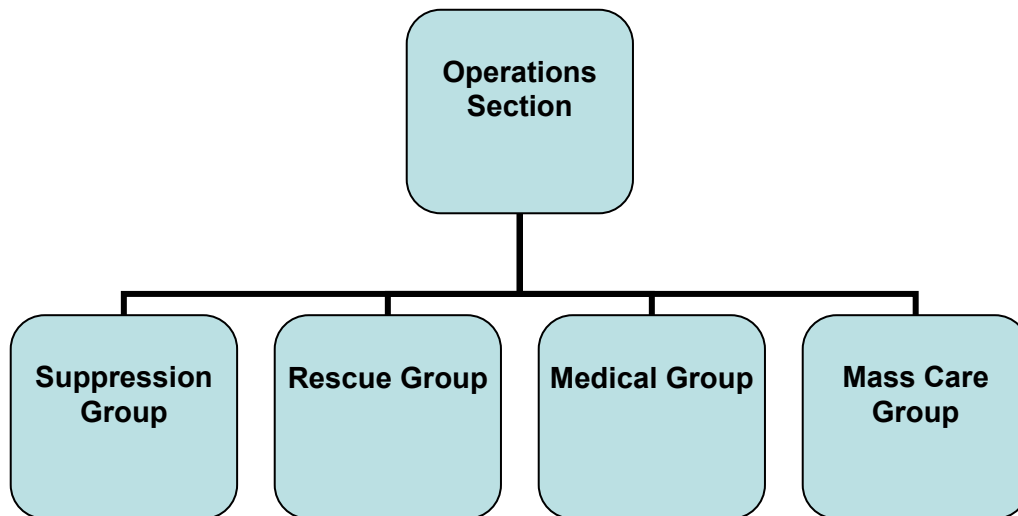


On some large incidents, such as wildland fires, with challenging or difficult terrain and limited access, Divisions may be further sub-divided into Sectors.

2.3.2 Functional Groups

Functional Groups can be used to describe areas of like activity (e.g., rescue, evacuation, or medical), as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Use of Functional Groups



2.3.3 Combined Geographical Divisions and Functional Groups

It is also possible to have both Divisions and Groups within the Operations Section. For example, Divisions A, B, and C (based on geographical locations) may work in conjunction with functional Groups assigned to specific tasks (e.g., traffic control and smoke ventilation) in those locations. Alternatively, Groups may be assigned throughout the entire incident and may work independently or in conjunction with Divisions. Organizationally, the Supervisors of Divisions and Groups have the same level of authority.

2.4 RESOURCE ORGANIZATION

Initially, in any incident, responding individual resources (single resources, Strike Teams, and Task Forces) will report directly to the IC/UC. Task Forces and Strike Teams are an effective way to reduce the span of control over a large number of single resources. As the incident grows in size or complexity, these individual resources may operate within Divisions and/or Groups.

2.4.1 Single Resources

Resources may be employed on a single basis, such as individual personnel, equipment, and any associated operators. This is typically the case in the context of the initial response to the incident.

2.4.2 Task Forces

Task Forces are any combination of resources convened to accomplish a specific mission and can be ad hoc or planned. Task Forces include a designated leader and operate with common communications. Several key resource elements can be managed under one individual's supervision, thus aiding in span of control. As an



example, during a flood incident, a public works Task Force might be established, with the mission of opening storm drains. It might consist of a dump truck, a backhoe, a front loader, a five-person crew with shovels and transportation, and a Task Force Leader (e.g., public works foreman with vehicle and communications).

2.4.3. Strike Teams

A Strike Team consists of a set number of resources of the same kind and type operating under a designated leader with common communications between them. Strike Teams represent known capability and are highly effective management units. As an example, for a fire response a Strike Team could consist of five Type I engines and a Strike Team Leader. The Strike Team Leader is required to have a vehicle with communication capabilities to communicate with his or her team.

2.5 AIR OPERATIONS BRANCH

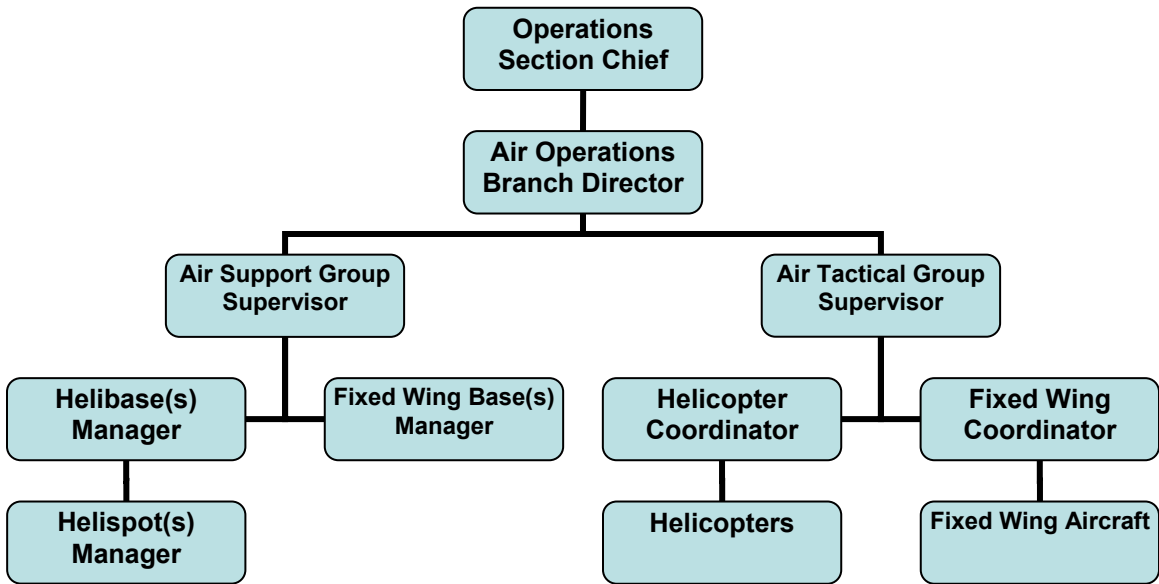
The Operations Section Chief may establish an Air Operations Branch and designate its director, when the complexity of air operations requires additional support and effort or when the incident requires mixing tactical and logistical utilization of helicopters and other aircraft. Aviation safety is a paramount concern in complex operations, and a designated Air Operations Branch ensures the safe and efficient use of aviation resources. Figure 11 shows a typical fully expanded organizational structure for air operations.

Whenever helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft must operate simultaneously within the incident airspace, an Air Tactical Group Supervisor should be designated. This individual coordinates all airborne activity with the assistance of a helicopter coordinator and a fixed-wing coordinator. When only one helicopter is used, however, the helicopter may be directly under the control of the Operations Section Chief.

The Air Support Group establishes and operates bases for rotary-wing air assets and maintains required liaison with off-incident fixed-wing bases. The Air Support Group is responsible for all timekeeping for aviation resources assigned to the incident.



Figure 11. Air Operations Organization

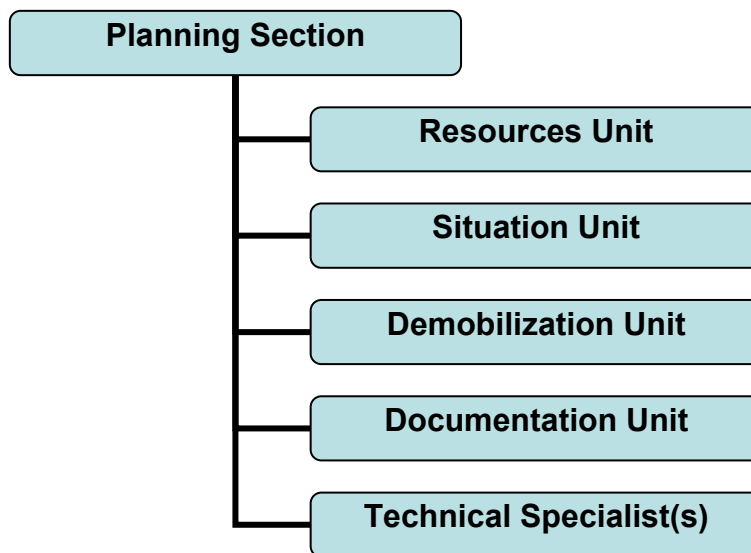




3 THE PLANNING SECTION

The Planning Section is responsible for collecting, evaluating, and disseminating operational information pertaining to the incident. This Section maintains information and intelligence on the current and forecasted situation, as well as the status of resources assigned to the incident. The Planning Section prepares and documents Incident Action Plans and incident maps, and gathers and disseminates information and intelligence critical to the incident. The Planning Section has four primary Units (Resources, Situation, Documentation, and Demobilization) and may also include technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation and forecasting requirements for additional personnel and equipment.

Figure 12. Planning Section Organization



3.1 PLANNING SECTION CHIEF

The Planning Section Chief oversees all incident-related data gathering and analysis regarding incident operations and assigned resources, conducts Planning Meetings, and prepares the IAP for each operational period. This individual will normally come from the jurisdiction with primary incident responsibility and may have one or more deputies from other participating jurisdictions.



3.2 RESOURCES UNIT

3.2.1. Responsibilities

The Resources Unit makes certain that all assigned personnel and resources have checked in at the incident. Resources consist of personnel, teams, crews, aircraft, and equipment available for assignment to or employment during an incident. The Resources Unit maintains a system for keeping track of the current location and status of all assigned resources and maintains a master list of all resources committed to incident operations.

3.2.2 Resource Status

Resources must be categorized by kind and type (capability and capacity), and resource status must be tracked continuously to manage them effectively during an incident. The following status conditions and procedures are used for maintaining an up-to-date and accurate picture of resource status.

3.2.2.1 Status Conditions

Tactical resources at an incident can have one of three status conditions:

- **Assigned:** Resources that are checked in and are cleared to work on an incident.
- **Available:** Personnel, teams, equipment, or facilities that have been assigned to an incident and are ready for a specific work detail or function.
- **Out of Service:** Assigned resources that are unable to function for mechanical, personal, or health reasons.

3.2.2.2 Changes in Status

Typically, when the status of a resource has changed (e.g., a unit that was previously listed as “out of service” is reclassified as “available”), the Unit Leader or the supervisor who approved the status change should immediately notify the Resources Unit Leader, who, in turn, will make the appropriate status reclassification.

3.3 SITUATION UNIT

The Situation Unit collects, processes, and organizes ongoing situation information; prepares situation summaries; and develops projections and forecasts of future events related to the incident. The Situation Unit prepares maps and also gathers and disseminates information and intelligence for use in the IAP. This Unit should be prepared to provide timely situation reports as scheduled or at the request of the Planning Section Chief or IC. This Unit may also require the expertise of technical specialists.



3.4 DOCUMENTATION UNIT

The Documentation Unit maintains accurate and complete incident files, including a complete record of the major steps taken to resolve the incident; provides duplication services to incident personnel; and files, maintains, and stores incident files for legal, analytical, and historical purposes. This Unit compiles and publishes the IAP and maintains the files and records that are developed as part of the overall IAP and planning function.

3.5 DEMOBILIZATION UNIT

The Demobilization Unit develops an Incident Demobilization Plan that includes specific instructions for all personnel and resources that will require demobilization. This Unit should begin its work early in the incident, creating rosters of personnel and resources, and obtaining any missing information as check-in proceeds. Note that many municipal provided resources are local, and as such do not require specific demobilization instructions. Once the Incident Demobilization Plan has been approved, the Demobilization Unit ensures that it is distributed both at the incident and elsewhere as necessary.

3.6 TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

ICS is designed to function in a wide variety of incident scenarios that require the use of technical specialists. These personnel have special skills and are activated only when needed. Specialists may serve anywhere within the organization, including the Command Staff. No specific incident qualifications are prescribed or required, as technical specialists normally perform the same duties during an incident that they perform in their everyday jobs, and they are typically certified in their fields or professions.

Technical specialists are most often assigned to the specific area (Section, Branch, Unit, Division, etc.) where their services are needed and performed. In some situations they may be assigned to a separate Unit within the Planning Section, much like a talent pool, and assigned out to various jobs on a temporary basis. For example, a tactical specialist may be sent to the Operations Section to assist with tactical matters, a financial specialist may be sent to the Finance/Administration Section to assist with fiscal matters, or a legal specialist or legal counsel may be assigned directly to the Command Staff to advise the IC/UC on legal matters, such as emergency proclamations, legality of evacuation orders, isolation and quarantine, and legal rights and restrictions pertaining to media access. Generally, if the expertise is needed for only a short period and involves only one individual, that individual should be assigned to the Situation Unit. If the expertise will be required on a long-term basis and requires several persons, it is advisable to establish a separate Technical Unit in the Planning Section.



A specific example of the need to establish a distinct Technical Unit within the General Staff is the requirement to coordinate and manage large volumes of environmental samples or analytical data from multiple sources in the context of certain complex incidents, particularly those involving biological, chemical, or radiological hazards. To meet this requirement, an Environmental Unit could be established within the Planning Section to facilitate interagency environmental data managing, monitoring, sampling, analyzing, and assessing. The Environmental Unit would prepare environmental data for the Situation Unit and work in close coordination with other Units and Sections within the ICS structure to enable effective decision support to the IC or UC. Technical specialists assigned to the Environmental Unit might include a scientific support coordinator as well as technicians proficient in response technologies, weather forecast, resources at risk, sampling, cleanup assessment, and disposal.

Examples of Technical Specialists

Agricultural specialist
Chemical or radiological decontamination specialist
Communication specialist
Cultural resource specialist
Data management specialist
Emergency medical services specialist
Environmental impact specialist
Epidemiologist
Explosives specialist
Faith community representative
Fire Behaviour Analyst
Flood control specialist
Forensic pathologist
Hazardous materials technician
Homeland security specialist
Industrial hygienist
Intelligence specialist
Law enforcement specialist
Legal counsel
Mass care specialist
Meteorologist
Military specialist
Mortuary affairs specialist
Numerical modeler
Occupational safety and health specialist
Pharmacist
Public health specialist
Public relations specialist



Radiation health specialist
Records management specialist
Resource/cost specialist
Scientific support coordinator
Special needs advisor
Structural engineering specialist
Toxicologist
Transportation specialist
Veterinarian
Waste management specialist
Water-use specialist

Tasks accomplished by the Environmental Unit might include the following:

- Identifying sensitive areas and recommending response priorities.
- Developing a plan for collecting, transporting, and analyzing samples.
- Providing input on wildlife protection strategies.
- Determining the extent and effects of site contamination.
- Developing site cleanup and hazardous material disposal plans.
- Identifying the need for and obtaining permits and other authorizations.

3.7 The Incident Action Plan

The Planning Section is normally responsible for gathering and disseminating information and intelligence critical to the incident, unless the IC/UC places this function elsewhere. The Planning Section is also responsible for assembling the IAP. The IAP includes the overall incident objectives and strategies established by Incident Command. In the case of a UC, the IAP must adequately address the mission and policy needs of each jurisdictional agency, as well as interaction between jurisdictions, functional agencies, and private organizations. The IAP also addresses tactics and support activities required for the planned operational period, generally 12 to 24 hours.

The IAP should incorporate changes in strategies and tactics based on lessons learned during earlier operational periods. A written IAP is especially important when:

- Resources from multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions are involved;
- The incident will span several operational periods;
- Changes in shifts of personnel and/or equipment are required; or
- There is a need to document actions and decisions.



The IAP will typically contain a number of components, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample IAP Outline

Component	Normally Prepared By
Incident Objectives (Form: ICS 202)	Incident Commander
Organization Assignment List or Chart (Form: ICS 203)	Resources Unit
Assignment List (Form: ICS 204)	Resources Unit
Incident Radio Communications Plan (Form: ICS 205)	Communications Unit
Medical Plan (Form: ICS 206)	Medical Unit
Incident Maps	Situation Unit
General Safety Message/Site Safety Plan	Safety Officer
Other Potential Components (incident dependent)	
Air Operations Summary	Air Operations
Weather Forecast	Planning Section
Traffic Plan	Ground Support Unit
Decontamination Plan	Technical Specialist
Waste Management or Disposal Plan	Technical Specialist
Demobilization Plan	Demobilization Unit
Site Security Plan	Law Enforcement, Technical Specialist, or Security Manager
Investigative Plan	Law Enforcement
Evidence Recovery Plan	Law Enforcement
Evacuation Plan	As required
Sheltering/Mass Care Plan	As required
Other (as required)	As required

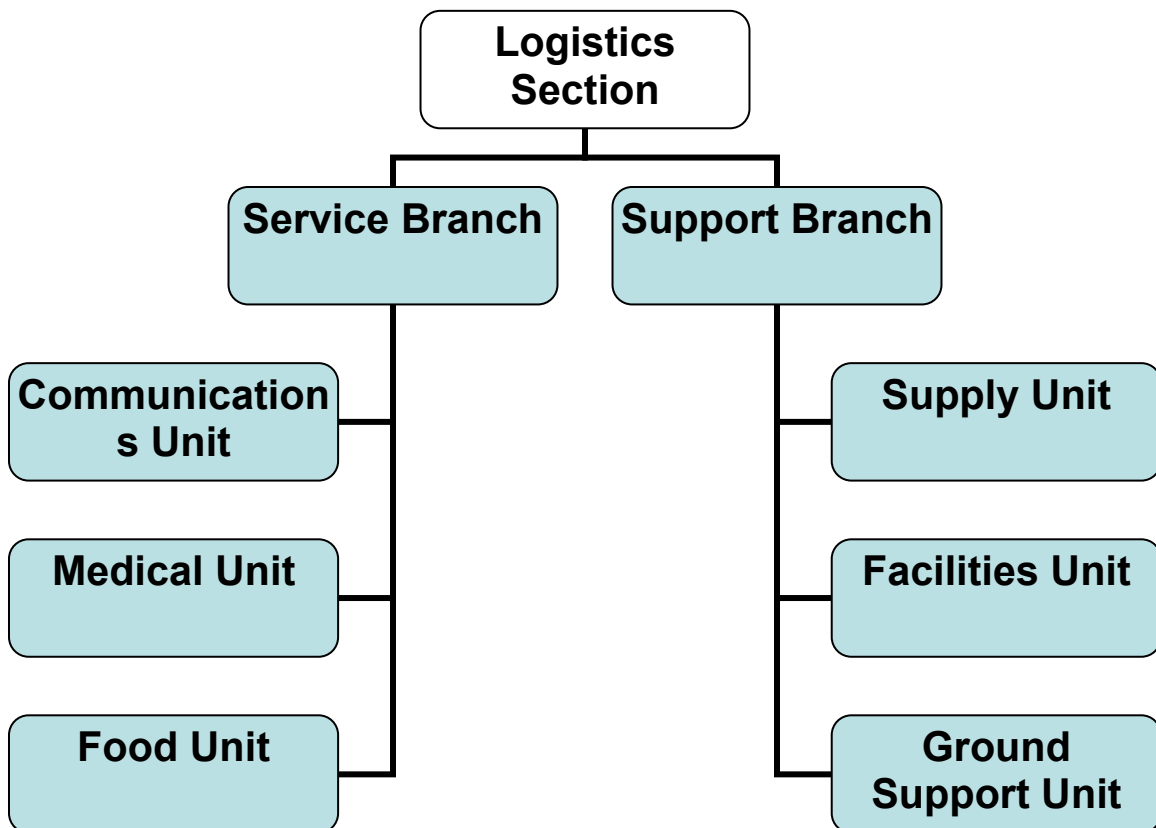


4 THE LOGISTICS SECTION

The Logistics Section provides for all the support needs for the incident, such as ordering resources and providing facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fuel, food service, communications, and medical services for incident personnel.

The Logistics Section is led by a Section Chief, who may also have one or more deputies. Having a deputy is encouraged when all designated Units are established at an incident site. When the incident is very large or requires a number of facilities with large numbers of equipment, the Logistics Section can be divided into Branches. This helps with span of control by providing more effective supervision and coordination among the individual Units. Conversely, in smaller incidents or when fewer resources are needed, a Branch configuration may be used to combine the task assignments of individual Units. Figure 13 provides an example of the Logistics Section organized with Service and Support Branches.

Figure 13. Logistics Section With Branch Organizational Structure





4.1 SUPPLY UNIT

The Supply Unit orders, receives, processes, stores, inventories, and distributes all incident-related resources and supplies.

Once established, the Supply Unit also has the basic responsibility for all off-incident ordering, including the following:

- All tactical and support resources (including personnel).
- All expendable and nonexpendable supplies required for incident support.

The Supply Unit provides the support required to receive, process, store, and distribute all supply orders. The Unit also handles tool operations, which includes storing, disbursing, and servicing tools and portable, nonexpendable equipment. Additionally, the Supply Unit assists in projecting resource needs based on information provided in the IAP.

4.2 FACILITIES UNIT

The Facilities Unit sets up, maintains, and demobilizes all facilities used in support of incident operations. The Unit also provides facility maintenance and law enforcement/security services required for incident support.

The Facilities Unit sets up the Incident Command Post (ICP), Incident Base, and Camps (including trailers or other forms of shelter for use in and around the incident area); it also provides the services associated with maintaining those functions. The Incident Base and Camps may be established in areas having existing structures, which are used in whole or in part. The Facilities Unit also provides and sets up necessary personnel support facilities, including areas for the following:

- Food and hydration service.
- Sleeping.
- Sanitation and showers.
- Staging.

This Unit also orders, through Supply, such additional support items as portable toilets, shower facilities, and lighting units.

Providing shelter for victims is a critical operational activity, which should be incorporated into the IAP. Sheltering is normally conducted by appropriate nongovernmental organization staff, such as the Red Cross or other similar entities.

4.3 GROUND SUPPORT UNIT

The Ground Support Unit:



- Maintains and repairs primary tactical vehicles and mobile ground support equipment.
- Records usage time for all ground equipment (including contract equipment) assigned to the incident.
- Supplies fuel for all mobile equipment.
- Provides transportation in support of incident operations (except aircraft).
- Develops and implements the incident Traffic Plan.

In addition to its primary functions of maintaining and servicing vehicles and mobile equipment, the Ground Support Unit maintains a transportation pool for major incidents. This pool consists of vehicles (e.g., staff cars, buses, or pickups) that are suitable for transporting personnel. The Ground Support Unit also provides to the Resources Unit up-to-date information on the location and status of transportation vehicles assigned to the Ground Support Unit.

4.4 COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Communications Unit develops the Communications Plan (ICS 205), to make the most effective use of the communications equipment and facilities assigned to the incident. Additionally, this Unit installs and tests all communications equipment, supervises and operates the incident communications centre, distributes and recovers communications equipment assigned to incident personnel, and maintains and repairs communications equipment on site.

The Communications Unit is responsible for effective incident communications planning, especially in the context of a multiagency incident. All communications between organizational elements during an incident should be in plain language (clear text) to ensure that information dissemination is clear and understood by all intended recipients. Planning is critical for determining required radio nets, establishing interagency frequency assignments, and ensuring the interoperability and the optimal use of all assigned communications capabilities.

The Communications Unit Leader should attend all incident Planning Meetings to ensure that the communication systems available for the incident can support tactical operations planned for the next operational period.

Incident communications are managed through the use of an incident Communications Plan and a communications centre established solely for the use of tactical and support resources assigned to the incident.

Advance planning is required to ensure that an appropriate communications system is available to support incident operations requirements. This planning includes the development of frequency inventories, frequency-use agreements, and interagency radio caches.



Most complex incidents will require a Communications Plan. The Communications Unit is responsible for planning the use of radio frequencies; establishing networks for command, tactical, support, and air units; setting up on-scene telephone and public address equipment; and providing any required off-incident communication links. Codes should not be used for radio communication. A clear spoken message—based on common terminology that avoids misunderstanding in complex and noisy situations—reduces the chances for error. The use of common terminology allows emergency management/response personnel to communicate clearly with one another and effectively coordinate activities, no matter the size, scope, location, or complexity of the incident.

Radio networks for large incidents may be organized as follows:

4.4.1 Command Net

The command net links together Incident Command, Command Staff, Section Chiefs, Branch Directors, and Division and Group Supervisors.

4.4.2 Tactical Nets

Several tactical nets may be established to connect departments, agencies, geographical areas, or specific functional units. The determination of how nets are set up should be a joint function designed by Planning, Operations, and Logistics.

4.4.3 Support Net

A support net may be established primarily to handle changes in resource status but also to handle logistical requests and other nontactical functions.

4.4.4 Air-to-Ground Net

To coordinate air-to-ground traffic, either a specific tactical frequency may be designated, or regular tactical nets may be used.

4.4.5 Air-to-Air Nets

Air-to-air nets may be designated and assigned for use at the incident. An air-to-air net is designed to be used by airborne assets; ground units should not utilize this net.

4.5 FOOD UNIT

The Food Unit determines food and hydration requirements of the responders, and has the responsibility for planning menus, ordering food, providing cooking facilities, cooking and serving food, maintaining food service areas, and managing food security and safety.

Efficient food service is important, but it is especially important for any extended incident. The Food Unit must be able to anticipate incident needs, such as the number of people who will need to be fed and whether the type, location, or complexity of the incident predicates special food requirements. The Unit must supply food needs for the



entire incident, including all remote locations (e.g., Camps and Staging Areas), and also supply food service to operations personnel who are unable to leave their assignments.

Feeding affected non response persons (e.g., victims, evacuees, persons at shelters) is a critical operational activity that will normally be incorporated into the IAP. Feeding activities will normally be conducted by members of appropriate NGOs, such as the Red Cross or similar entities. Services provided by appropriate NGOs would not fall within the Food Unit but in a separate functional assignment that should be communicated and coordinated with the IC and Operations Section Chief to ensure operational continuity.

The Food Unit must interact closely with the following elements:

- Planning Section, to determine the number of personnel who must be fed.
- Facilities Unit, to arrange food service areas.
- Supply Unit, to order food, unless provided under contract or agreement.
- Ground Support Unit, to obtain ground transportation.
- Air Operations Branch Director, to deliver food to remote locations.

Careful planning and monitoring is required to ensure food safety before and during food service operations, including the assignment, as indicated, of public health professionals with expertise in environmental health and food safety.

4.6 MEDICAL UNIT

The Medical Unit is responsible for the effective and efficient provision of medical services to incident personnel, and reports directly to the Logistics Section Chief. The primary responsibilities of the Medical Unit include the following:

- Develop procedures for handling any major medical emergency involving incident personnel.
- Develop the Incident Medical Plan (for incident personnel).
- Provide continuity of medical care, including vaccinations, vector control, occupational health, prophylaxis, and mental health services for incident personnel.
- Provide transportation for injured incident personnel.
- Coordinate and establish the routine rest and rehabilitation of incident responders.
- Ensure that injured incident personnel are tracked as they move from their origin to a care facility and from there to final disposition.
- Assist in processing all paperwork related to injuries or deaths of incident-assigned personnel.
- Coordinate personnel and mortuary affairs for incident personnel fatalities.

The Medical Unit Leader will develop a Medical Plan, which will, in turn, form part of the IAP. The Medical Plan should provide specific information on medical assistance



capabilities at incident locations, potentially hazardous areas or conditions, and off-site medical assistance facilities and procedures for handling complex medical emergencies. The Medical Unit will also assist the Finance/Administration Section with the administrative requirements related to injury compensation, including obtaining written authorizations, billing forms, witness statements, administrative medical documents, and reimbursement as required. The Medical Unit will ensure patient privacy to the fullest extent possible.

Patient care and medical services for those who are not emergency management/response personnel (e.g., incident victims) are critical operational activities. These activities are incorporated into the IAP as key considerations and should be staffed accordingly with appropriate professional personnel.



5 THE FINANCE/ ADMINISTRATION SECTION

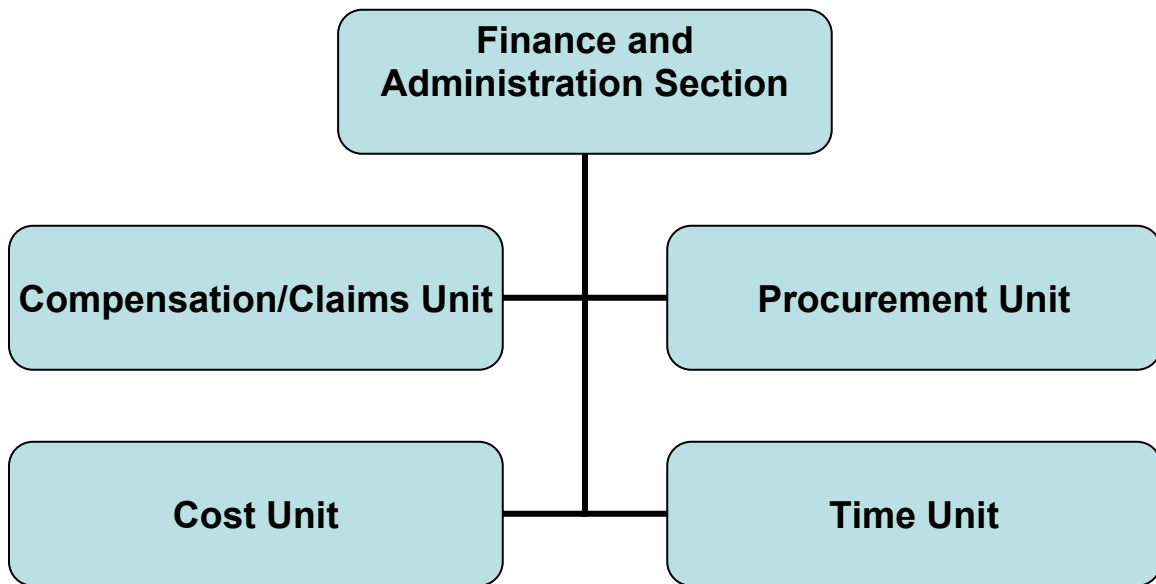
A Finance/Administration Section is established when there is a specific need for financial and/or administrative services to support incident management activities. Large or evolving scenarios involve significant funding originating from multiple sources. In addition to monitoring multiple sources of funds, the Section Chief must track and report to the IC/UC the accrued cost as the incident progresses. This allows the IC/UC to forecast the need for additional funds before operations are affected negatively, and it is particularly important if significant operational resources are under contract from the private sector. The Section Chief may also need to monitor expenditures to ensure that applicable statutory rules are met. Close coordination with the Planning and Logistics Sections is essential so that operational records can be reconciled with financial documents. A Finance/Administration Section is established when there is a specific need for financial and/or administrative services to support incident management activities. Large or evolving scenarios involve significant funding originating from multiple sources. In addition to monitoring multiple sources of funds, the Section Chief must track and report to the IC/UC the accrued cost as the incident progresses. This allows the IC/UC to forecast the need for additional funds before operations are affected negatively, and it is particularly important if significant operational resources are under contract from the private sector. The Section Chief may also need to monitor expenditures to ensure that applicable statutory rules are met. Close coordination with the Planning and Logistics Sections is essential so that operational records can be reconciled with financial documents.

The Finance/Administration Section Chief will determine, given current and anticipated future requirements, the need for establishing specific subordinate units. Because of the specialized nature of finance functions, the Section Chief should come from the agency that has the greatest requirement for this support. The Finance/Administration Section Chief may also have one or more deputies. The Finance/Administration Section Chief will determine, given current and anticipated future requirements, the need for establishing specific subordinate units. Because of the specialized nature of finance functions, the Section Chief should come from the agency that has the greatest requirement for this support. The Finance/Administration Section Chief may also have one or more deputies.

While the functions of Finance/Administration are critical components of effective command and management, components of the Finance/Administration Section are not necessarily staffed on the incident scene. Wireless communications systems enable some of the Finance/Administration functions to be performed away from the incident scene, typically in the workstations where these functions would customarily be performed.



Figure 14. Finance/Administration Section Organization



5.1 TIME UNIT

The Time Unit is responsible primarily for ensuring proper daily recording of personnel time, in accordance with the policies of the relevant agencies. The Time Unit also ensures that the Logistics Section records or captures equipment-use time.

If applicable (depending on the agencies involved), personnel time records will be collected and processed for each operational period. The Time Unit Leader may require the assistance of personnel familiar with the relevant policies of any affected agencies. These records must be verified, checked for accuracy, and posted according to existing policies. Excess hours worked must also be determined, for which separate logs must be maintained.

5.2 PROCUREMENT UNIT

The Procurement Unit administers all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts. This Unit coordinates with local jurisdictions to identify sources for equipment, prepares and signs equipment rental agreements, and processes all administrative requirements associated with equipment rental and supply contracts. In some cases, the Supply Unit in the Logistics Section will be responsible for certain procurement activities. The Procurement Unit will also work closely with local cost authorities.

5.3 COMPENSATION AND CLAIMS UNIT

Under ICS, a single Unit handles injury compensation and claims. Depending on the incident, the specific activities are varied and may not always be accomplished by the



same person. The individual handling injury compensation ensures that all forms required by workers' compensation programs and local agencies are completed. This individual also maintains files on injuries and illnesses associated with the incident, and ensures that all witness statements are obtained in writing. Since the Medical Unit may also perform some of these tasks, close coordination between the Medical and Compensation and Claims Units is essential. The claims function handles investigations of all civil tort claims involving property associated with or involved in the incident. The Compensation and Claims Unit maintains logs on the claims, obtains witness statements, and documents investigations and agency follow-up requirements.

5.4 COST UNIT

The Cost Unit provides cost analysis data for the incident. This Unit must ensure that equipment and personnel for which payment is required are properly identified, obtain and record all cost data, and analyze and prepare estimates of incident costs. The Cost Unit also provides input on cost estimates for resource use to the Planning Section. The Cost Unit must maintain accurate information on the actual costs of all assigned resources.



6. INTELLIGENCE/INVESTIGATIONS FUNCTION

The collection, analysis, and sharing of incident-related intelligence are important elements of ICS. Normally, operational information and situational intelligence are management functions located in the Planning Section, with a focus on three incident intelligence areas: situation status, resource status, and anticipated incident status or escalation (e.g., weather forecasts and location of supplies). This information and intelligence is utilized for incident management decision making. In addition, technical specialists in the Planning Section may be utilized to provide specific information that supports tactical decisions.

Incident management organizations must also establish a system for the collection, analysis, and sharing of information developed during intelligence/investigation efforts. Some incidents require intelligence and investigative information, which is defined in either of two ways. First, it is defined as information that leads to the detection, prevention, apprehension, and prosecution of criminal activities or the individuals involved, including terrorist incidents. Second, it is defined as information that leads to determination of the cause, projection of spread, assessment of impact, or selection of countermeasures for a given incident (regardless of the source) such as public health events, disease outbreaks, or fires with unknown origins.

ICS allows for organizational flexibility, so the Intelligence/Investigations Function can be embedded in several different places within the organizational structure.

- ***Within the Planning Section:*** This is the traditional placement for this function and is appropriate for incidents with little or no investigative information requirements nor a significant amount of specialized information.
- ***As a Separate General Staff Section:*** This option may be appropriate when there is a significant intelligence/investigations component to the incident for criminal or epidemiological purposes or when multiple investigative agencies are involved. A separate Intelligence/Investigations Section may be needed when highly specialized information requiring technical analysis is both critical and time sensitive to lifesaving operations (e.g., chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear incidents) or when there is a need for classified intelligence.
- ***Within the Operations Section:*** This option may be appropriate for incidents that require a high degree of linkage and coordination between the investigative information and the operational tactics that are being employed.
- ***Within the Command Staff:*** This option may be appropriate for incidents with little need for tactical information or classified intelligence and where supporting Agency Representatives are providing real-time information to the IC/UC.

The mission of the Intelligence/Investigations Function is to ensure that all investigative



and intelligence operations, functions, and activities within the incident response are properly managed, coordinated, and directed in order to:

- Prevent/deter additional activity, incidents, or attacks.
- Collect, process, analyze, and appropriately disseminate intelligence information.
- Conduct a thorough and comprehensive investigation.
- Identify, process, collect, create a chain of custody for, safeguard, examine/analyze, and store all probative evidence.
- Determine source or cause and control spread and impact, in the investigation of emerging incidents (fire, disease outbreak, etc.).

The Intelligence/Investigations Function has responsibilities that cross all interests of departments involved during an incident; however, certain functions remain specific to law enforcement response and mission areas. Two examples of these are to expeditiously identify and apprehend all perpetrators, and to successfully prosecute all defendants.

Regardless of how the Intelligence/Investigations Function is organized, a close liaison will be maintained, and information will be transmitted to Incident Command, the Operations Section, and the Planning Section. However, classified information

requiring a security clearance, sensitive information, or specific investigative tactics that would compromise the investigation will be shared only with those who have the appropriate security clearance or a need to know.

The Intelligence/Investigations Function can be organized in a variety of ways. The following are examples of Groups that may be activated if needed:

- **Investigative Operations Group:** Responsible for overall investigative effort.
- **Intelligence Group:** Responsible for obtaining unclassified, classified, and open source intelligence.
- **Forensic Group:** Responsible for collection and integrity of forensic evidence, and in incidents of a criminal nature, the integrity of the crime scene.
- **Investigative Support Group:** Responsible for ensuring that required investigative personnel are made available expeditiously and that the necessary resources are properly distributed, maintained, safeguarded, stored, and returned, when appropriate.

Other Groups may be created to handle the following responsibilities: ensuring that missing or unidentified persons and human remains are investigated and identified expeditiously and that required notifications are made in a timely manner.



7 ESTABLISHING AN AREA COMMAND

As described in Section A, the purpose of an Area Command is either to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by a separate ICS organization or to oversee the management of a very large or evolving incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams (IMTs) engaged.

7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Area Command does not have operational responsibilities. For the incidents under its authority, the Area Command:

- Develops broad objectives for the impacted area(s).
- Coordinates the development of individual incident objectives and strategies.
- (Re)allocates resources as the established priorities change.
- Ensures that incidents are properly managed.
- Ensures effective communications.
- Ensures that incident management objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policies.
- Identifies critical resource needs and reports them to the established EOCs.
- Ensures that short-term “emergency” recovery is coordinated to assist in the transition to full recovery operations.

The function of Area Command is to develop broad objectives for the impacted area and to coordinate the development of individual incident objectives and strategies. Additionally, the Area Commander will set priorities for the use of critical resources allocated to the incident.

7.2 ORGANIZATION

The Area Command organization operates under the same basic principles as ICS. Typically, an Area Command will comprise the following key personnel, all of whom must possess appropriate qualifications and certifications:

7.2.1 Area Commander (Unified Area Command)

The Area Commander is responsible for the overall direction of the IMTs assigned. This responsibility includes ensuring that conflicts are resolved, incident objectives established, and strategies selected for the use of critical resources. The Area Commander is also responsible for coordinating with Federal, Provincial, Territorial, First Nations, and local departments and agencies, as well as NGOs and the private sector.

7.2.2 Assistant Area Commander–Logistics

The Area Command Logistics Chief provides facilities, services, and materials at the Area Command level and ensures the effective allocation of critical resources and



supplies among the IMTs.

7.2.3 Assistant Area Commander–Planning

The Area Command Planning Chief collects information from various IMTs to assess and evaluate potential conflicts in establishing incident objectives, strategies, and priorities for allocating critical resources.

7.2.4 Area Command Aviation Coordinator

An Aviation Coordinator is assigned when aviation resources are competing for common airspace and critical resources, and works in coordination with incident aviation organizations to evaluate potential conflicts, develop common airspace management procedures, ensure aviation safety, and allocate critical resources in accordance with Area Command priorities.

7.2.5 Area Command Support Positions

The following Area Command positions are activated as necessary:

- **Resources Unit Leader:** Tracks and maintains the status and availability of critical resources assigned to each incident under the Assistant Area Commander–Planning.
- **Situation Unit Leader:** Monitors the status of objectives for each incident or IMT assigned to the Assistant Area Commander–Planning.
- **Information Officer:** Provides coordination between incident locations and serves as the point of contact for media requests to the Area Command.
- **Liaison Officer:** Helps maintain off-incident interagency contacts and coordination.

7.3 LOCATION

The following guidelines should be followed in locating an Area Command:

- To the extent possible, the Area Command should be established in close proximity to the incidents under its authority. This makes it easier for the Area Commander and the ICs to meet and otherwise interact.
- It is, however, best not to co-locate an Area Command with any individual ICP. Doing so might cause confusion with the Command and Management activities associated with that particular incident.
- Area Commands must establish effective, efficient communications, coordination processes, and protocols with subordinate ICs, as well as with other incident management organizations involved in incident operations.
- The facility used to house the organization should be large enough to accommodate a full Area Command staff. It should also be able to accommodate meetings between the Area Command staff, the ICs, and Agency Administrators/Executives as well as news media representatives.



7.4 REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

When an Area Command is involved in coordinating multiple incident management activities, the following reporting relationships will apply:

- The ICs for the incidents under the Area Command's authority report to the Area Commander.
- The Area Commander is accountable to the agency(s) or to the jurisdictional executive(s) or administrator(s).
- If one or more incidents within the Area Command are multi-jurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established.



8 FACILITIES AND LOCATIONS

Several kinds and types of facilities may be established in and around the incident area. The requirements of the incident and the desires of the IC/UC will determine the specific kinds and locations of facilities and may consist of the following designated facilities, among others.

8.1 INCIDENT COMMAND POST

The ICP signifies the location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command organization. It typically comprises the Incident Command and the Command and General Staffs, but may include other designated incident personnel from Federal, Provincial, Territorial, First Nations and local municipalities and agencies, as well as NGOs and the private sector. Typically, the ICP is located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site and is the location for the conduct of direct, on-scene control of tactical operations. Incident planning is conducted at the ICP; an incident communications centre also would normally be established at this location. The ICP may be co-located with the Incident Base, if the communications requirements can be met.

8.2 INCIDENT BASE

An Incident Base is the location at which primary support activities are conducted. A single Incident Base is established to house equipment and personnel support operations. The Incident Base should be designed to be able to support operations at multiple incident sites.

8.3 CAMPS

Camps are separate from the Incident Base and are located as satellites to the Incident Base, where they can best support incident operations. Camps provide support, such as food, sleeping areas, and sanitation. Camps may also provide minor maintenance and servicing of equipment. Camps may be relocated to meet changing operational requirements.

8.4 STAGING AREAS

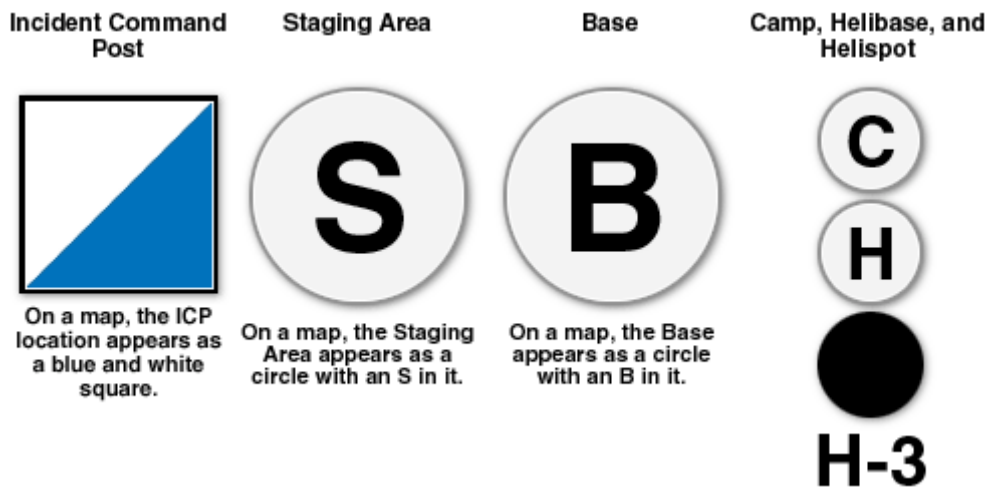
Staging Areas are established for the temporary location of available resources. Staging Areas will be established by the Operations Section Chief to enable positioning of and accounting for resources not immediately assigned. A Staging Area can be any location in which personnel, supplies, and equipment can be temporarily housed or parked while awaiting operational assignment. Staging Areas may include temporary feeding, fuelling, and sanitation services. The Operations Section Chief assigns a



manager for each Staging Area, who checks in all incoming resources, dispatches resources at the Operations Section Chief's request, and requests Logistics Section support, as necessary, for resources located in the Staging Area.

ICS provides for standard map symbols for incident facilities and locations.

Figure 15 Map Symbols





9 THE PLANNING PROCESS AND THE IAP

9.1 Overview

Sound, timely planning provides the foundation for effective incident management. The planning process described below represents a template for strategic, operational, and tactical planning that includes all steps that an IC/UC and other members of the Command and General Staffs should take to develop and disseminate an IAP. The planning process may begin with the scheduling of a planned event, the identification of a credible threat, or the initial response to an actual or impending event. The process continues with the implementation of the formalized steps and the staffing required to develop a written IAP.

A clear, concise IAP template is essential to guide the initial incident management decision process and the continuing collective planning activities of IMTs. The planning process should provide the following:

- Current information that accurately describes the incident situation and resource status.
- Predictions of the probable course of events.
- Alternative strategies to attain critical incident objectives.
- An accurate, realistic IAP for the next operational period.

Five primary phases should be followed in sequence to ensure a comprehensive IAP. These phases are designed to enable the accomplishment of incident objectives within a specified time. The IAP must provide clear strategic direction and include a comprehensive listing of the tactics, resources, reserves, and support required to accomplish each overarching incident objective. The comprehensive IAP will state the sequence of events for achieving multiple incident objectives in a coordinated way. However, the IAP is a living document that is based on the best available information at the time of the Planning Meeting. Planning Meetings should not be delayed in anticipation of future information.

The primary phases of the planning process are essentially the same for the IC who develops the initial plan, for the IC and Operations Section Chief revising the initial plan for extended operations, and for the IMT developing a formal IAP. During the initial stages of incident management, planners should develop a simple plan that can be communicated through concise oral briefings. Frequently, this plan must be developed very quickly and with incomplete situation information. As the incident management effort evolves, additional lead time, staff, information systems, and technologies enable more detailed planning and cataloguing of events and lessons learned.

The five primary phases in the planning process are to understand the situation; establish incident objectives and strategy; develop the plan; prepare and disseminate the plan; and execute, evaluate, and revise the plan.



9.1.1 Understand the Situation

The first phase includes gathering, recording, analyzing, and displaying situation, resource, and incident-potential information in a manner that will facilitate:

- Increased situational awareness of the magnitude, complexity, and potential impact of the incident.
- The ability to determine the resources required to develop and implement an effective IAP.

9.1.2 Establish Incident Objectives and Strategy

The second phase includes formulating and prioritizing measurable incident objectives and identifying an appropriate strategy. The incident objectives and strategy must conform to the legal obligations and management objectives of all affected agencies, and may need to include specific issues relevant to critical infrastructure.

Reasonable alternative strategies that will accomplish overall incident objectives are identified, analyzed, and evaluated to determine the most appropriate strategy for the situation at hand. Evaluation criteria include public health and safety factors, estimated costs, and various environmental, legal, and political considerations.

9.1.3 Develop the Plan

The third phase involves determining the tactical direction and the specific resources, reserves, and support requirements for implementing the selected strategies and tactics for the operational period.

Before the formal Planning Meetings, each member of the Command and General Staffs is responsible for gathering certain information to support the proposed plan.

9.1.4 Prepare and Disseminate the Plan

The fourth phase involves preparing the plan in a format that is appropriate for the level of complexity of the incident. For the initial response, the format is a well-prepared outline for an oral briefing. For most incidents that will span multiple operational periods, the plan will be developed in writing according to ICS procedures.

9.1.5 Execute, Evaluate, and Revise the Plan

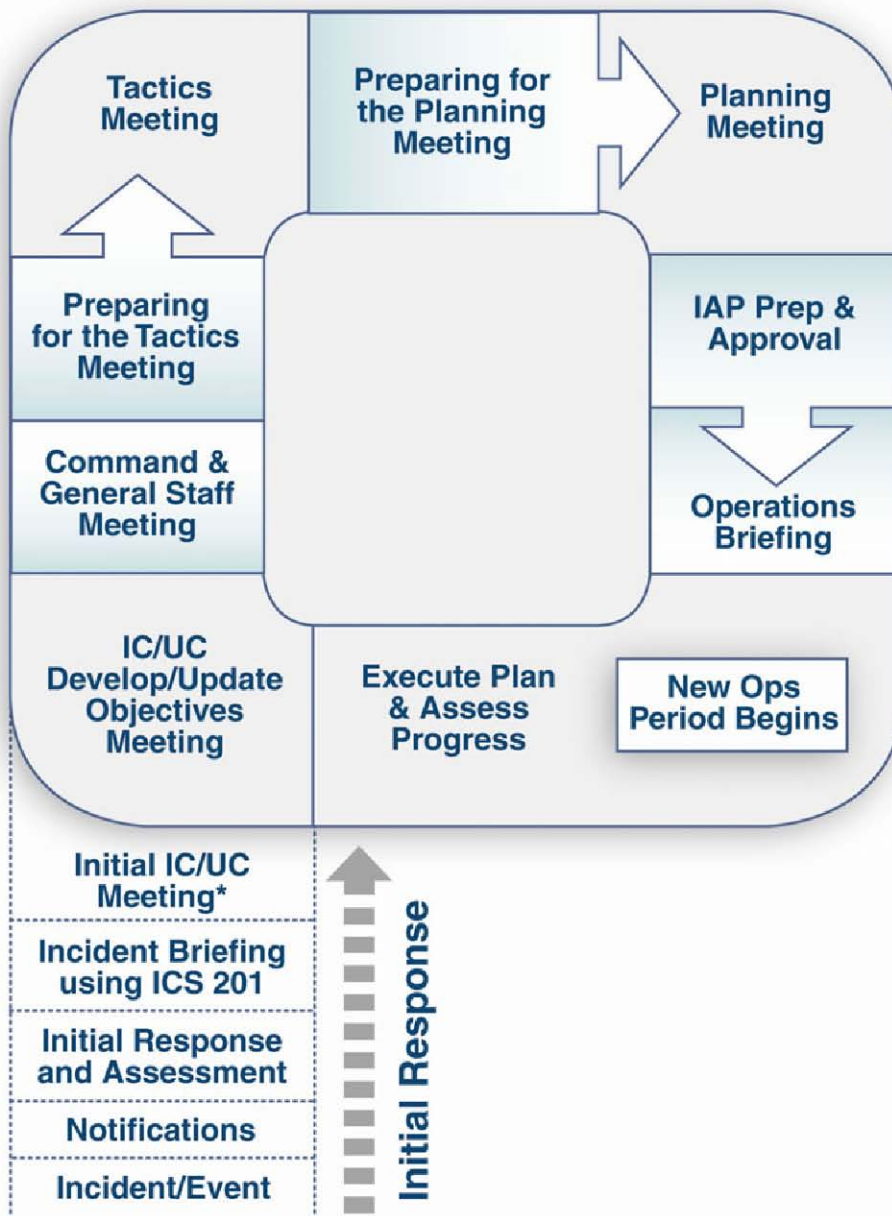
The planning process includes the requirement to execute and evaluate planned activities and check the accuracy of information to be used in planning for subsequent operational periods. The General Staff should regularly compare planned progress with actual progress. When deviations occur and when new information emerges, it should be included in the first step of the process used for modifying the current plan or developing the plan for the subsequent operational period.



9.2 RESPONSIBILITIES AND SPECIFIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES

9.2.1 Operational Period Planning Cycle

Figure 16. Operational Period Planning Cycle



*During this timeframe a meeting with the Agency Administrator/Executive can occur.



9.2.2 Planning Steps: Understanding the Situation and Establishing Objectives and Strategy

The Planning Section Chief should take the following actions prior to the initial Planning Meeting (if possible, obtain a completed Incident Briefing (ICS 201):

- Evaluate the current situation and decide whether the current planning is adequate for the remainder of the operational period (i.e., until the next plan takes effect).
- Advise the IC and the Operations Section Chief of any suggested revisions to the current plan, as necessary.
- Establish a planning cycle for the incident.
- When requested, participate in the Objectives Meeting to contribute to the development/update of incident objectives and strategies. The task of developing incident objectives and strategies is often the sole responsibility of the IC/UC.
- Participate in the Tactics Meeting, if held, to review the tactics developed by the Operations Section Chief.
- Determine Planning Meeting attendees in consultation with the IC. For major incidents, attendees should include the following:
 - Incident Commander.
 - Command Staff members.
 - General Staff members.
 - Resources Unit Leader.
 - Situation Unit Leader.
 - Air Operations Branch Director (if established).
 - Communications Unit Leader.
 - Technical specialists (as required).
 - Agency Representatives (as required).
- Establish the location and time for the Planning Meeting.
- Ensure that planning boards and forms are available.
- Notify necessary support staff about the meeting and their assignments.
- Ensure that a current situation and resource briefing will be available for the meeting.
- Obtain an estimate of resource availability for use in planning for the next operational period.
- Obtain necessary agency policy, legal, or fiscal constraints for use in the Planning Meeting.

9.2.3 Conducting the Planning Meeting

The Planning Meeting is normally conducted by the Planning Section Chief. The sequence of steps that follows is intended to aid the Planning Section Chief in developing the IAP. The planning steps are used with the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215).



9.2.3.1 Give a briefing on situation, resource status, and incident potential

The Planning Section Chief and/or Resources and Situation Unit Leaders should provide an up-to-date briefing on the situation. Information for this briefing may come from any or all of the following sources:

- Initial Incident Commander.
- Incident Briefing (ICS 201).
- Field observations.
- Operations reports.
- Regional resources and situation reports.

9.2.3.2 Set/Review established objectives

The IC/UC is responsible for this step. The incident objectives are not limited to any single operational period but will consider the total incident situation. The IC/UC establishes the general strategy to be used, states any major constraints (policy, legal, or fiscal) on accomplishing the objectives, and offers appropriate contingency considerations.

9.2.3.3 Plot operational lines, establish Branch/Division boundaries, and identify Group assignments

This step is normally accomplished by the Operations Section Chief (for the next operational period) in conjunction with the Planning Section Chief, who will establish Division and Branch boundaries for geographical Divisions and determine the need for functional Group assignments for the next operational period. The operational boundaries will be plotted on the map.

9.2.3.4 Specify tactics for each Division/Group

After determining Division geographical assignments or Group functions, the Operations Section Chief will establish the specific work assignments to be performed for the next operational period. Tactics (work assignments) should be specific and within the boundaries set by the IC/UC general objectives and established strategies. These work assignments should be recorded on the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215). At this time, the IC/UC, Operations Section Chief, and Planning Section Chief should also consider the need for any alternative strategies or tactics and ensure that these are properly noted on the Operational Planning Worksheet .

9.2.3.5 Specify resources needed by Division/Group

After specifying tactics for each Division/Group, the Operations Section Chief, in conjunction with the Planning Section Chief, will determine the resource needs to accomplish the work assignments. Resource needs will be recorded on the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215). Resource needs should be considered on the basis of the type of resources required to accomplish the assignment.

9.2.3.6 Specify operations facilities and reporting locations and plot on map

The Operations Section Chief, in conjunction with the Planning and Logistics Section



Chiefs, should designate and make available the facilities and reporting locations required to accomplish Operations Section work assignments. The Operations Section Chief should indicate the reporting time requirements for the resources and any special resource assignments.

9.2.3.7 Develop resource order

The Planning Section Chief should assess resource needs based on the needs indicated by the Operations Section Chief and resources data available from the Resources Unit. The Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215), when properly completed, will show resource requirements and the resources available to meet those requirements. Subtracting the resources available from those required will indicate any additional resource needs. From this assessment, a new resource order can be developed and provided to the IC/UC for approval and then placed through normal dispatch channels by the Logistics Section.

9.2.3.8 Consider Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plan requirements

The IAP will normally consist of the Incident Objectives (ICS 202), Organization Chart (ICS 203), Assignment List (ICS 204), and a map of the incident area. Larger incidents may require additional supporting attachments, such as a separate Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205), a Medical Plan (ICS 206), and possibly a Traffic Plan. The Planning Section Chief should determine the need for these attachments and ensure that the appropriate Units prepare them. The IAP and attachments will normally include the items listed in Table 3.



Table 3. The IAP and Typical Attachments

Component	Normally Prepared By
Incident Objectives (ICS 202)	Incident Commander
Organization Assignment List or Chart (ICS 203)	Resources Unit
Assignment List (ICS 204)	Resources Unit
Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)	Communications Unit
Medical Plan (ICS 206)	Medical Unit
Incident Maps	Situation Unit
Safety Message Plan (ICS 208)	Safety Officer
Other Potential Components (incident dependent)	
Air Operations Summary (ICS 220)	Air Operations
Traffic Plan	Ground Support Unit
Decontamination Plan	Technical Specialist
Waste Management or Disposal Plan	Technical Specialist
Demobilization Checkout (ICS 221)	Demobilization Unit
Site Security Plan	Law Enforcement, Technical Specialist, or Security Manager
Investigative Plan	Law Enforcement
Evidence Recovery Plan	Law Enforcement
Evacuation Plan	As required
Sheltering/Mass Care Plan	As required
Other (as required)	As required



9.2.3.9 Finalize, approve, and implement the Incident Action Plan

The Planning Section, in conjunction with the Operations Section, is responsible for seeing that the IAP is completed, reviewed, and distributed. The following is the sequence of steps for accomplishing this:

- Set the deadline for completing IAP attachments (see Table 4).
- Obtain plan attachments and review them for completeness and approvals. Before completing the plan, the Planning Section Chief should review the Division and Group tactical work assignments for any changes due to lack of resource availability. The Resources Unit may then transfer Division/Group assignment information, including alternatives from the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215), onto the Division Assignment Lists (ICS 204).
- Determine the number of IAPs required.
- Arrange with the Documentation Unit to reproduce the IAP.
- Review the IAP to ensure it is up to date and complete prior to the operations briefing and plan distribution.
- Provide the IAP briefing plan, as required, and distribute the plan prior to beginning of the new operational period.

Table 4. ICS Forms That Can Aid the Planning Process*

Number	Purpose
ICS 201 (p.1)**	Incident Briefing Map
ICS 201 (p.2)**	Summary of Current Actions
ICS 201 (p.3)**	Current Organization
ICS 201 (p.4)**	Resources Summary
ICS 202	Incident Objectives
ICS 203	Organization Assignment List
ICS 204	Assignment List
ICS 205	Incident Radio Communications Plan
ICS 206	Medical Plan
ICS 207	Incident Organization Chart (wall mounted)
ICS 209	Incident Status Summary



ICS 210	Status Change
ICS 211	Incident Check-In List
ICS 213	General Message
ICS 215	Operational Planning Worksheet
ICS 215A	Hazard Risk Analysis

**The ICS 201 Forms are the initial summary forms provided at the start of an incident. The information they provide can help craft an IAP, but the ICS 201 Forms may not be included in the formal written IAP.



10 ICS FORMS

This section describes some common ICS Forms. The individual forms may be tailored to meet an agency's needs. More importantly, even though the format is flexible, the form number and purpose of the specific type of form (e.g., Assignment List (ICS 204) defines the assignments for a Division or Group) must remain intact in order to maintain consistency and facilitate immediate identification and interoperability, and for ease of use.

The following provides brief descriptions of selected ICS Forms. This list is not all inclusive; other forms are available online, commercially, and in a variety of formats.

10.1 ICS 201 – Incident Briefing

Most often used by the initial IC, this four-section document (often produced as four pages) allows for the capture of vital incident information prior to the implementation of the formal planning process. ICS 201 allows for a concise and complete transition of command briefing to an incoming new IC. In addition, this form may serve as the full extent of incident command and control documentation if the situation is resolved by the initial response resources and organization. This form is designed to be transferred easily to the members of the Command and General Staffs as they arrive and begin work. It is not included as a part of the formal written IAP.

10.2 ICS 202 – Incident Objectives

ICS 202 serves as the first page of a written IAP. It includes incident information, a listing of the IC's objectives for the operational period, pertinent weather information, a general safety message, and a table of contents for the plan. Signature blocks are provided.

10.3 ICS 203 – Organization Assignment List

ICS 203 is typically the second page of the IAP. It provides a full accounting of incident management and supervisory staff for that operational period.

10.4 ICS 204 – Assignment List

ICS 204 is included in multiples, based on the organizational structure of the Operations Section for the operational period. Each Division/Group will have its own page, listing the Supervisor for the Division/Group (including Branch Director if assigned) and the specific assigned resources with leader name and number of personnel assigned to each resource. This document then describes in detail the specific actions the Division or Group will be taking in support of the overall incident objectives. Any special instructions will be included as well as the elements of the Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205) that apply to that Division or Group.

10.5 ICS 205 – Incident Radio Communications Plan

ICS 205 is used to provide information on all radio frequency assignments down to the



Division/Group level.

10.6 ICS 206 – Medical Plan

ICS 206 presents the incident's Medical Plan to care for responder medical emergencies.

10.7 ICS 209 – Incident Status Summary

ICS 209 collects basic incident decision support information and is the primary mechanism for reporting this situational information to incident coordination and support organizations and the Agency Administrators/Executives.

10.8 ICS 211 – Incident Check-In List

ICS 211 documents the check-in process. Check-in recorders report check-in information to the Resources Unit.

10.9 ICS 215 – Operational Planning Worksheet

ICS 215 is used in the incident Planning Meeting to develop tactical assignments and resources needed to achieve incident objectives and strategies.

10.10 ICS 215A – Hazard Risk Analysis

ICS 215A communicates to the Operations and Planning Section Chiefs the safety and health issues identified by the Safety Officer. The ICS 215A form identifies mitigation measures to address the identified safety issues.



11 SUMMARY OF MAJOR ICS POSITIONS

This section lists the primary functions of each major ICS position.

Table 5. Summary Table of Major ICS Positions*

Major ICS Position	Primary Functions
Incident Commander or Unified Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear authority and know agency policy. • Ensure incident safety. • Establish the ICP. • Set priorities, and determine incident objectives and strategies to be followed. • Establish ICS organization needed to manage the incident. • Approve the IAP. • Coordinate Command and General Staff activities. • Approve resource requests and use of volunteers and auxiliary personnel. • Order demobilization as needed. • Ensure after-action reports are completed. • Authorize information release to the media.
Information Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine, according to direction from IC, any limits on information release. • Develop accurate, accessible, and timely information for use in press/media briefings. • Obtain the IC's approval of news releases. • Conduct periodic media briefings. • Arrange for tours and other interviews or briefings that may be required. • Monitor and forward media information that may be useful to incident planning. • Maintain current information summaries and/or displays on the incident. • Make information about the incident available to incident personnel. • Participate in Planning Meetings. • Implement methods to monitor rumour control.
<p>*The Intelligence/Investigations Function may be under the direction of a separate General Staff position.</p>	



Safety Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and mitigate hazardous situations.• Create a Safety Plan.• Ensure safety messages and briefings are made.• Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts .• Review the IAP for safety implications.• Assign assistants qualified to evaluate special hazards.• Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents within the incident area.• Review and approve the Medical Plan.• Participate in Planning Meetings to address anticipated hazards associated with future operations.
Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act as a point of contact for Agency Representatives.• Maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and agency Representatives.• Assist in setting up and coordinating interagency contacts.• Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems.• Participate in Planning Meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capabilities of agency resources.• Provide agency-specific demobilization information and requirements.
Operations Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure safety of tactical operations.• Manage tactical operations.• Develop operations portions of the IAP.• Supervise execution of operations portions of the IAP.• Request additional resources to support tactical operations.• Approve release of resources from active operational assignments.• Make or approve expedient changes to the IAP.• Maintain close contact with the IC, subordinate Operations personnel, and other agencies involved in the incident.



Planning Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data.• Supervise preparation of the IAP.• Provide input to the IC and Operations in preparing the IAP.• Incorporate Traffic, Medical, and Communications Plans and other supporting material into the IAP.• Conduct/facilitate Planning Meetings.• Reassign out-of-service personnel within the ICS organization already on scene, as appropriate.• Compile and display incident status information.• Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Units (e.g., Resources Unit, Situation Unit).• Determine need for specialized resources.• Assemble and disassemble Task Forces and Strike Teams not assigned to Operations.• Establish specialized data collection systems as necessary (e.g., weather).• Assemble information on alternative strategies.• Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.• Report significant changes in incident status.• Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan.
Logistics Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide all facilities, transportation, communications, supplies, equipment maintenance and fuelling, food, and medical services for incident personnel, and all off-incident resources.• Manage all incident logistics.• Provide logistics input to the IAP.• Brief Logistics staff as needed.• Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.• Request additional resources as needed.• Ensure and oversee development of Traffic, Medical, and Communications Plans as required.• Oversee demobilization of Logistics Section and associated resources.



Finance/Administration Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage all financial aspects of an incident.• Provide financial and cost analysis information as requested.• Ensure compensation and claims functions are being addressed relative to the incident.• Gather pertinent information from briefings with responsible agencies.• Develop an operational plan for the Finance/Administration Section and fill Section supply and support needs.• Determine the need to set up and operate an incident commissary.• Meet with assisting and cooperating Agency Representatives as needed.• Maintain daily contact with agency(s) headquarters on finance matters.• Ensure that personnel time records are completed accurately and transmitted to home agencies.• Ensure that all obligation documents initiated at the incident are properly prepared and completed.• Brief agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing attention or followup.• Provide input to the IAP.
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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

For the purposes of ICS, the following terms and definitions apply:

Agency: A division of government with a specific function offering a particular kind of assistance. In the Incident Command System, agencies are defined either as jurisdictional (having statutory responsibility for incident management) or as assisting or cooperating (providing resources or other assistance). Governmental organizations are most often in charge of an incident, though in certain circumstances private-sector organizations may be included. Additionally, nongovernmental organizations may be included to provide support.

Agency Administrator/Executive: The official responsible for administering policy for an agency or jurisdiction. An Agency Administrator/Executive (or other public official with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident) usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command.

Agency Dispatch: The agency or jurisdictional facility from which resources are sent to incidents.

Agency Representative: A person assigned by a primary, assisting, or cooperating Federal, State, tribal, or local government agency, or nongovernmental or private organization, that has been delegated authority to make decisions affecting that agency's or organization's participation in incident management activities following appropriate consultation with the leadership of that agency.

All-Hazards: Describing an incident, natural or manmade, that warrants action to protect life, property, environment, and public health or safety, and to minimize disruptions of government, social, or economic activities.

Allocated Resource: Resource dispatched to an incident.

Area Command: An organization established to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by a separate Incident Command System organization or to oversee the management of a very large or evolving incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams engaged. An Agency Administrator/Executive or other public official with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. An Area Command is activated only if necessary, depending on the complexity of the incident and incident management span-of-control considerations.

Assessment: The process of acquiring, collecting, processing, examining, analyzing, evaluating, monitoring, and interpreting the data, information, evidence, objects, measurements, images, sound, etc., whether tangible or intangible, to provide a basis for decision making.



Assigned Resource: Resource checked in and assigned work tasks on an incident.

Assignment: Task given to a personnel resource to perform within a given operational period that is based on operational objectives defined in the Incident Action Plan.

Assistant: Title for subordinates of principal Command Staff positions. The title indicates a level of technical capability, qualifications, and responsibility subordinate to the primary positions. Assistants may also be assigned to Unit Leaders.

Assisting Agency: An agency or organization providing personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with direct responsibility for incident management. See **Supporting Agency**.

Available Resource: Resource assigned to an incident, checked in, and available for a mission assignment, normally located in a Staging Area.

Branch: The organizational level having functional or geographical responsibility for major aspects of incident operations. A Branch is organizationally situated between the Section Chief and the Division or Group in the Operations Section, and between the Section and Units in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman numerals or by functional area.

Cache: A predetermined complement of tools, equipment, and/or supplies stored in a designated location, available for incident use.

Camp: A geographical site within the general incident area (separate from the Incident Base) that is equipped and staffed to provide sleeping, food, water, and sanitary services to incident personnel.

Categorizing Resources: The process of organizing resources by category, kind, and type, including size, capacity, capability, skill, and other characteristics. This makes the resource ordering and dispatch process within and across organizations and agencies, and between governmental and nongovernmental entities, more efficient, and ensures that the resources received are appropriate to their needs.

Certifying Personnel: The process of authoritatively attesting that individuals meet professional standards for the training, experience, and performance required for key incident management functions.

Chain of Command: The orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization.

Check-In: The process through which resources first report to an incident. All responders, regardless of agency affiliation, must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.



Chief: The Incident Command System title for individuals responsible for management of functional Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration, and Intelligence/Investigations (if established as a separate Section).

Command: The act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority.

Command Staff: The staff who report directly to the Incident Commander, including the Information Officer, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, and other positions as required. They may have an assistant or assistants, as needed.

Common Operating Picture: An overview of an incident by all relevant parties that provides incident information enabling the Incident Commander/Unified Command and any supporting agencies and organizations to make effective, consistent, and timely decisions.

Common Terminology: Normally used words and phrases—avoiding the use of different words/phrases for same concepts—to ensure consistency and to allow diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of incident management functions and hazard scenarios.

Communications: The process of transmission of information through verbal, written, or symbolic means.

Communications/Dispatch Centre: Agency or interagency dispatch centres, 911 call centres, emergency control or command dispatch centres, or any naming convention given to the facility and staff that handles emergency calls from the public and communication with emergency management/response personnel.

Complex: Two or more individual incidents located in the same general area and assigned to a single Incident Commander or to Unified Command.

Cooperating Agency: An agency supplying assistance other than direct operational or support functions or resources to the incident management effort.

Coordinate: To advance an analysis and exchange of information systematically among principals who have or may have a need to know certain information to carry out specific incident management responsibilities.

Corrective Actions: The implementation of procedures that are based on lessons learned from actual incidents or from training and exercises.

Delegation of Authority: A statement provided to the Incident Commander by the Agency Executive delegating authority and assigning responsibility. The delegation of authority can include objectives, priorities, expectations, constraints, and other



considerations or guidelines, as needed. Many agencies require written delegation of authority to be given to the Incident Commander prior to assuming command on larger incidents.

Demobilization: The orderly, safe, and efficient return of an incident resource to its original location and status.

Deputy: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, can be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or to perform a specific task. In some cases a deputy can act as relief for a superior, and therefore must be fully qualified in the position. Deputies generally can be assigned to the Incident Commander, General Staff, and Branch Directors.

Director: The Incident Command System title for individuals responsible for supervision of a Branch.

Dispatch: The ordered movement of a resource or resources to an assigned operational mission, or an administrative move from one location to another.

Division: The organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. Divisions are established when the number of resources exceeds the manageable span of control of the Section Chief. See **Group**.

Emergency: Any incident, whether natural or manmade, that requires responsive action to protect the safety, health or welfare of people or to limit damage to property.

Emergency Management/Response Personnel: Includes Federal, Provincial and municipal governments, NGOs, private sector-organizations, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and all other organizations and individuals who assume an emergency management role. (Also known as emergency responder.)

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC): The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOCs may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., federal, provincial, regional, municipal), or by some combination thereof.

Emergency Operations Plan: An ongoing plan for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards.

Emergency Public Information: Information that is disseminated primarily in anticipation of or during an emergency. In addition to providing situational information to the public, it frequently provides directive actions required to be taken by the general



public.

Evacuation: The organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of civilians from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.

Event: See Planned Event.

Federal: Of or pertaining to the Government of Canada.

Finance/Administration Section: The Incident Command System Section responsible for all administrative and financial considerations surrounding an incident.

Function: One of the five major activities in the Incident Command System: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. A sixth function, Intelligence/Investigations, may be established, if required, to meet incident management needs. The term *function* is also used when describing the activity involved (e.g., the planning function).

General Staff: A group of incident management personnel organized according to function and reporting to the Incident Commander. The General Staff normally consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief. An Intelligence/Investigations Chief may be established, if required, to meet incident management needs.

Group: An organizational subdivision established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division. See **Division**.

Hazard: Something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome.

Incident: An occurrence, natural or manmade, that requires a response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, civil unrest, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, tsunamis, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response.

Incident Action Plan: An oral or written plan containing general objectives reflecting the overall strategy for managing an incident. It may include the identification of operational resources and assignments. It may also include attachments that provide direction and important information for management of the incident during one or more operational periods.



Incident Base: The location at which primary Logistics functions for an incident are coordinated and administered. There is only one Base per incident. (Incident name or other designator will be added to the term Base.) The Incident Command Post may be co-located with the Incident Base.

Incident Command: The Incident Command System organizational element responsible for overall management of the incident and consisting of the Incident Commander (either single or unified command structure) and any assigned supporting staff.

Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site.

Incident Command Post (ICP): The field location where the primary functions are performed. The ICP may be co-located with the Incident Base or other incident facilities.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized on-scene emergency management construct specifically designed to provide an integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. ICS is used by various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, to organize field-level incident management operations.

Incident Management: The broad spectrum of activities and organizations providing effective and efficient operations, coordination, and support applied at all levels of government, utilizing both governmental and nongovernmental resources to plan for, respond to, and recover from an incident, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

Incident Management Team (IMT): An Incident Commander and the appropriate Command and General Staff personnel assigned to an incident. The level of training and experience of the IMT members, coupled with the identified formal response requirements and responsibilities of the IMT, are factors in determining “type,” or level, of IMT.

Incident Objectives: Statements of guidance and direction needed to select appropriate strategy(s) and the tactical direction of resources. Incident objectives are based on realistic expectations of what can be accomplished when all allocated resources have been effectively deployed. Incident objectives must be achievable and



measurable, yet flexible enough to allow strategic and tactical alternatives.

Information Management: The collection, organization, and control over the structure, processing, and delivery of information from one or more sources and distribution to one or more audiences who have a stake in that information.

Intelligence/Investigations: An organizational subset within ICS. Intelligence gathered within the Intelligence/Investigations function is information that either leads to the detection, prevention, apprehension, and prosecution of criminal activities—or the individual(s) involved—including terrorist incidents or information that leads to determination of the cause of a given incident (regardless of the source) such as public health events or fires with unknown origins. This is different from the normal operational and situational intelligence gathered and reported by the Planning Section.

Interoperability: Ability of systems, personnel, and equipment to provide and receive functionality, data, information and/or services to and from other systems, personnel, and equipment, between both public and private agencies, departments, and other organizations, in a manner enabling them to operate effectively together. Allows emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions via voice, data, or video-on-demand, in real time, when needed, and when authorized.

Job Aid: Checklist or other visual aid intended to ensure that specific steps of completing a task or assignment are accomplished.

Jurisdiction: A range or sphere of authority. Public agencies have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority. Jurisdictional authority at an incident can be political or geographical (e.g., federal, provincial, territorial, local boundary lines) or functional (e.g., law enforcement, public health).

Jurisdictional Agency: The agency having jurisdiction and responsibility for a specific geographical area, or a mandated function.

Key Resource: Any publicly or privately controlled resource essential to the minimal operations of the economy and government.

Liaison: A form of communication for establishing and maintaining mutual understanding and cooperation.

Liaison Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies or organizations.

Logistics: The process and procedure for providing resources and other services to support incident management.



Logistics Section: The Incident Command System Section responsible for providing facilities, services, and material support for the incident.

Management by Objectives: A management approach that involves a five-step process for achieving the incident goal. The Management by Objectives approach includes the following: establishing overarching incident objectives; developing strategies based on overarching incident objectives; developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols; establishing specific, measurable tactics or tasks for various incident-management functional activities and directing efforts to attain them, in support of defined strategies; and documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective action.

Manager: Individual within an Incident Command System organizational unit who is assigned specific managerial responsibilities (e.g., Staging Area Manager or Camp Manager).

Mitigation: Activities providing a critical foundation in the effort to reduce the loss of life and property from natural and/or manmade disasters by avoiding or lessening the impact of a disaster and providing value to the public by creating safer communities. Mitigation seeks to fix the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. These activities or actions, in most cases, will have a long-term sustained effect.

Mobilization: The process and procedures used by all organizations—Federal, State, tribal, and local—for activating, assembling, and transporting all resources that have been requested to respond to or support an incident.

Mobilization Guide: Reference document used by organizations outlining agreements, processes, and procedures used by all participating agencies/organizations for activating, assembling, and transporting resources.

Multijurisdictional Incident: An incident requiring action from multiple agencies that each have jurisdiction to manage certain aspects of an incident. In the Incident Command System, these incidents will be managed under a Unified Command.

Mutual Aid Agreement or Assistance Agreement: Written or oral agreement between and among agencies/organizations and/or jurisdictions that provides a mechanism to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services. The primary objective is to facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of emergency support prior to, during, and/or after an incident.

Nongovernmental Organization (NGO): An entity with an association that is based on interests of its members, individuals, or institutions. It is not created by a government, but it may work cooperatively with government. Such organizations serve a public



purpose, not a private benefit. Examples of NGOs include faith-based charity organizations and the Red Cross. NGOs, including voluntary and faith-based groups, provide relief services to sustain life, reduce physical and emotional distress, and promote the recovery of disaster victims. Often these groups provide specialized services that help individuals with disabilities. NGOs and voluntary organizations play a major role in assisting emergency managers before, during, and after an emergency.

Officer: The Incident Command System title for a person responsible for one of the Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Information.

Operational Period: The time scheduled for executing a given set of operation actions, as specified in the Incident Action Plan. Operational periods can be of various lengths, although usually they last 12 to 24 hours.

Operations Section: The Incident Command System (ICS) Section responsible for all tactical incident operations and implementation of the Incident Action Plan. In ICS, the Operations Section normally includes subordinate Branches, Divisions, and/or Groups.

Organization: Any association or group of persons with like objectives. Examples include, but are not limited to, governmental departments and agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

Planned Event: A scheduled non emergency activity (e.g., sporting event, concert, parade, etc.).

Planning Meeting: A meeting held as needed before and throughout the duration of an incident to select specific strategies and tactics for incident control operations and for service and support planning. For larger incidents, the Planning Meeting is a major element in the development of the Incident Action Plan.

Planning Section: The Incident Command System Section responsible for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of operational information related to the incident, and for the preparation and documentation of the Incident Action Plan. This Section also maintains information on the current and forecasted situation and on the status of resources assigned to the incident.

Portability: An approach that facilitates the interaction of systems that are normally distinct. Portability of radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies among emergency management/response personnel will allow for the successful and efficient integration, transport, and deployment of communications systems when necessary. Portability includes the standardized assignment of radio channels across jurisdictions, which allows responders to participate in an incident outside their jurisdiction and still use familiar equipment.

Pre-Positioned Resource: A resource moved to an area near the expected incident



site in response to anticipated resource needs.

Preparedness: A continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination during incident response. Within the *National Incident Management System*, preparedness focuses on the following elements: planning; procedures and protocols; training and exercises; personnel qualification and certification; and equipment certification.

Preparedness Organization: An organization that provides coordination for emergency management and incident response activities before a potential incident. These organizations range from groups of individuals to small committees to large standing organizations that represent a wide variety of committees, planning groups, and other organizations (e.g., Citizen Corps, Local Emergency Planning Committees, Critical Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Councils).

Prevention: Actions to avoid an incident or to intervene to stop an incident from occurring. Prevention involves actions to protect lives and property. It involves applying intelligence and other information to a range of activities that may include such countermeasures as deterrence operations; heightened inspections; improved surveillance and security operations; investigations to determine the full nature and source of the threat; public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and, as appropriate, specific law enforcement operations aimed at deterring, pre-empting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity and apprehending potential perpetrators and bringing them to justice.

Private Sector: Organizations and individuals that are not part of any governmental structure. The private sector includes for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, formal and informal structures, commerce, and industry.

Protocol: A set of established guidelines for actions (which may be designated by individuals, teams, functions, or capabilities) under various specified conditions.

Public Information: Processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely, accurate, and accessible information on an incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest to the public, responders, and additional stakeholders (both directly affected and indirectly affected).

Information Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.

Recovery: The development, coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans; the reconstitution of government operations and services; individual, private-sector, nongovernmental, and public assistance programs to provide housing



and to promote restoration; long-term care and treatment of affected persons; additional measures for social, political, environmental, and economic restoration; evaluation of the incident to identify lessons learned; post incident reporting; and development of initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents.

Recovery Plan: A plan developed to restore an affected area or community.

Resource Tracking: A standardized, integrated process conducted prior to, during, and after an incident by all emergency management/response personnel and their associated organizations.

Resources: Personnel and major items of equipment, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment to incident operations and for which status is maintained. Resources are described by kind and type and may be used in operational support or supervisory capacities at an incident or at an Emergency Operations Centre.

Response: Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency operations plans and of mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavourable outcomes. As indicated by the situation, response activities include applying intelligence and other information to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at pre-empting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators and bringing them to justice.

Safety Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring incident operations and advising the Incident Commander on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel.

Section: The Incident Command System organizational level having responsibility for a major functional area of incident management (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration, and Intelligence/Investigations (if established)). The Section is organizationally situated between the Branch and the Incident Command.

Single Resource: An individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew/team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an incident.

Sector: On some large incidents, such as wildland fires, with challenging or difficult terrain and limited access, a Division Supervisor's ability to provide adequate tactical supervision may be exceeded. Divisions may be further sub-divided into Sectors. A Sector is a geographic area within a Division.



Situation Report: Confirmed or verified information regarding the specific details relating to an incident.

Span of Control: The number of resources for which a supervisor is responsible, usually expressed as the ratio of supervisors to individuals. An appropriate span of control is between 1:3 and 1:7, with optimal being 1:5, or between 1:8 and 1:10 for many large-scale law enforcement operations.

Staging Area: Temporary location for available resources. A Staging Area can be any location in which personnel, supplies, and equipment can be temporarily housed or parked while awaiting operational assignment.

Status Report: Information specifically related to the status of resources (e.g., the availability or assignment of resources).

Strategy: The general plan or direction selected to accomplish incident objectives.

Strike Team: A set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel, common communications, and a leader.

Supervisor: The Incident Command System title for an individual responsible for a Division or Group.

Supporting Agency: An agency that provides support and/or resource assistance to another agency. See **Assisting Agency**.

System: Any combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, processes, procedures, and communications integrated for a specific purpose.

Tactics: The deployment and directing of resources on an incident to accomplish the objectives designated by strategy.

Task Force: Any combination of resources assembled to support a specific mission or operational need. All resource elements within a Task Force must have common communications and a designated leader.

Technical Specialist: Person with special skills that can be used anywhere within the Incident Command System organization. No minimum qualifications are prescribed, as technical specialists normally perform the same duties during an incident that they perform in their everyday jobs, and they are typically certified in their fields or professions.

Technology Support: Assistance that facilitates incident operations and sustains the research and development programs that underpin the long-term investment in the



Nation's future incident management capabilities.

Threat: Natural or manmade occurrence, individual, entity, or action that has or indicates the potential to harm life, information, operations, the environment, and/or property.

Tools: Those instruments and capabilities that allow for the professional performance of tasks, such as information systems, agreements, doctrine, capabilities, and legislative authorities.

Type: An Incident Command System resource classification that refers to capability. Type 1 is generally considered to be more capable than Types 2, 3, or 4, respectively, because of size, power, capacity, or (in the case of Incident Management Teams) experience and qualifications.

Unified Approach: The integration of resource management, communications and information management, and command and management in order to form an effective system.

Unified Area Command: Version of command established when incidents under an Area Command are multijurisdictional. See **Area Command**.

Unified Command (UC): An Incident Command System application used when more than one agency has incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the UC, often the senior persons from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the UC, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan.

Unit: The organizational element with functional responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistics, or finance/administration activity.

Unit Leader: The individual in charge of managing Units within an Incident Command System (ICS) functional Section. The Unit can be staffed by a number of support personnel providing a wide range of services. Some of the support positions are pre-established within ICS (e.g., Base/Camp Manager), but many others will be assigned as technical specialists.

Unity of Command: An Incident Command System principle stating that each individual involved in incident operations will be assigned to only one supervisor.