

CHAPTER 3
AREA COMMAND

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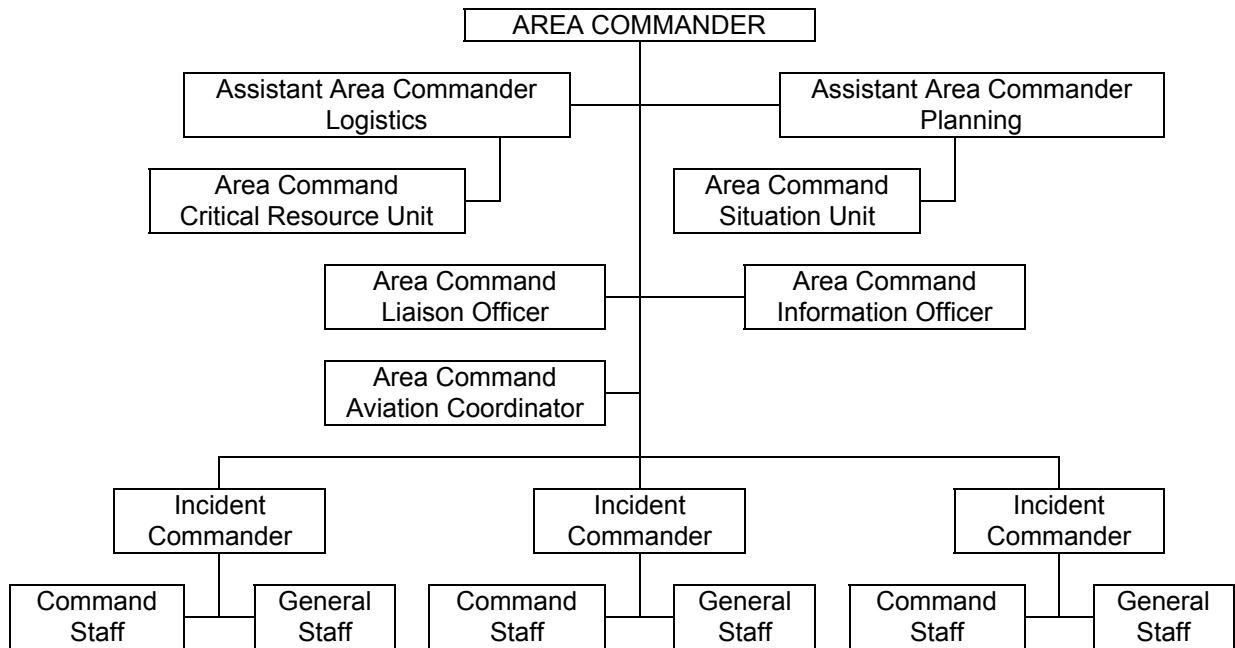
AREA COMMAND

Area Command is an expansion of the incident command function primarily designed to manage a very large incident or area that has multiple incident management teams assigned. An Area Command can be established at any time that incidents are close enough that oversight direction is required among incident management teams to ensure conflicts do not arise.

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

The organization is normally small with personnel assigned to Command, Planning and Logistics functions. Depending on the complexity of the interface between the incidents, specialists in other areas such as aviation, hazardous materials, the environment, and finance may also be assigned to the Area Command.

AREA COMMAND ORGANIZATION FOR THREE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS



POSITION CHECKLISTS

AREA COMMANDER (Single or Unified Area Command) - The Area Commander is responsible for the overall direction of incident management teams assigned to the same incident or to incidents in close proximity. This responsibility includes ensuring that conflicts are resolved, compatible incident objectives are established and strategies are selected for the use of critical resources.

Area Command also has the responsibility to coordinate with local, state, federal and volunteer organizations and agencies that are operating within the Area.

- a. Obtain briefing from the agency executive(s) on agency expectations, concerns and constraints.
- b. Obtain and carry out delegation of authority from the agency executive for overall management and direction of the incidents within the designated Area Command.
- c. If operating as a Unified Area Command, develop working agreement for how Area Commanders will function together.
- d. Delegate authority to Incident Commanders based on agency expectations, concerns and constraints.
- e. Establish an Area Command schedule and timeline.
- f. Resolve conflicts between incident "realities" and agency executive "wants."
- g. Establish appropriate location for the Area Command facilities.
- h. Determine and implement an appropriate Area Command organization.
- i. Determine need for Technical Specialists to support Area Command.
- j. Obtain incident briefing and Incident Action Plans from Incident Commanders.
- k. Assess incident situations prior to strategy meetings.
- l. Conduct a joint meeting with all Incident Commanders.
- m. Review objectives and strategies for each incident.
- n. Periodically review critical resource needs.
- o. Maintain a close coordination with the agency executive.
- p. Establish priorities for use of critical resources.
- q. Review procedures for interaction within the Area Command.
- r. Approve Incident Commanders' requests for and release of critical resources.
- s. Coordinate and approve demobilization plans.
- t. Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

ASSISTANT AREA COMMANDER, PLANNING - The Assistant Area Commander, Planning is responsible for collecting information from incident management teams in order to assess and evaluate potential conflicts in establishing incident objectives, strategies and the priority use of critical resources.

- a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander.
- b. Assemble information on individual incident objectives and begin to identify potential conflicts and/or ways for incidents to develop compatible operations.
- c. Recommend the priorities for allocation of critical resources to incidents.
- d. Maintain status on critical resource totals (not detailed status).
- e. Ensure that advance planning beyond the next operational period is being accomplished.

- f. Prepare and distribute Area Commander's decisions or orders.
- g. Prepare recommendations for the reassignment of critical resources as they become available.
- h. Ensure demobilization plans are coordinated between incident management teams and agency dispatchers.
- i. Schedule strategy meeting with Incident Commanders to conform to their planning processes.
- j. Prepare Area Command briefings as requested or needed.
- k. Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

ASSISTANT AREA COMMANDER, LOGISTICS - The Assistant Area Commander, Logistics is responsible for providing facilities, services and material at the Area Command level, and for ensuring effective use of critical resources and supplies among the incident management teams.

- a. Obtain briefing from the Area Commander.
- b. Provide facilities, services and materials for the Area Command organization.
- c. In the absence of the Area Command Aviation Coordinator, ensure coordinated airspace temporary flight restrictions are in place and understood.
- d. Ensure coordinated communication links and frequencies are in place.
- e. Assist in the preparation of Area Command decisions.
- f. Ensure the continued effective and priority use of critical resources among the incident management teams.
- g. Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

AREA COMMAND AVIATION COORDINATOR - Technical Specialist responsible for ensuring effective use of critical aviation resources among multiple management teams.

- a. Obtains briefing from Area Commander.
- b. Coordinates with local unit(s) aviation managers, dispatch centers, and aviation facility managers.
- c. Monitors incident(s) aviation cost, efficiency, and safety. Ensures agency rules, regulations, and safety procedures are followed.
- d. Provide to incidents local initial attack forces and other interested parties with an area aviation plan that outlines Area Command aviation procedures and specifics of the area aviation operation.
- e. Allocates air and ground based aviation resources according to Area Command priorities and objectives.
- f. Ensures inter-incident movement of aircraft is planned and coordinated.
- g. Coordinates with local and adjacent initial attack aircraft bases and local dispatch to ensure that procedures for transiting incident area and corridors are in place. Ensures flight following procedures, entry/exit routes and corridors, hazards, frequencies and incident air space are known to all affected.
- h. Coordinates with Incident Air Operations Branch Directors, dispatch, FAA, DOD, and local aviation authorities and administrators to ensure that Temporary Flight Restrictions are in place, coordinated, and do not overlap. Ensures that potential risks of operating on, near, or within Military Training Routes and Special-Use Airspace have been mitigated.

- i. Ensures that a process is in place for timely transmittal of incident reports and oversees the process to ensure corrective action is taken.
- j. Coordinates with incident, dispatch, and coordination centers to determine availability and status of committed and uncommitted of aviation resources, and to give status reports and situation appraisals for aviation assets and resources.
- k. Coordinate with Incident Air Operations Branch Directors, Communication Unit Leaders, frequency coordinators, coordination centers and initial attack dispatch to establish coordinated aviation communications plans to ensure aviation frequency management.
- l. Coordinates and manages aviation program and operations if aviation assets are assigned to Area Command.
- m. Coordinates the scheduling and movement of aviation safety assistance teams among incidents.
- n. Assists incidents by coordinating with Contracting Officers, local aviation managers, and vendors concerning a variety of issues (fueling, contract modifications, contract extensions, etc.).
- o. Coordinates with military officials and agency representatives concerning the assignments, utilization, status, and disposition of military aviation assets.