

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 12  
COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF**

**October 1994**

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
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The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT INSTRUCTORS OF THIS MODULE READ THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE **INSTRUCTOR CURRICULUM GUIDE** AND MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED THEREIN.**



## Detailed Lesson Outline

- COURSE:** Module 12 - Command and General Staff
- SUGGESTED TIME:** 6 Hours
- TRAINING AIDS:** Overhead projector, overhead pens, reference text
- SUBJECT:** Each Command and General Staff position is explained in terms of principal responsibilities and importance to the organization. Guidelines for activation of the Command and General Staff positions and the role of deputies and assistants are discussed. Relationships and duties are covered for each Command Staff member and for Agency Representatives.
- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Identify the steps built into the ICS design to compensate for previous incident management problems.
  2. Describe the primary guidelines related to Command and General Staff positions.
  3. Summarize principal responsibilities for each Command and General Staff member.
  4. Describe the roles of deputies and assistants in incident management.
  5. Describe the purposes and responsibilities of agency representatives, reporting relationships, and how they can be effectively used within the incident organization.
  6. Develop a Command and General Staff organization around a simulated scenario.

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
ADVISE STUDENTS THAT THE CLASS INSTRUCTION PHASE OF THIS MODULE WILL LAST APPROXIMATELY 4 HOURS. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A 2-HOUR EXERCISE AND CRITIQUE.	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>ALSO ADVISE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST MODULE OF THE I-400 ADVANCED ICS. SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MATERIAL COVERED IN MODULE 7 IS REVIEWED HERE. MORE MATERIAL IS PROVIDED ON EACH POSITION.</p>	
<p>REFER STUDENTS TO THE QUESTION SHEET THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED DURING THE EXERCISE AND REVIEW IT WITH THEM. THIS WILL HELP TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION AND INTEREST IN THE COURSE MATERIALS.</p>	<p>Reference Text p. 12-23</p>
<p><u>DO NOT PROVIDE THE ACTUAL SCENARIO UNTIL TIME FOR THE EXERCISE.</u></p>	
<p>STRESS THAT EXERCISE RELATED QUESTIONS MAY IN SOME CASES COVER A BROADER RANGE OF MATERIAL THAN PRESENTED IN THIS MODULE. IT ASSUMES THEY HAVE HAD PREREQUISITE MODULES.</p>	
<p>REVIEW THE INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>12-01-I400-VG</p>
<p>I. Background Related to Command and General Staff Development</p> <p>The Incident Command System was developed in response to problems that create major difficulties in incident management. These problems are often familiar to emergency service personnel. They include, for example, several agencies or jurisdictions with shared responsibility on a single incident, different organization structures, lack of communications, different terminology, etc.</p>	
<p>AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SESSION HAVE STUDENTS BRIEFLY DISCUSS OTHER INCIDENT-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT THEY MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>In addition to the problem of the single agency approach to incident management, one of the major other problems in previous incident management organizations was that there was too much authority vested in the top leadership role. The person in charge made <u>virtually all</u> the decisions. Assistants and deputies were usually not empowered to take independent actions. The result was that the incident organization took on the character, training and experience of the person in charge.</p> <p>One result was that as an incident grew, the management and decision-making load on the organization's leader also increased. As a result, major decisions often were not being made in a timely manner.</p> <p>Another consequence was that span of control also expanded as the organization grew. Often, the organizational leader had far too many "points of contact" to be effective. Too large a span of control has often been cited as a major problem in incident management.</p>	12-02-I400-VG
<p>To resolve these problems, the ICS design contained the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. A standardized functional organization must be established.</li> <li>B. Related functions should be grouped together within the organization.</li> <li>C. Subordinates within the organization must be delegated the <u>necessary authority</u> to manage their assigned functions with maximum autonomy, in accordance with the action plan objectives.</li> </ul>	12-03-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>D. Every incident, small or large, simple or complex, must have some form of an action plan whether oral or written.</p> <p>The action plan must be made known to all supervisory personnel. It will guide their operational actions for a prescribed period of time.</p> <p>As a result of including these requirements in the ICS design, it was possible to adequately organize and manage, delegate authority, and share responsibility.</p> <p>Obvious outgrowths of this were to reduce the span of control for the organizational leader to an effective level, and reduce the need for continual instructions to subordinates.</p> <p>The use of distributed authority in ICS is a primary factor in creating an incident organization that is responsive to management by objectives.</p> <p>II. Determination of Command and General Staff Functions</p> <p>ICS was designed by identifying the <u>primary</u> activities or functions necessary to effectively respond to incidents.</p> <p>Analyses of incident reports, and review of military organizations were all used in ICS development. These analyses identified the primary needs of incidents.</p> <p>As incidents became more complex, difficult, and expensive, the need for an <u>organizational manager</u> became more evident. Thus in ICS, and especially in larger incidents, the Incident Commander <u>manages the organization</u> and <u>not the incident</u>.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>In addition to the Command function, other desired functions and activities were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To delegate authority and to provide a <u>separate</u> organizational level within the ICS structure with <u>sole responsibility</u> for the tactical direction and control of resources.</li> <li>• To provide logistical support to the incident organization.</li> <li>• To provide planning services for both current and future activities.</li> <li>• To provide cost assessment, time recording, and procurement control necessary to support the incident and the managing of claims.</li> <li>• To promptly and effectively interact with the media, and provide informational services for the incident, involved agencies, and the public.</li> <li>• To provide a safe operating environment within all parts of the incident organization.</li> <li>• To ensure that assisting and cooperating agencies needs are met, and to see that they are used in an effective manner.</li> </ul> <p>While other activities were identified, these major incident activities became the basis for the ICS organization. All other functions support these activities.</p>	<p>12-04-I400-VG</p>
<p>A. Line and Staff Organizations</p> <p>In reviewing the list of the seven primary activities, some of them, e.g., tactical direction and logistical support, have quite specific responsibilities. These kinds of activities also</p>	<p>12-05-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>require the most support to accomplish their assignments. Other functional areas, e.g., "safety or information," have a more general relationship to the incident.</p> <p>Therefore, the ICS development team placed certain functions into a classic direct <u>line management</u> organization, and the others became <u>support staff</u> functions.</p> <p>The primary direct line management functions were established as <u>Sections</u> in the ICS organization and were called:</p> <p>ASK STUDENTS FOR THE NAMES ASSIGNED TO LINE ORGANIZATION FUNCTIONS.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Logistics</li> <li>• Finance/Administration</li> </ul> <p>The primary Support Staff functions were designated as:</p>	12-06-I400-VG
<p>ASK STUDENTS FOR THE NAMES ASSIGNED TO THE PRIMARY SUPPORT STAFF FUNCTIONS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Liaison</li> </ul> <p>From this breakout, the ICS Command and General Staff organizations developed.</p> <p>The four line General Staff functions and the three Command Staff support functions have worked well in a variety of incident applications. It became evident as ICS was used for a wider variety of incident types, that these functions</p>	12-07-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>would apply to the management of any incident of any size, independent of the nature of the incident, and could also be applied to the management of planned events.</p>	
<p>B. Command and General Staff Titles</p> <p>To provide an even clearer distinction, personnel filling Command and General Staffs positions were given distinctive titles.</p>	
<p>ASK STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY THE TITLES.</p> <p>All General Staff managers in the ICS are Chiefs.</p>	12-08-I400-VG
<p>All Command Staff personnel are Officers.</p> <p>All other levels within the organization have distinctive titles to help in identifying their position in the organization. These will be covered shortly.</p>	12-09-I400-VG
<p>The reason for using titles in the organization is often not understood. The use of titles provides another level of consistency, especially in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi-agency incidents - where many agencies must come together rapidly and work together effectively.</li> </ol>	
<p>CITE EXAMPLES OF BEING ASSIGNED TO AN INCIDENT AS A BRANCH MANAGER, BRANCH CHIEF, BRANCH SUPERVISOR, ETC. HAVING A CONSISTENT TITLE FOR THE POSITION ELIMINATES ANY CONFUSION.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. In ordering resources - where ordering will require some title be attached to the position.</li> </ol>	

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<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
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- 3. Having unique position titles allows for the use of the best qualified persons in the position without regard to any single agency's rank structure.

YOU MAY WISH TO CITE SOME EXAMPLES: E.G., ORDERING TWO DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_. (LEADERS, CHIEFS, DIRECTORS, SUPERVISORS, ETC.) HERE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE RESOURCE ORDER BE AS SPECIFIC AND CLEAR AS POSSIBLE.

III. Major Responsibilities of Command and General Staff Positions

DETAILED RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THESE POSITIONS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN MODULE 3 AND MODULE 7. REFER TO THESE MODULES FOR SPECIFICS ON THESE POSITIONS.

THE ICS COMPANION DOCUMENT - POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ALSO PROVIDES MORE DETAIL ON RESPONSIBILITIES.

EMPHASIZE TO STUDENTS THAT ONLY A GENERAL SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH POSITION WILL BE PRESENTED.

Responsibilities of the Command and General Staff positions have been covered in previous modules. The following is a brief summary of each position.

The Incident Commander is technically not a part of either the General or Command staff.

HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. Responsibilities of Incident Commander
  - Make sure you have clear authority and know agency policy.

12-10-I400-VG  
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<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure incident safety.</li> <li>• Establish an Incident Command Post.</li> <li>• Obtain a briefing from the prior Incident Commander and/or assess the situation.</li> <li>• Establish immediate priorities.</li> <li>• Determine incident objectives and strategy(s) to be followed.</li> <li>• Establish the level of organization needed, and continuously monitor the operation and effectiveness of that organization.</li> <li>• Manage planning meetings as required.</li> <li>• Approve and implement the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Coordinate the activities of the Command and General Staff.</li> <li>• Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources.</li> <li>• Approve the use of students, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.</li> <li>• Authorize the release of information to the news media.</li> <li>• Order demobilization of the incident when appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure incident after-action reports are complete.</li> </ul>	<p>12-10-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>B. The ICS General Staff Positions</p> <p>The ICS General Staff consists of the following positions:</p>	
<p>ASK STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY NAMES OF GENERAL STAFF POSITIONS.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations Section Chief</li> <li>• Planning Section Chief</li> <li>• Logistics Section Chief</li> <li>• Finance/Administration Section Chief</li> </ul>	<p>12-11-I400-VG</p>
<p><u>General guidelines related to General Staff positions:</u></p>	<p>12-12-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only <u>one</u> person will be designated to lead each General Staff position.</li> <li>• General Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any agency or jurisdiction.</li> <li>• Members of the General Staff report directly to the Incident Commander. If a General Staff position is not activated, the Incident Commander will have responsibility for that functional activity.</li> <li>• Deputy positions may be established for each of the General Staff positions. Deputies are individuals fully qualified to fill the primary position. Deputies can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies, as appropriate. This is a good way to bring about greater interagency coordination.</li> </ul>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Staff members may exchange information with any person within the organization. Direction takes place through the chain of command. This is an important concept in ICS.</li> <li>• General Staff positions should not be combined. For example, to establish a "Planning and Logistics Section" it is better to initially create the two separate functions, and if necessary for a short time place one person in charge of both. That way, the transfer of responsibility can be made easier.</li> </ul>	
<p>The reasons not to combine positions are:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If they need to be separated at a later time, this could cause confusion due to the mix of assignments, staffing, etc.</li> <li>• This creates a "non-standard" organization which would be confusing to incoming agencies.</li> </ul>	12-13-I400-VG
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operations Section Chief</li> </ol> <p>The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The Incident Action Plan provides the necessary guidance. The need to expand the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and is influenced by span of control considerations.</p>	12-14-1400-VG
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	<p>12-15-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Major responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage tactical operations.</li> <li>• Ensure interaction is taking place with other agencies.</li> <li>• Assist in the development of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Supervise the execution of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Maintain close contact with subordinate positions.</li> <li>• Ensure safe tactical operations.</li> <li>• Request additional resources to support tactical operations.</li> <li>• Approve release of resources from active assignments (not release from the incident).</li> <li>• Make or approve expedient changes to the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Maintain close communication with the Incident Commander.</li> </ul>	<p>12-15-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p>2. Planning Section Chief</p> <p>The Planning Section Chief is responsible for providing planning and status services for the incident. Under the direction of</p>	<p>12-16-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>the Planning Section Chief, the Planning Section collects situation and resources status information, evaluates it, and processes the information for use in developing action plans. Dissemination of information can be in the form of the Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status board displays.</p>	
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	
<p>Major responsibilities of the Planning Section Chief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data.</li> <li>• Provide input to the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief for use in preparing the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Supervise preparation of the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Conduct and facilitate planning meetings.</li> <li>• Reassign personnel already on site to ICS organizational positions as needed and appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>12-17-I400-VG Page 1 of 3</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units.</li> <li>• Determine the need for specialized resources to support the incident.</li> </ul>	<p>12-17-I400-VG Page 2 of 3</p>

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble and disassemble task forces and strike teams not assigned to Operations.</li> <li>• Establish specialized data collection systems as necessary. (e.g., weather)</li> <li>• Assemble information on alternative strategies and contingency plans.</li> <li>• Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.</li> <li>• Report any significant changes in incident status.</li> <li>• Compile and display incident status information.</li> <li>• Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan.</li> <li>• Incorporate Traffic, Medical, Communications Plans, and other supporting material into the Incident Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>12-17-I400-VG Page 3 of 3</p>
<p>3. Logistics Section Chief</p> <p>The Logistics Section Chief provides all incident support needs with the exception of air logistics support.</p> <p>The Logistics Section is responsible for providing:</p>	<p>12-18-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	<p>12-19-I400-VG</p>

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Supplies</li> <li>• Equipment maintenance and fueling</li> <li>• Food Services (for responders)</li> <li>• Medical services (for responders)</li> <li>• All off-incident resources</li> </ul>	
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	
<p>Major responsibilities of the Logistics Section Chief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage all incident logistics.</li> <li>• Provide logistical input to the Incident Commander in preparing the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• Brief Logistics Branch Directors and Unit Leaders as needed.</li> <li>• Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.</li> <li>• Request additional resources as needed.</li> <li>• Develop as required, the Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plans.</li> <li>• Oversee demobilization of the Logistics Section.</li> </ul>	<p>12-20-I400-VG</p>

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<p>4. Finance/Administration Section Chief</p> <p>The Finance/Administration Section Chief is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. Not all incidents will require an Finance/Administration Section. Only when the involved agencies have a specific need for finance services will the Section be activated.</p> <p>Due to the specialized nature of the administration and finance function, the Finance/Administration Section Chief is usually a member of the jurisdiction or agency requiring financial services. However, that is not an absolute requirement.</p>	<p>12-21-I400-VG</p>
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	
<p>Major responsibilities of the Finance/Administration Section Chief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage all financial aspects of an incident.</li> <li>• Provide financial and cost analysis information as requested.</li> <li>• Ensure compensation and claims functions are being addressed relative to the incident.</li> <li>• Gather pertinent information from briefings with responsible agencies.</li> <li>• Develop an operating plan for the Finance/Administration Section; fill Section supply and support needs.</li> </ul>	<p>12-22-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine need to set up and operate an incident commissary.</li> <li>• Meet with assisting and cooperating agency representatives as needed.</li> <li>• Maintain daily contact with agency(s) administrative headquarters on finance matters.</li> <li>• Ensure that all personnel and equipment time records are accurately completed and transmitted to home agencies, according to policy.</li> <li>• Provide financial input for demobilization planning.</li> <li>• Ensure that all obligation documents initiated at the incident are properly prepared and completed.</li> <li>• Brief agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing attention or follow-up.</li> </ul>	<p>12-22-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p>5. Activating General Staff Positions</p> <p>General Staff positions on an incident are activated only as needed. Smaller incidents may not require activation. A primary concern is always span of control.</p> <p>There are no guidelines as to which positions would be activated first. The complexity of the incident, experience, training, and the judgment of the Incident</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Commander will determine the order of activation.</p> <p>An important consideration in ICS is that those positions not activated remain the responsibility of the Incident Commander.</p> <p>C. The Command Staff</p> <p>There are three other important activities that are the responsibility of the Incident Commander, in addition to the primary command and general staff functions.</p> <p>ASK STUDENTS TO DESCRIBE THE OTHER ACTIVITIES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handling public information and media relations.</li> <li>• Maintaining close contact with assisting and cooperating agencies.</li> <li>• Ensuring maximum possible safety for all assigned personnel.</li> </ul> <p>As incidents grow in size or become more complex, any one of these activities can consume much of the Incident Commander's time. Therefore, it is important for the Incident Commander to recognize the importance of and quickly fill needed Command Staff positions.</p> <p>The Command Staff in ICS consists of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Officer</li> <li>• Safety Officer</li> <li>• Liaison Officer</li> </ul>	<p>12-23-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Guidelines related to Command Staff Positions:</p> <p>ASK STUDENTS TO PROVIDE AND LIST GUIDELINES THEY THINK ARE IMPORTANT.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one person will be designated for each Command Staff position. This applies to all incidents including multijurisdictional incidents.</li> <li>• Command Staff positions should not be combined.</li> <li>• Command Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any appropriate agency or jurisdiction.</li> <li>• There are no deputy positions at the Command Staff level.</li> <li>• Each of the positions may have one or more assistants as necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>12-24-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistants are recommended for larger incidents.</li> <li>• Assistants can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies as appropriate.</li> <li>• Command Staff members report directly to the Incident Commander.</li> <li>• Command Staff members may interact with any position within the ICS for purposes of information exchange.</li> </ul>	<p>12-24-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p>1. Information Officer</p> <p>The Information Officer is responsible for developing information about the incident</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>for the news media, incident personnel, and other appropriate agencies and organizations.</p> <p>Reasons for the Incident Commander to designate an Information Officer include:</p> <p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An obvious high visibility or sensitive incident.</li> <li>• Media demands for information may interfere with the IC's effectiveness.</li> <li>• The media's capability to acquire (and interpret) its own information is increasing.</li> <li>• Reduces the risk of multiple sources releasing possibly conflicting information.</li> </ul> <p>The following are the major responsibilities of the Information Officer: (Note that agencies will have different policies and procedures relative to the handling of public information. For example, in some areas incident media releases must be first cleared by the Agency Executive.)</p> <p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	<p>12-25-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine from the Incident Commander any limits on the information to be released.</li> <li>• Develop information for use in media briefings.</li> </ul>	<p>12-26-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain Incident Commander's approval of media news releases.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic media briefings.</li> <li>• Arrange for tours and other interviews or briefings that may be required.</li> <li>• Monitor and forward media information that may be useful to incident planning.</li> <li>• Maintain current information summaries and/or displays on the incident.</li> <li>• Make information about the incident available to incident personnel.</li> <li>• Participate in the planning meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>12-26-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p>2. Safety Officer</p> <p>The Safety Officer's function on the Command Staff is to identify, assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations, and to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety. Working through the chain of command, the Safety Officer will correct unsafe situations.</p> <p>An important point to remember is that the Safety Officer may exercise <u>emergency authority</u> to directly stop unsafe acts if personnel are in imminent life-threatening danger.</p>	<p>12-27-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Under OSHA regulation 1910.120, the Safety Officer function is required by law at the tactical operations level on hazardous materials incidents.</p>	
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	
<p>Major responsibilities of the Safety Officer are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in planning meetings.</li> <li>• Identify hazardous situations associated with the incident, and make sure that problems are taken care of prior to an accident.</li> <li>• Assign assistants qualified to evaluate special hazards.</li> <li>• Review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications and prepare incident specific safety message or plan based on hazards, problems, or agency requirements.</li> <li>• Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.</li> <li>• Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents that have occurred within the incident area.</li> <li>• Review and approve the Medical Plan.</li> <li>• Ensure safety messages and briefings are made as needed.</li> </ul>	<p>12-28-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>3. Liaison Officer</p> <p>Incidents that are multijurisdictional or that have several agencies involved at the incident scene may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff.</p> <p>The Liaison Officer will be the point of contact for Agency Representatives assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. These are usually personnel <u>other than</u> those directly associated with resources on direct tactical assignments.</p>	
<p>HAVE STUDENTS PROVIDE RESPONSIBILITIES. LIST AND DISCUSS. COMPARE TO LIST BELOW.</p>	
<p>The following are some of the main reasons to establish the Liaison Officer position at an incident:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When several <u>agencies</u> send or plan to send Agency Representatives to an incident in support of their resources.</li> <li>• When the IC can no longer provide the time for individual coordination with each Agency Representative.</li> </ul>	<p>12-29-I400-VG</p>
<p>Major responsibilities and duties of the Liaison Officer at an incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as a point of contact for Agency Representatives.</li> </ul>	<p>12-30-I400-VG</p>

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and Agency Representatives.</li> <li>• Assist in setting up and coordinating interagency contacts.</li> <li>• Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems.</li> <li>• Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capabilities of agency resources.</li> <li>• Provide agency-specific demobilization information and requirements.</li> </ul>	
<p>IV. Agency Representatives</p> <p>An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency. An Agency Representative is different than an individual assigned to an incident to be a part of a Unified Command.</p> <p>The Agency Representative must be given authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.</p> <p><b>POINT OUT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF TIME DELAYS, ETC. WHEN AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES CANNOT MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEIR AGENCY.</b></p> <p>Agency Representatives can function as IC's in a Unified Command if they are IC qualified by their agencies.</p>	<p>12-31-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Even in a Unified Command organization, agencies may provide other Agency Representatives to assist in the multi-agency coordination.</p> <p>Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer, or to the Incident Commander in the absence of a Liaison Officer.</p> <p>Major responsibilities of the Agency Representative:</p>	
<p>HAVE STUDENTS DISCUSS RESPONSIBILITIES.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all of their agency resources have completed check-in at the incident.</li> <li>• Obtain briefing from the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander.</li> <li>• Inform their agency personnel on the incident that the Agency Representative position has been filled.</li> <li>• Attend planning meetings as required.</li> <li>• Provide input to the planning process on the use of agency resources unless resource technical specialists are assigned from the agency.</li> <li>• Cooperate fully with the Incident Commander and the Command and General Staff on the agency's involvement at the incident.</li> </ul>	<p>12-32-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the well-being and safety of agency personnel assigned to the incident.</li> <li>• Advise the Liaison Officer of any special agency needs, requirements or agency restrictions.</li> <li>• Report to agency dispatch or headquarters on a pre-arranged schedule.</li> </ul>	<p>12-32-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all agency personnel and equipment are properly accounted for and released prior to departure.</li> <li>• Ensure that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are complete prior to departure.</li> <li>• Have a debriefing session with the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander prior to departure.</li> </ul>	
<p>V. Small Group Exercise</p> <p>The purpose of this exercise is to have students develop an ICS Command and General organization around a simulated scenario.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DIVIDE STUDENTS INTO GROUPS OF FIVE.</li> <li>2. THE ENCLOSED SCENARIO IS FOR A WILDFIRE INCIDENT. IF THIS IS NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUR STUDENTS' BACKGROUNDS, SELECT ANOTHER SCENARIO FROM THE SCENARIO CATALOG.</li> <li>3. ASSIGN RESOURCES APPROPRIATE TO THE AGENCY IN CHARGE, USING NUMBERS IN THE SCENARIO. SEE ATTACHED RESOURCE LISTING. EACH GROUP SHOULD HAVE THE SAME RESOURCE LIST.</li> <li>4. STUDENT GROUPS ARE TO DEVELOP AN INCIDENT ORGANIZATION FOR THAT SCENARIO. THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE AS DETAILED AS POSSIBLE.</li> </ol>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>5. THEY SHOULD INCLUDE MULTI-AGENCY AND MULTIJURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS THE USE OF DEPUTIES AND ASSISTANTS IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.</p>	
<p>6. THEY ARE TO ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS IN THE REFERENCE TEXT. IF YOU WISH TO SHORTEN THE LIST, DESIGNATE IN ADVANCE THE QUESTIONS YOU WANT ADDRESSED.</p>	<p>Reference Text p.12-23</p>
<p>7. REASSEMBLE STUDENTS AND HAVE EACH GROUP PRESENT THEIR ORGANIZATION.</p>	
<p>8. CRITIQUE RESULTS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS.</p>	
<p>THIS COMPLETES PRESENTATION MATERIAL FOR THIS MODULE. HAVE STUDENTS PREPARE FOR MODULE TEST.</p>	

## SCENARIO

### Thunder Mountain Wildfire

You are the Incident Commander on the Thunder Mountain Fire. You have two wildland engines with you, a Type 4 and a Type 5. The fire is burning in an area with limited access. The time is 1400.

The fire is threatening the Thunder Mountain watershed, which is the main source of water for the Warrington township. The fire is burning in brush and is estimated to be 125 acres and is headed toward a prime stand of timber on Thunder Mountain. The top of the mountain has all types of the electronic equipment for Warrington (telephone system, television, etc.) The fire is being pushed in the direction of a summer home area on Thunder Lake, five miles away. Estimated control date for the fire is 4 days from now.

Additional resources due on scene within one hour:

- 5 engines, 3 Type 4s and 2 Type 5s
- 1 Type 2 Water Tender
- 1 Dozer Type 2 with single resource boss and operator
- 4 Type 2 hand crews
- 2 Type 3 helicopters
- 1 Helibase manager

Additional background:

You have been on scene for 15 minutes.

You currently have 2 single resources reporting to you, an additional 14 are ordered and due on scene within the hour.

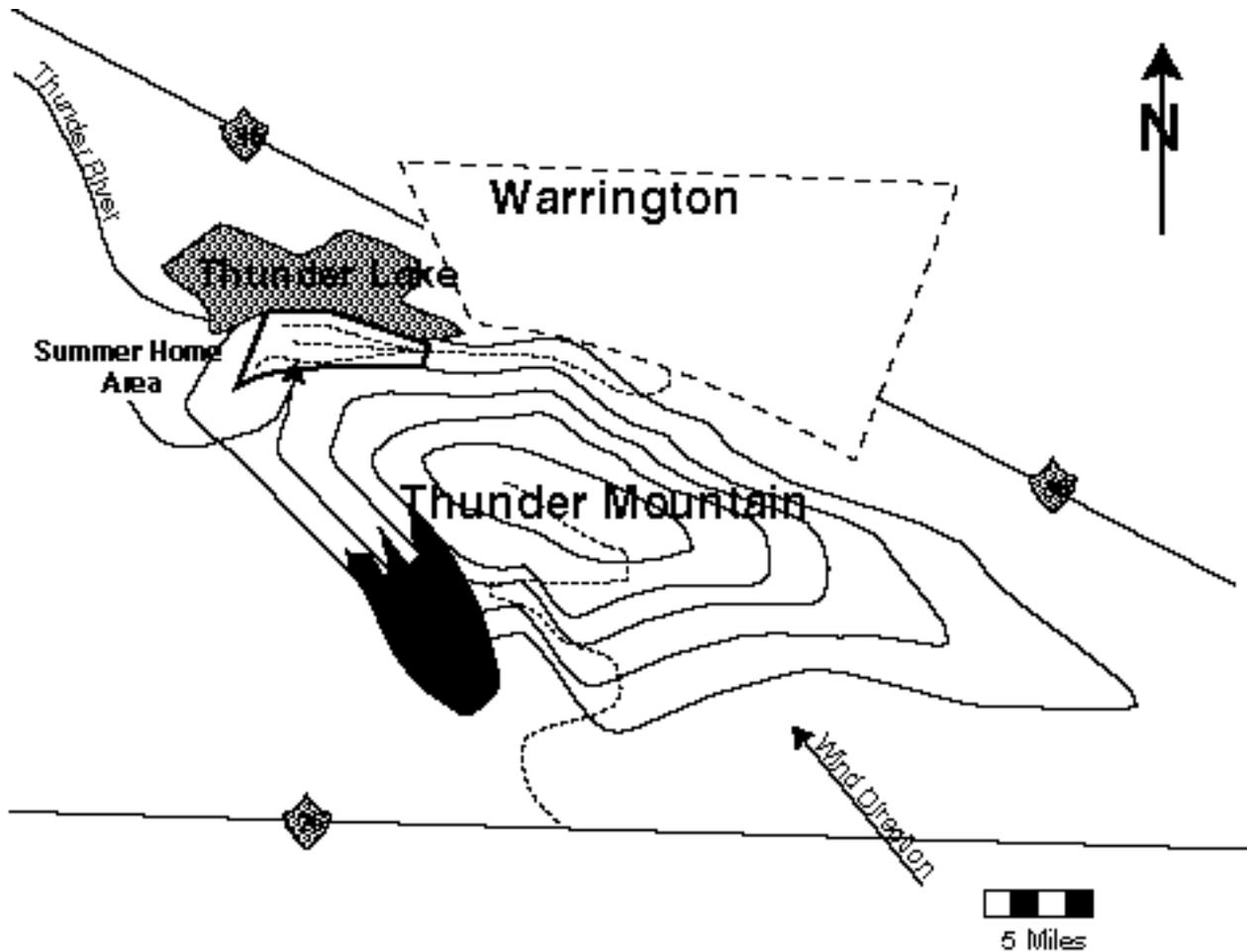
A small remote summer home area is located 5 miles from the fire. It is in the direct path of the fire. Property is not immediately in danger but, if the winds pick up, the summer home area and the radio equipment on top of the mountain could be in danger.

The news media have just arrived with a TV ground crew.

Weather for the area is predicted to be hot and dry for the next several days.

Your agency has primary responsibility for the incident, but may need to request assistance from other agencies.

Staff is limited. However four qualified people are available who could assume staff role (Command and General). These are in addition to the single resources on scene.



## THUNDER MOUNTAIN WILDFIRE

### RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

Exercise Planners: Change names or add to this list as you desire. Depending on the exercise needs, use blank columns to show: # resources available, typing, resources needed, resources ordered, resources in Staging Areas, resources assigned by agency, etc.

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMM. UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 12  
COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF**

**October 1994**

**REFERENCE TEXT**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
Mike Munkres - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Gary Nelson - Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Bill Vargas - State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety

The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California



Each Command and General Staff position is explained in terms of principal responsibilities and importance to the organization. Guidelines for activation of the Command and General Staff positions and the role of deputies and assistants are discussed. Relationships and duties are covered for each Command Staff member and for Agency Representatives.

Objectives:

1. Identify the steps built into the ICS design to compensate for previous incident management problems.
2. Describe the primary guidelines related to Command and General Staff positions.
3. Summarize principal responsibilities for each Command and General Staff member.
4. Describe the roles of deputies and assistants in incident management.
5. Describe the purposes and responsibilities of agency representatives, reporting relationships, and how they can be effectively used within the incident organization.
6. Develop a Command and General Staff organization around a simulated scenario.

## I. Background Related to Command and General Staff Development

The Incident Command System was developed in response to problems that create major difficulties in incident management. These problems are often familiar to emergency service personnel. They include, for example, several agencies or jurisdictions with shared responsibility on a single incident, different organization structures, lack of communications, different terminology, etc.

In addition to the problem of the single agency approach to incident management, one of the major other problems in previous incident management organizations was that there was too much authority vested in the top leadership role. The person in charge made virtually all the decisions. Assistants and deputies were usually not empowered to take independent actions. The result was that the incident organization took on the character, training and experience of the person in charge.

One result was that as an incident grew, the management and decision-making load on the organization's leader also increased. As a result, major decisions often were not being made in a timely manner.

Another consequence was that span of control also expanded as the organization grew. Often, the organizational leader had far too many "points of contact" to be effective. Too large a span of control has often been cited as a major problem in incident management.

To resolve these problems, the ICS design contained the following requirements:

- A. A standardized functional organization must be established.
- B. Related functions should be grouped together within the organization.

- C. Subordinates within the organization must be delegated the necessary authority to manage their assigned functions with maximum autonomy, in accordance with the action plan objectives.
- D. Every incident, small or large, simple or complex, must have some form of an action plan whether oral or written.

The action plan must be made known to all supervisory personnel. It will guide their operational actions for a prescribed period of time.

As a result of including these requirements in the ICS design, it was possible to adequately organize and manage, delegate authority, and share responsibility.

Obvious outgrowths of this were to reduce the span of control for the organizational leader to an effective level, and reduce the need for continual instructions to subordinates.

The use of distributed authority in ICS is a primary factor in creating an incident organization that is responsive to management by objectives.

## II. Determination of Command and General Staff Functions

ICS was designed by identifying the primary activities or functions necessary to effectively respond to incidents.

Analyses of incident reports, and review of military organizations were all used in ICS development. These analyses identified the primary needs of incidents.

As incidents became more complex, difficult, and expensive, the need for an organizational manager became more evident. Thus in ICS, and especially in larger incidents, the Incident Commander manages the organization and not the incident.

In addition to the Command function, other desired functions and activities were:

- To delegate authority and to provide a separate organizational level within the ICS structure with sole responsibility for the tactical direction and control of resources.
- To provide logistical support to the incident organization.
- To provide planning services for both current and future activities.
- To provide cost assessment, time recording, and procurement control necessary to support the incident and the managing of claims.
- To promptly and effectively interact with the media, and provide informational services for the incident, involved agencies, and the public.
- To provide a safe operating environment within all parts of the incident organization.
- To ensure that assisting and cooperating agencies needs are met, and to see that they are used in an effective manner.

While other activities were identified, these major incident activities became the basis for the ICS organization. All other functions support these activities.

#### A. Line and Staff Organizations

In reviewing the list of the seven primary activities, some of them, e.g., tactical direction and logistical support, have quite specific responsibilities. These kinds of activities also require the most support to accomplish their assignments. Other functional areas, e.g., safety or information, have a more general relationship to the incident.

Therefore, the ICS development team placed certain functions into a classic direct line management organization, and the others became support staff functions.

The primary direct line management functions were established as Sections in the ICS organization and were called:

- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration

The primary Support Staff functions were designated as:

- Information
- Safety
- Liaison

From this breakout, the ICS Command and General Staff organizations developed.

The four line General Staff functions and the three Command Staff support functions have worked well in a variety of incident applications.

It became evident as ICS was used for a wider variety of incident types, that these functions would apply to the management of any incident of any size, independent of the nature of the incident, and could also be applied to the management of planned events.

## B. Command and General Staff Titles

To provide an even clearer distinction, personnel filling Command and General Staffs positions were given distinctive titles.

All General Staff managers in the ICS are Chiefs.

All Command Staff personnel are Officers.

All other levels within the organization have distinctive titles to help in identifying their position in the organization. These will be covered shortly.

The reason for using titles in the organization is often not understood. The use of titles provides another level of consistency, especially in:

1. Multi-agency incidents - where many agencies must come together rapidly and work together effectively.
2. In ordering resources - where ordering will require some title be attached to the position.
3. Having unique position titles allows for the use of the best qualified persons in the position without regard to any single agency's rank structure.

### III. Major Responsibilities of Command and General Staff Positions

Responsibilities of the Command and General Staff positions have been covered in previous modules. The following is a brief summary of each position.

The Incident Commander is technically not a part of either the General or Command staff.

#### A. Responsibilities of Incident Commander

- Make sure you have clear authority and know agency policy.
- Ensure incident safety.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Obtain a briefing from the prior Incident Commander and/or assess the situation.
- Establish immediate priorities.

- Determine incident objectives and strategy(s) to be followed.
- Establish the level of organization needed, and continuously monitor the operation and effectiveness of that organization.
- Manage planning meetings as required.
- Approve and implement the Incident Action Plan.
- Coordinate the activities of the Command and General Staff.
- Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources.
- Approve the use of students, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize the release of information to the news media.
- Order demobilization of the incident when appropriate.
- Ensure incident after-action reports are complete.

#### B. The ICS General Staff Positions

The ICS General Staff consists of the following positions:

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

General guidelines related to General Staff positions:

- Only one person will be designated to lead each General Staff position.
- General Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any agency or jurisdiction.
- Members of the General Staff report directly to the Incident Commander. If a General Staff position is not activated, the Incident Commander will have responsibility for that functional activity.
- Deputy positions may be established for each of the General Staff positions. Deputies are individuals fully qualified to fill the primary position. Deputies can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies, as appropriate. This is a good way to bring about greater interagency coordination.
- General Staff members may exchange information with any person within the organization. Direction takes place through the chain of command. This is an important concept in ICS.
- General Staff positions should not be combined. For example, to establish a "Planning and Logistics Section" it is better to initially create the two separate functions, and if necessary for a short time place one person in charge of both. That way, the transfer of responsibility can be made easier.

The reasons not to combine positions are:

- If they need to be separated at a later time, this could cause confusion due to the mix of assignments, staffing, etc.
- This creates a "non-standard" organization which would be confusing to incoming agencies.

## 1. Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The Incident Action Plan provides the necessary guidance. The need to expand the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and is influenced by span of control considerations.

Major responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief:

- Manage tactical operations.
- Ensure interaction is taking place with other agencies.
- Assist in the development of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
- Supervise the execution of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
- Maintain close contact with subordinate positions.
- Ensure safe tactical operations.
- Request additional resources to support tactical operations.
- Approve release of resources from active assignments (not release from the incident).
- Make or approve expedient changes to the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
- Maintain close communication with the Incident Commander.

## 2. Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief is responsible for providing planning and status services for the incident. Under the direction of the Planning Section Chief, the Planning Section collects situation and resources status information, evaluates it, and processes the information for use in developing action plans. Dissemination of information can be in the form of the Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status board displays.

Major responsibilities of the Planning Section Chief:

- Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data.
- Provide input to the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief for use in preparing the Incident Action Plan.
- Supervise preparation of the Incident Action Plan.
- Conduct and facilitate planning meetings.
- Reassign personnel already on site to ICS organizational positions as needed and appropriate.
- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units.
- Determine the need for specialized resources to support the incident.
- 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 and contingency plans.
- Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.
- Report any significant changes in incident status.
- Compile and display incident status information.
- Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan.
- Incorporate Traffic, Medical, Communications Plans, and other supporting material into the Incident Action Plan.

### 3. Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief provides all incident support needs with the exception of air logistics support.

The Logistics Section is responsible for providing:

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Communications
- Supplies
- Equipment maintenance and fueling
- Food Services (for responders)

- Medical services (for responders)
- All off-incident resources

Major responsibilities of the Logistics Section Chief:

- Manage all incident logistics.
- Provide logistical input to the Incident Commander in preparing the Incident Action Plan.
- Brief Logistics Branch Directors and Unit Leaders as needed.
- Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.
- Request additional resources as needed.
- Develop as required, the Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plans.
- Oversee demobilization of the Logistics Section.

#### 4. Finance/Administration Section Chief

The Finance/Administration Section Chief is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. Not all incidents will require an Finance/Administration Section. Only when the involved agencies have a specific need for finance services will the Section be activated.

Due to the specialized nature of the administration and finance function, the Finance/Administration Section Chief is usually a member of the jurisdiction or agency requiring financial services. However, that is not an absolute requirement.

Major responsibilities of the  
Finance/Administration Section Chief:

- 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 operating plan for the Finance/Administration Section; fill Section supply and support needs.
- Determine need to set up and operate an incident commissary.
- Meet with assisting and cooperating agency representatives as needed.
- Maintain daily contact with agency(s) administrative headquarters on finance matters.
- Ensure that all personnel and equipment time records are accurately completed and transmitted to home agencies, according to policy.
- Provide financial input for demobilization planning.
- 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 follow-up.

## 5. Activating General Staff Positions

General Staff positions on an incident are activated only as needed. Smaller incidents may not require activation. A primary concern is always span of control.

There are no guidelines as to which positions would be activated first. The complexity of the incident, experience, training, and the judgment of the Incident

Commander will determine the order of activation.

An important consideration in ICS is that those positions not activated remain the responsibility of the Incident Commander.

### C. The Command Staff

There are three other important activities that are the responsibility of the Incident Commander, in addition to the primary command and general staff functions.

- Handling public information and media relations.
- Maintaining close contact with assisting and cooperating agencies.
- Ensuring maximum possible safety for all assigned personnel.

As incidents grow in size or become more complex, any one of these activities can consume much of the Incident Commander's time. Therefore, it is important for the Incident Commander to recognize the importance of and quickly fill needed Command Staff positions.

The Command Staff in ICS consists of:

- Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer

### Guidelines related to Command Staff Positions:

- Only one person will be designated for each Command Staff position. This applies to all incidents including multijurisdictional incidents.
- Command Staff positions should not be combined.
- Command Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any appropriate agency or jurisdiction.
- There are no deputy positions at the Command Staff level.
- Each of the positions may have one or more assistants as necessary.
- Assistants are recommended for larger incidents.
- Assistants can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies as appropriate.
- Command Staff members report directly to the Incident Commander.
- Command Staff members may interact with any position within the ICS for purposes of information exchange.

## 1. Information Officer

The Information Officer is responsible for developing information about the incident for the news media, incident personnel, and other appropriate agencies and organizations.

Reasons for the Incident Commander to designate an Information Officer include:

- An obvious high visibility or sensitive incident.
- Media demands for information may interfere with the IC's effectiveness.
- The media's capability to acquire (and interpret) its own information is increasing.
- Reduces the risk of multiple sources releasing possibly conflicting information.

The following are the major responsibilities of the Information Officer: (Note that agencies will have different policies and procedures relative to the handling of public information. For example, in some areas incident media releases must be first cleared by the Agency Executive.)

- Determine from the Incident Commander any limits on the information to be released.
- Develop information for use in media briefings.
- Obtain Incident Commander's approval of media 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 the planning meeting.

## 2. Safety Officer

The Safety Officer's function on the Command Staff is to identify, assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations, and to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety. Working through the chain of command, the Safety Officer will correct unsafe situations.

An important point to remember is that the Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to directly stop unsafe acts if personnel are in imminent life-threatening danger.

Under OSHA regulation 1910.120, the Safety Officer function is required by law at the tactical operations level on hazardous materials incidents.

Major responsibilities of the Safety Officer are:

- Participate in planning meetings.
- Identify hazardous situations associated with the incident, and make sure that problems are taken care of prior to an accident.
- Assign assistants qualified to evaluate special hazards.

- Review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications and prepare incident specific safety message or plan based on hazards, problems, or agency requirements.
- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents that have occurred within the incident area.
- Review and approve the Medical Plan.
- Ensure safety messages and briefings are made as needed.

### 3. Liaison Officer

Incidents that are multijurisdictional or that have several agencies involved at the incident scene may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff.

The Liaison Officer will be the point of contact for Agency Representatives assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. These are usually personnel other than those directly associated with resources on direct tactical assignments.

The following are some of the main reasons to establish the Liaison Officer position at an incident:

- When several agencies send or plan to send Agency Representatives to an incident in support of their resources.
- When the IC can no longer provide the time for individual coordination with each Agency Representative.

### Major responsibilities and duties of the Liaison Officer at an incident:

- 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.

#### IV. Agency Representatives

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency. An Agency Representative is different than an individual assigned to an incident to be a part of a Unified Command.

The Agency Representative must be given authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

Agency Representatives can function as IC's in a Unified Command if they are IC qualified by their agencies.

Even in a Unified Command organization, agencies may provide other Agency Representatives to assist in the multiagency coordination.

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

Major responsibilities of the Agency Representative:

- Ensure that all of their agency resources have completed check-in at the incident.
- Obtain briefing from the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander.
- Inform their agency personnel on the incident that the Agency Representative position has been filled.
- Attend planning meetings as required.
- Provide input to the planning process on the use of agency resources unless resource technical specialists are assigned from the agency.
- Cooperate fully with the Incident Commander and the Command and General Staff on the agency's involvement at the incident.
- Oversee the well-being and safety of agency personnel assigned to the incident
- Advise the Liaison Officer of any special agency needs, requirements or agency restrictions.
- Report to agency dispatch or headquarters on a pre-arranged schedule.
- Ensure that all agency personnel and equipment are properly accounted for and released prior to departure.
- Ensure that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are complete prior to departure.
- Have a debriefing session with the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander prior to departure.

**MODULE 12**  
**COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF**

**Command and Staff Questions**  
**Exercise Scenario**



## Command and Staff Questions

At the end of this module you will be given a scenario of an incident. Working in teams you will be asked to develop an incident management organization for that scenario.

The text material which will be presented during the module will help you in making appropriate decisions regarding the scenario incident organization.

In your presentation to the full group, you will be asked to address some or all of the following questions.

1. The organization needed to work this scenario could be:  
  
Single Command  
Single Command with deputies  
Unified Command  
Which would you suggest? Why?
2. If other than a single command, how would you structure the command? Which agencies/jurisdiction, etc.?
3. Which General Staff positions would you activate? Explain.
4. What would be your order of activation of the General Staff? Explain.
5. Within Operations, would you favor a branch structure? If so, do you feel it should be a functional or geographic/jurisdictional structure? Explain.
6. Does this incident call for the use of staging areas? If so, should there be one or more staging areas established?
7. Where would you place staging area(s)? Explain.
8. Would staging areas be set up by function, i.e., for one kind of resource; by agency or open to all resources? Explain.
9. Would this incident call for any air operations? If so, diagram the organization to be used.

10. If you establish a Planning Section, what units would you activate for this incident? Would you designate a deputy? If a deputy is assigned, do you see the deputy coming from within the same agency or from another agency/jurisdiction? Explain.
11. If you establish a Logistics Section, what units would you activate for this incident? In what order? Explain.
12. What facilities other than staging would you establish? Explain.
13. Is there a need for a deputy Logistics Section Chief? If so, from what agency/jurisdiction? Explain.
14. Is there a need for a Finance/Administration Section? If so, what units would you establish?
15. Is there a need for a Command Staff? If so, how would it be prioritized and organized? Would there be a need for assistants? What agency/jurisdiction would they come from?

## V. Small Group Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to have you develop an ICS General and Command organization around a simulated scenario.

### **SCENARIO**

#### Thunder Mountain Wildfire

You are the Incident Commander on the Thunder Mountain Fire. You have two wildland engines with you, a Type 4 and a Type 5. The fire is burning in an area with limited access. The time is 1400.

The fire is threatening the Thunder Mountain watershed, which is the main source of water for the Warrington township. The fire is burning in brush and is estimated to be 125 acres and is headed toward a prime stand of timber on Thunder Mountain. The top of the mountain has all types of the electronic equipment for Warrington (telephone system, television, etc.) The fire is being pushed in the direction of a summer home area on Thunder Lake, five miles away. Estimated control date for the fire is 4 days from now.

Additional resources due on scene within one hour:

- 5 engines, 3 Type 4s and 2 Type 5s
- 1 Type 2 Water Tender
- 1 Dozer Type 2 with single resource boss and operator
- 4 Type 2 hand crews
- 2 Type 3 helicopters
- 1 Helibase manager

Additional background:

You have been on scene for 15 minutes.

You currently have 2 single resources reporting to you, an additional 14 are ordered and due on scene within the hour.

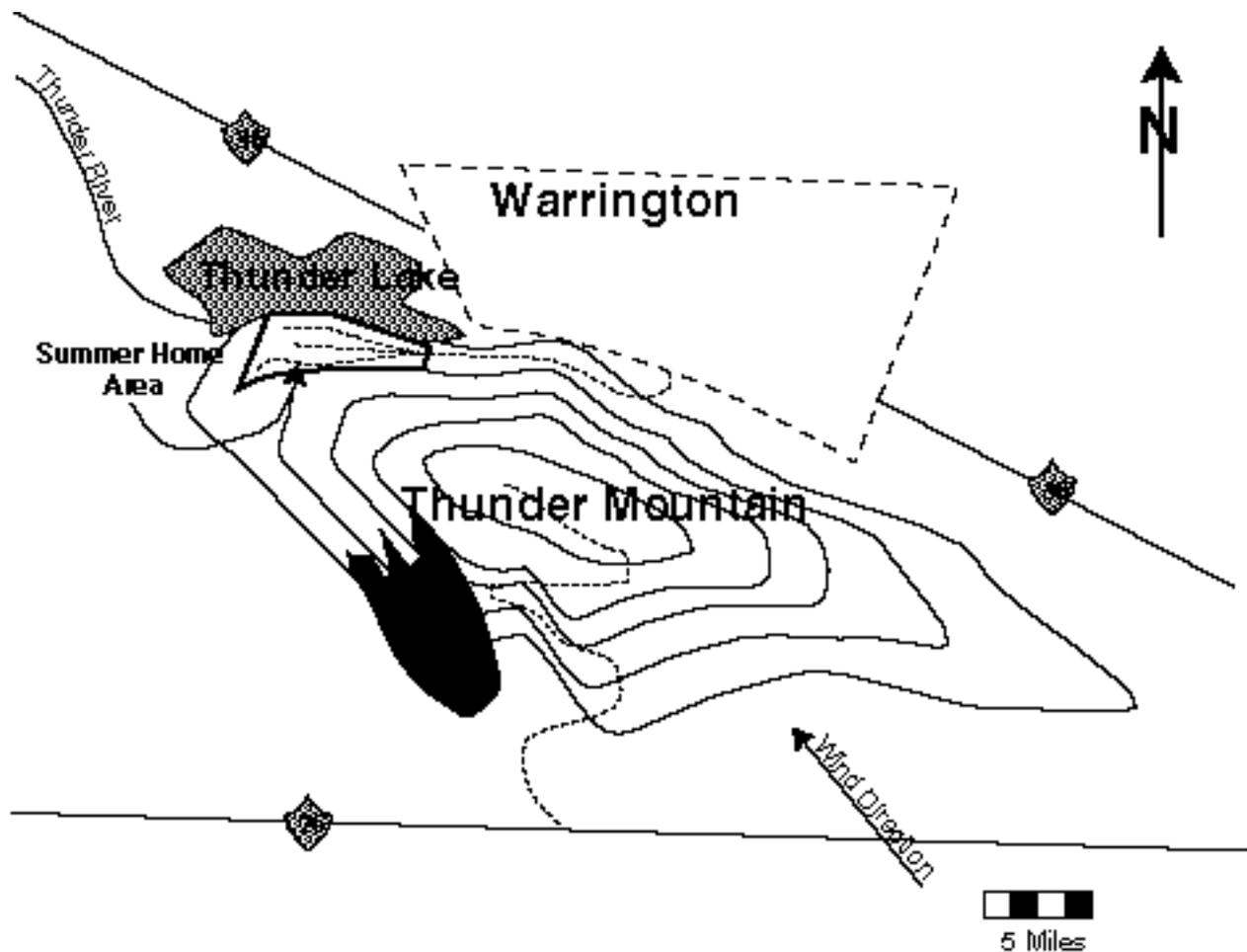
A small remote summer home area is located 5 miles from the fire. It is in the direct path of the fire. Property is not immediately in danger but, if the winds pick up, the summer home area and the radio equipment on top of the mountain could be in danger.

The news media have just arrived with a TV ground crew.

Weather for the area is predicted to be hot and dry for the next several days.

Your agency has primary responsibility for the incident, but may need to request assistance from other agencies.

Staff is limited. However four qualified people are available who could assume staff role (Command and General). These are in addition to the single resources on scene.



## THUNDER MOUNTAIN WILDFIRE

### RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

Exercise Planners: Change names or add to this list as you desire. Depending on the exercise needs, use blank columns to show: # resources available, typing, resources needed, resources ordered, resources in Staging Areas, resources assigned by agency, etc.

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMM. UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				

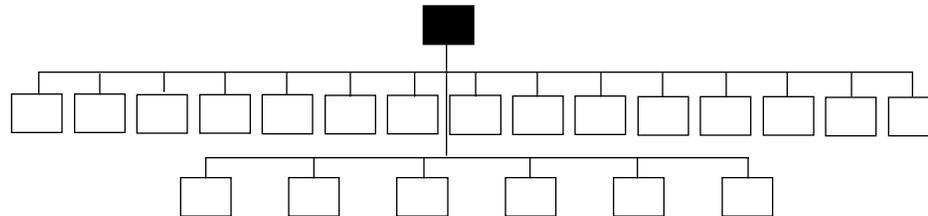


# **Module 12 Objectives:**

1. Identify the steps into the ICS design to compensate for previous incident management problems.
2. Describe the primary guidelines related to Command and General Staff positions.
3. Summarize principal responsibilities for each Command and General Staff member.
4. Describe the roles of deputies and assistants in incident management.
5. Describe the purposes and responsibilities of agency representatives, reporting relationships, and their effective use.
6. Develop a Command and General Staff organization around a simulated scenario.

All decisions made by one person

Poor span of control



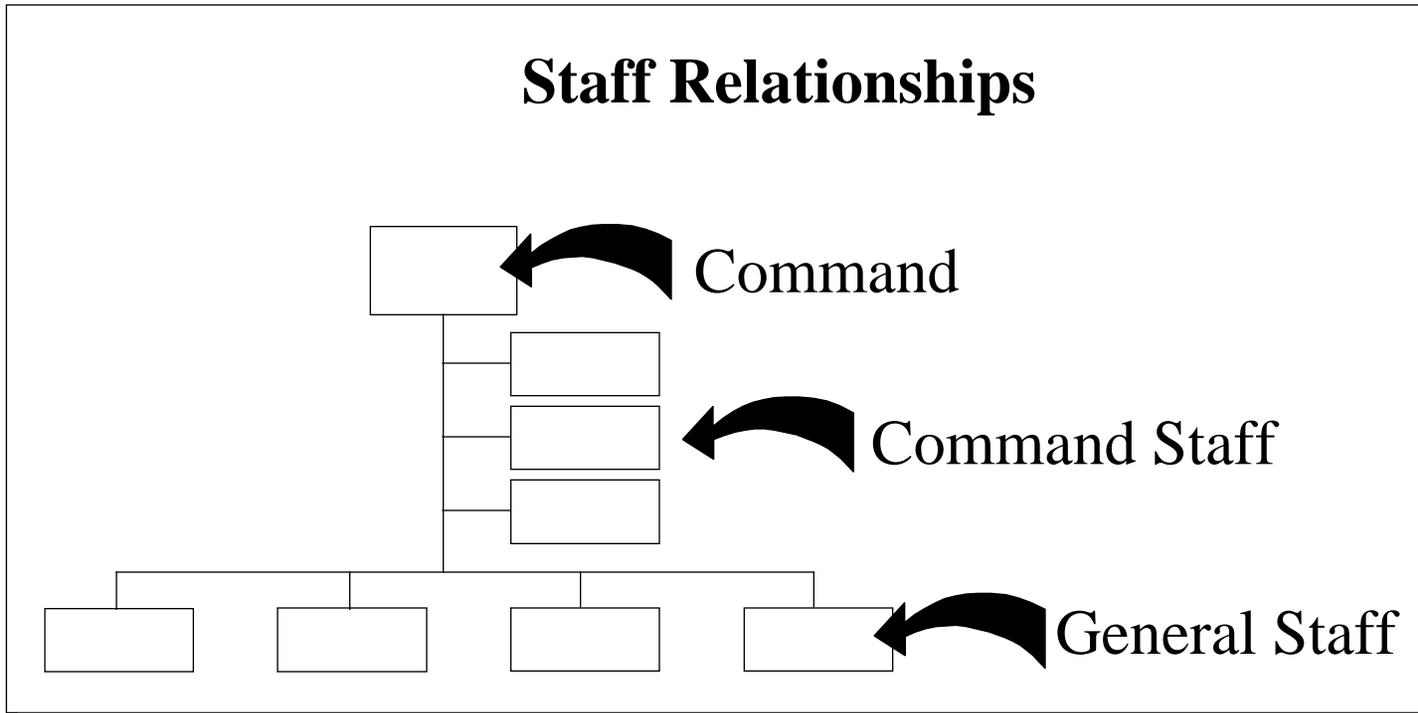
# ICS Design Requirements

- A standardized, functional organization must be established.
- Related functions should be grouped together within the organization.
- Subordinates must be delegated the **authority** to manage their assigned functions in accordance with the action plan objectives.
- Every incident, small or large, simple or complex, must have some form of an action plan whether oral or written.

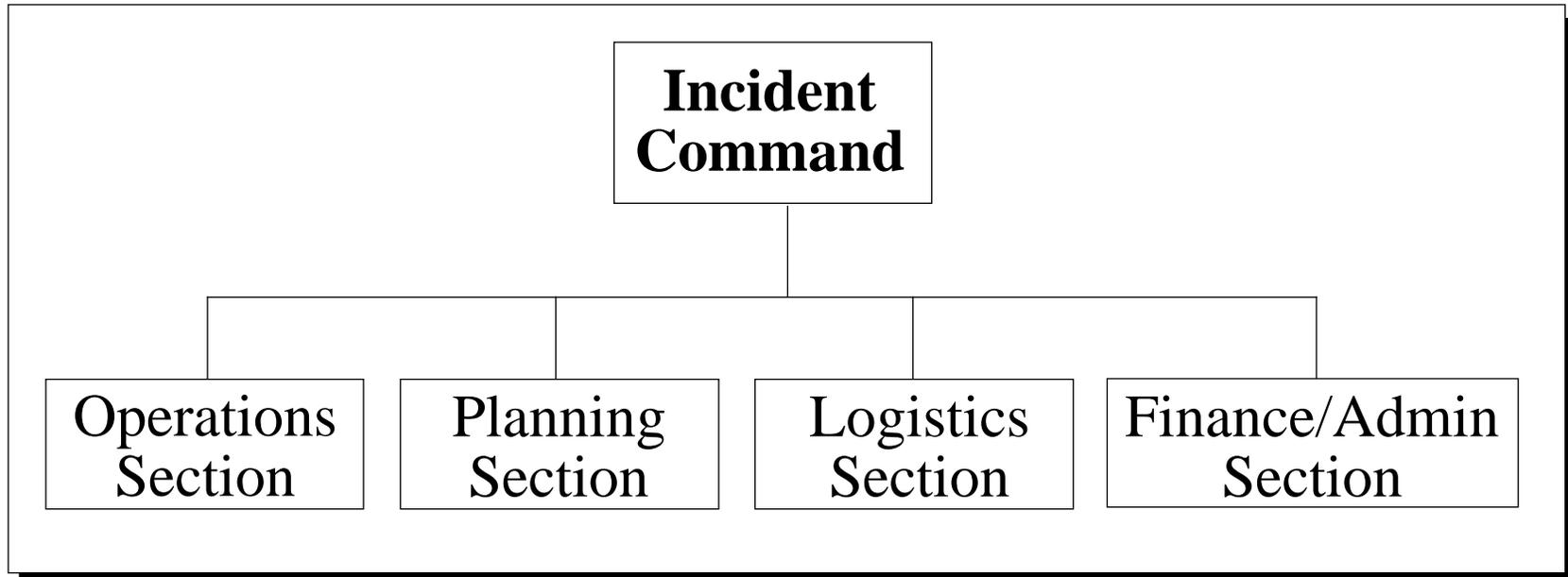
# Identification of Incident Management Needs

- Delegate authority
- Provide logistical support
- Provide planning services
- Provide for administrative and cost control
- Provide information services
- Ensure a safe operating environment
- Interact effectively with other agencies

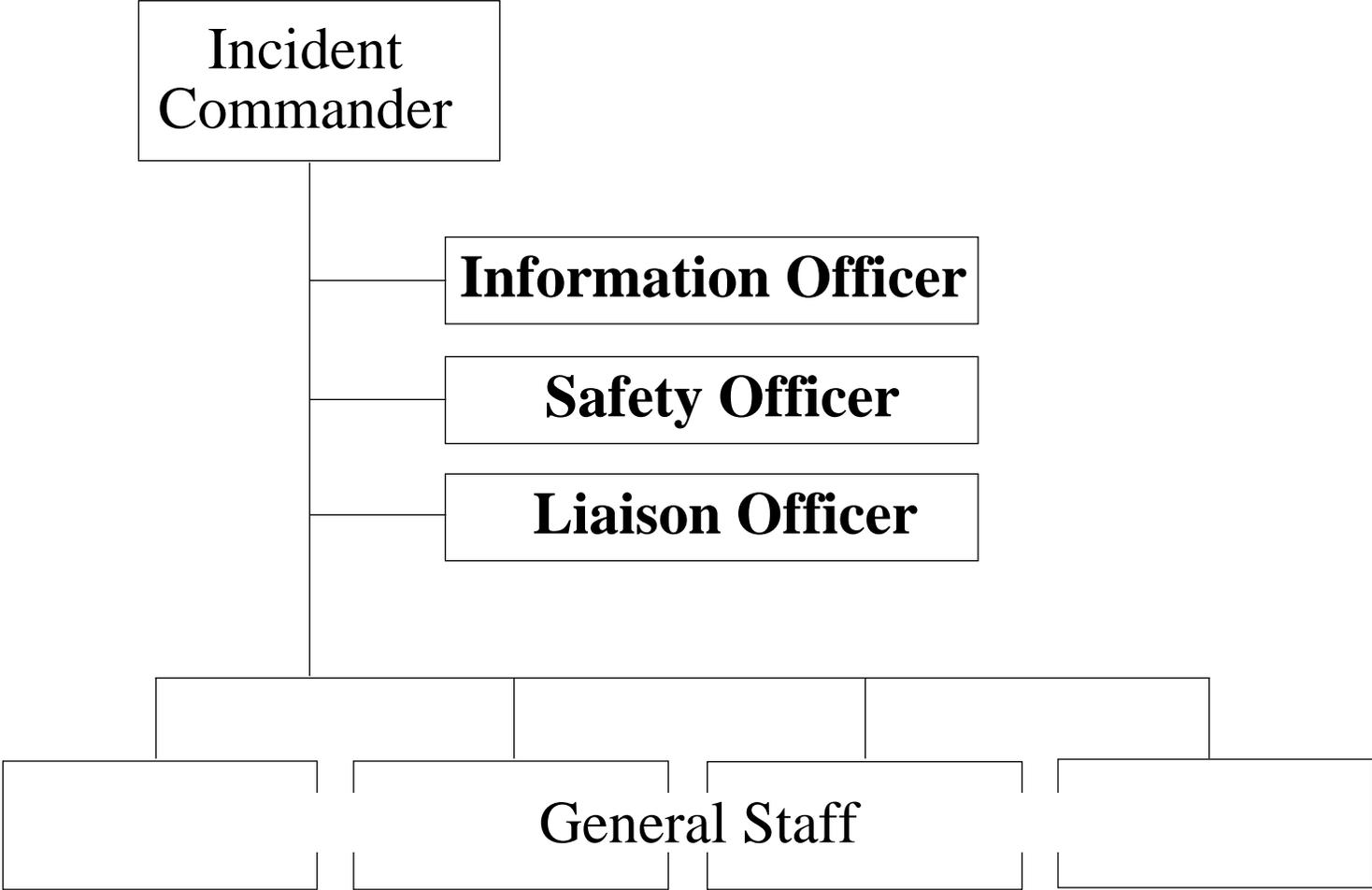
# Incident Command System



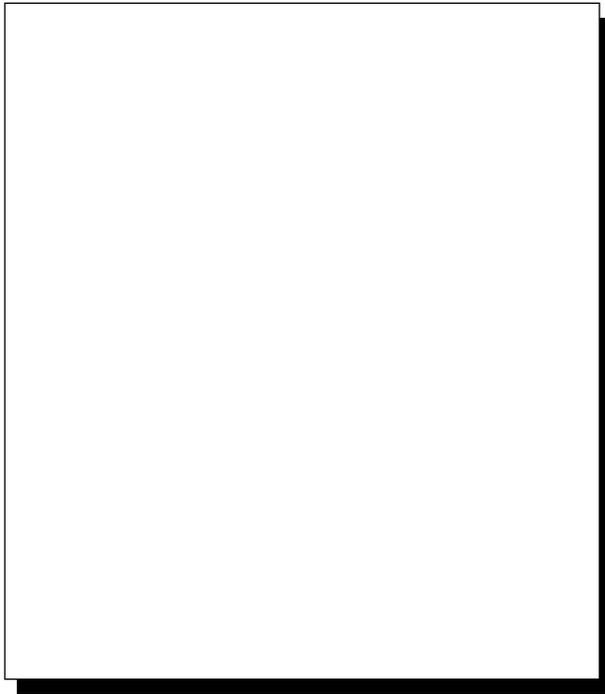
# The General Staff



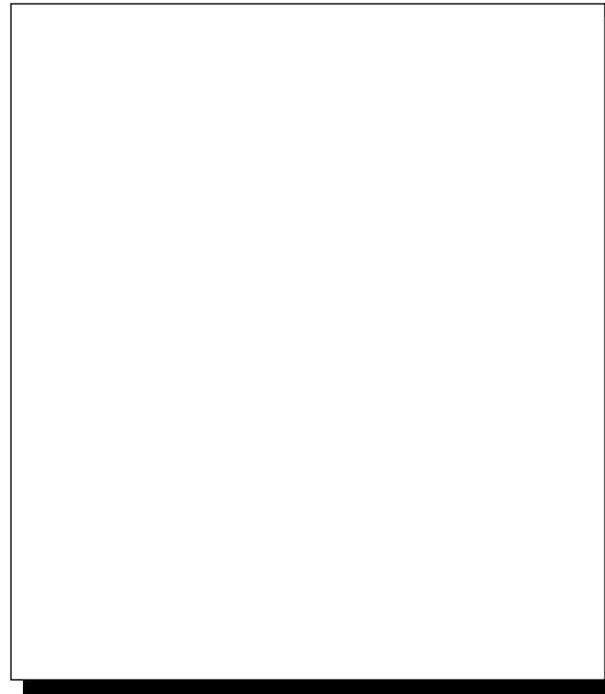
# The Command Staff



# General Staff



# Command Staff



# **The Importance of Using Position Titles in the ICS Organization**

- In multi-agency incidents to provide standardization**
- In ordering resources to ensure understanding**
- To allow most qualified personnel to be used**

"I don't have a qualified IC for this incident. Does your agency have one that could be assigned?"

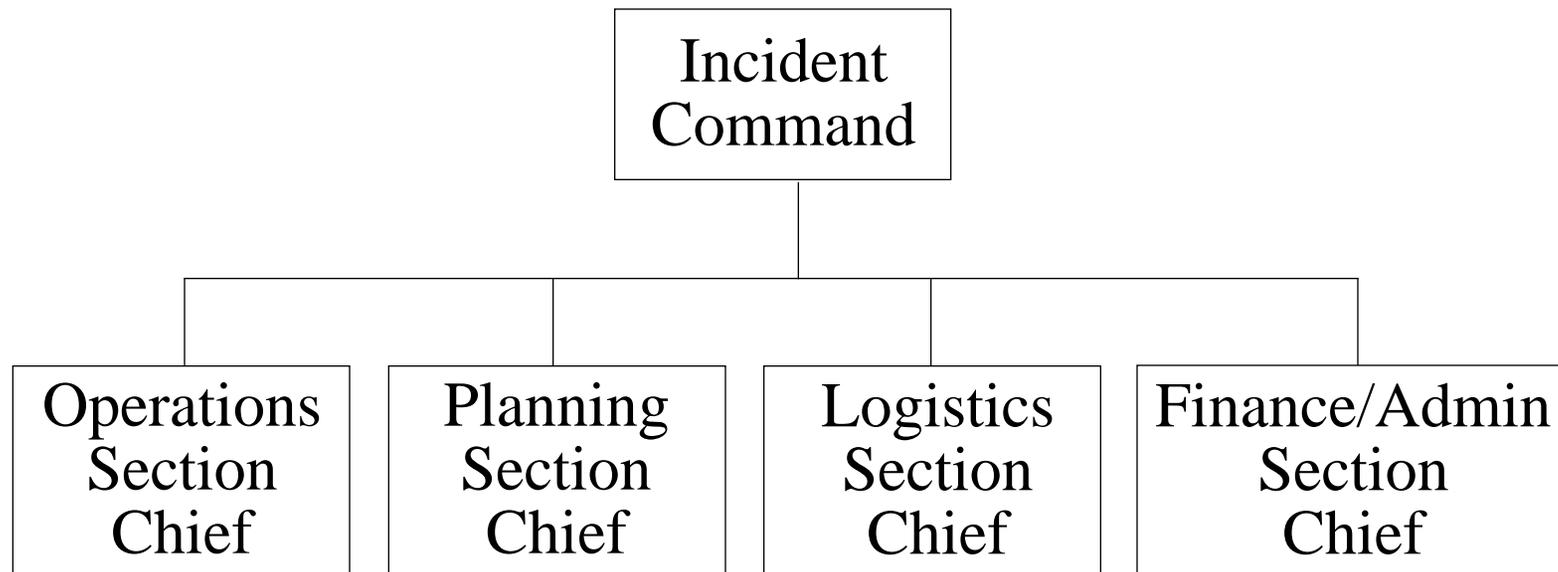
# Incident Commander Responsibilities:

- Have clear authority and know agency policy.
- Ensure incident safety.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Obtain a briefing from prior Incident Commander and/or assess the situation.
- Establish the immediate priorities.
- Determine incident objectives and strategy(s) to be followed.
- Establish the level of organization needed, and monitor the effectiveness of that organization.
- Manage planning meetings as required.

## **Incident Commander Responsibilities (cont.):**

- Approve and implement the Incident Action Plan.
- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources.
- Approve the use of students, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize release of information to the news media.
- Order demobilization of the incident when appropriate.
- Ensure incident after-action reports are complete.

# Incident Commander and General Staff



# Guidelines for General Staff

- Only one person will be designated to lead each General Staff position.
- General Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any agency or jurisdiction.
- Each member of the General Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.
- Deputy positions may be established for each of the General Staff positions. Deputies can be designated from other agencies as appropriate.
- General Staff members may exchange information with any person within the organization through the chain of command.
- General Staff positions (i.e., sections) should not be combined.



Planning and Logistics  
Section Chief

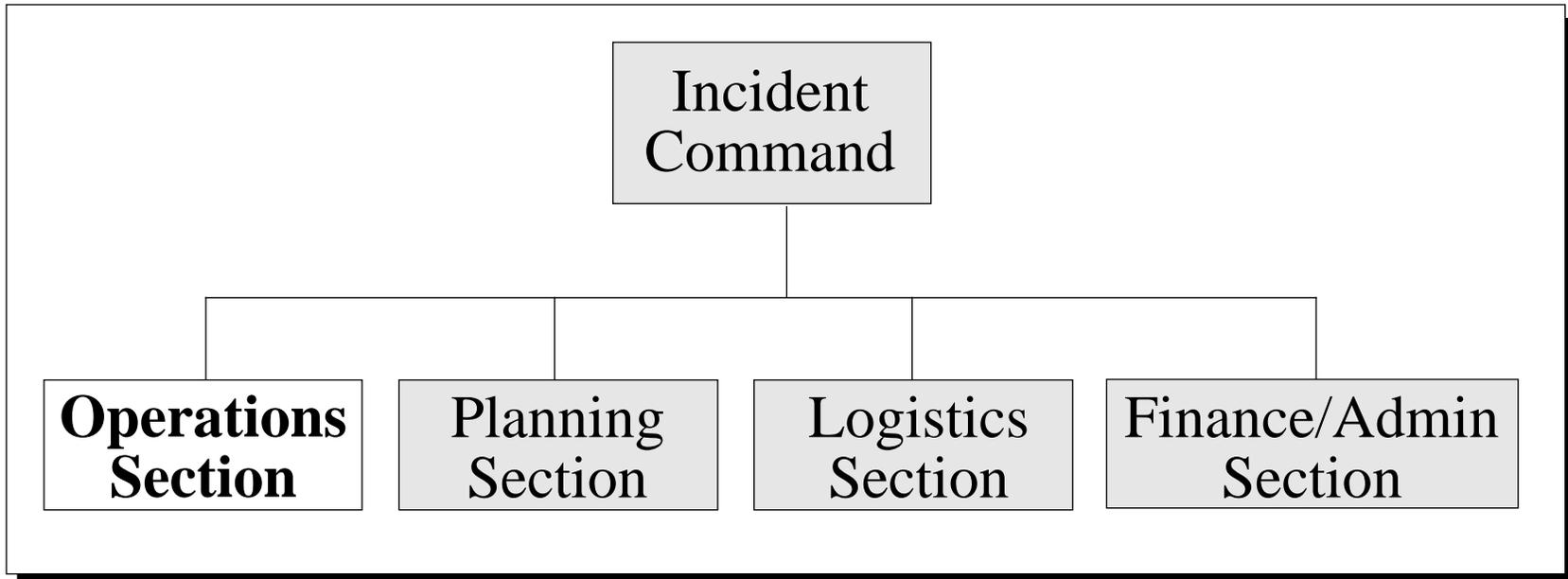
**Clear  
Separation of  
Sections**

Planning  
Section Chief

Logistics  
Section Chief

### **Reasons Not to Combine Organizational Units:**

- Can cause staffing confusion later if sections separate.
- Creates a non-standard organization.

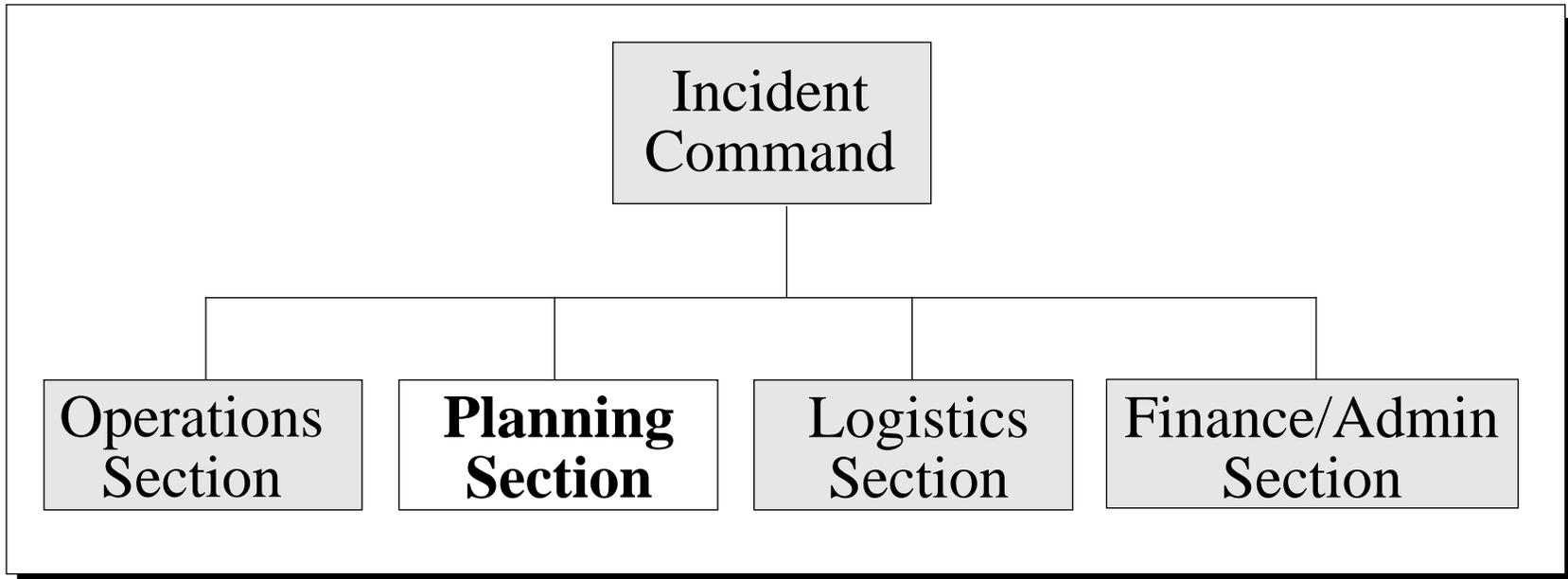


# Major Responsibilities Operations Section Chief

- Manage tactical operations.
- Ensure interaction is taking place with other agencies.
- Assist in the development of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
- Supervise the execution of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
- Maintain close contact with subordinate positions.

# Major Responsibilities Operations Section Chief (cont.)

- Assure safe tactical operations.
- Request additional resources to support tactical operations.
- Approve release of resources from active assignments (not release from the incident).
- Make or approve expedient changes to the Incident Action Plan.
- Maintain close communication with the Incident Commander.



# Major Responsibilities Planning Section Chief

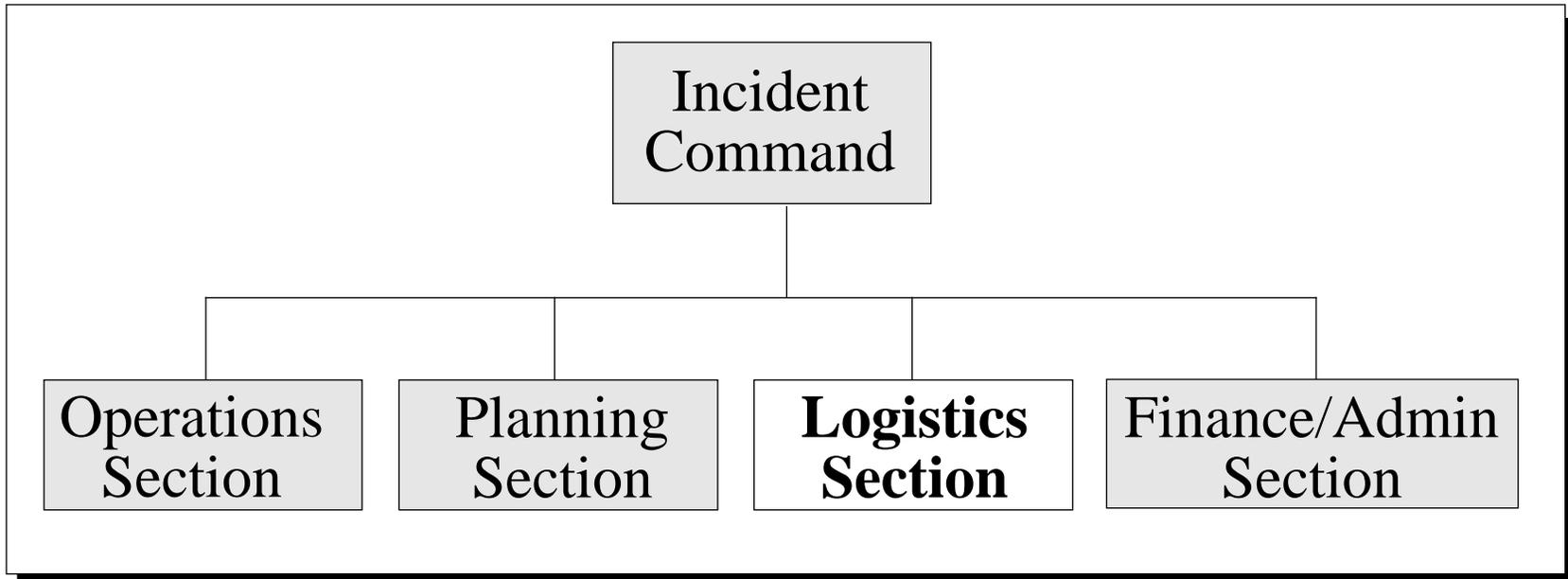
- Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data.
- Provide input to the IC and Operations Section Chief in preparing the Incident Action Plan.
- Supervise preparation of the Incident Action Plan.
- Conduct and facilitate planning meetings.
- Reassign personnel already on-site to ICS organizational positions as appropriate.

# Major Responsibilities Planning Section Chief (cont.)

- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for units (e.g., resources, situation units).
- Determine need for any specialized resources in support of the incident.
- 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.

## **Major Responsibilities Planning Section Chief (cont.)**

- Report any significant changes in incident status.
- Compile and display incident status information.
- Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan.
- Incorporate traffic, medical, communications plans, and other supporting material into the Incident Action Plan.

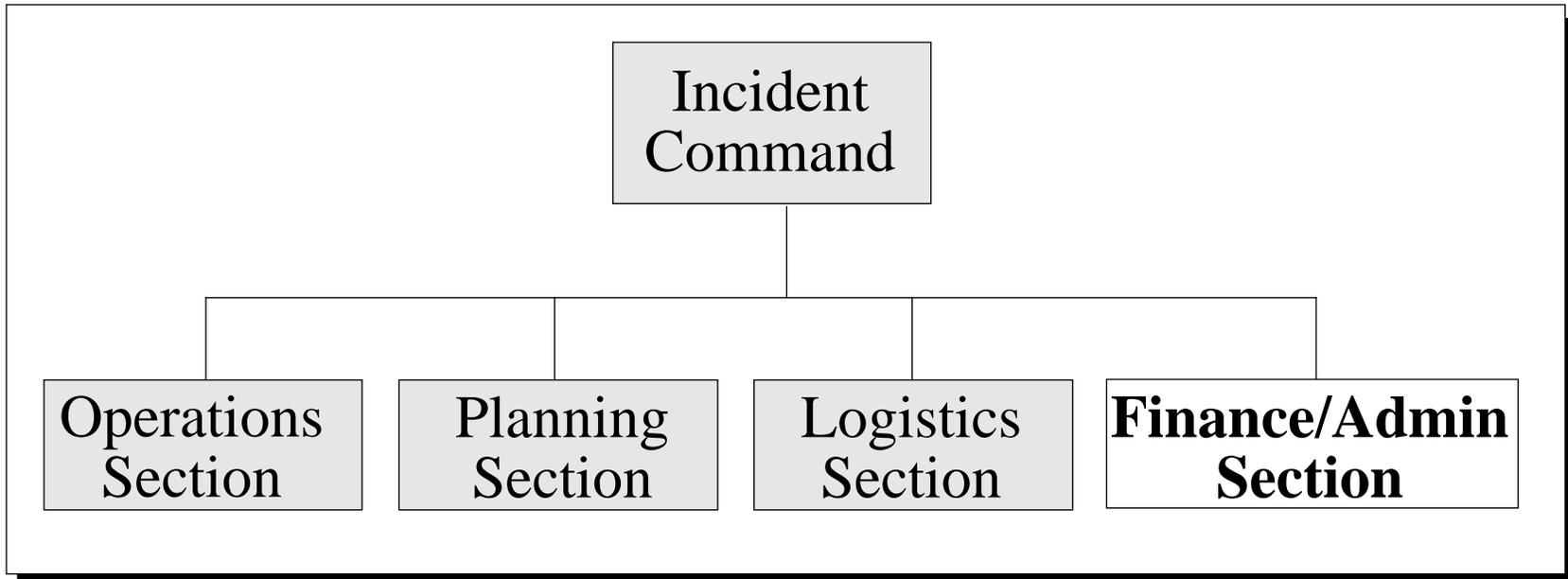


# ICS Logistics Section Provides:

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Communications
- Supplies
- Equipment maintenance and fueling
- Food services - for incident personnel
- Medical services - for incident personnel
- All off-incident resources

# Major Responsibilities Logistics Section Chief

- Manage all incident logistics.
- Provide logistics input to the Incident Action Plan.
- Brief Logistics Branch Directors and Unit Leaders as needed.
- Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.
- Request additional resources as needed.
- Develop as required, the Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plans.
- Oversee demobilization of the Logistics Section.



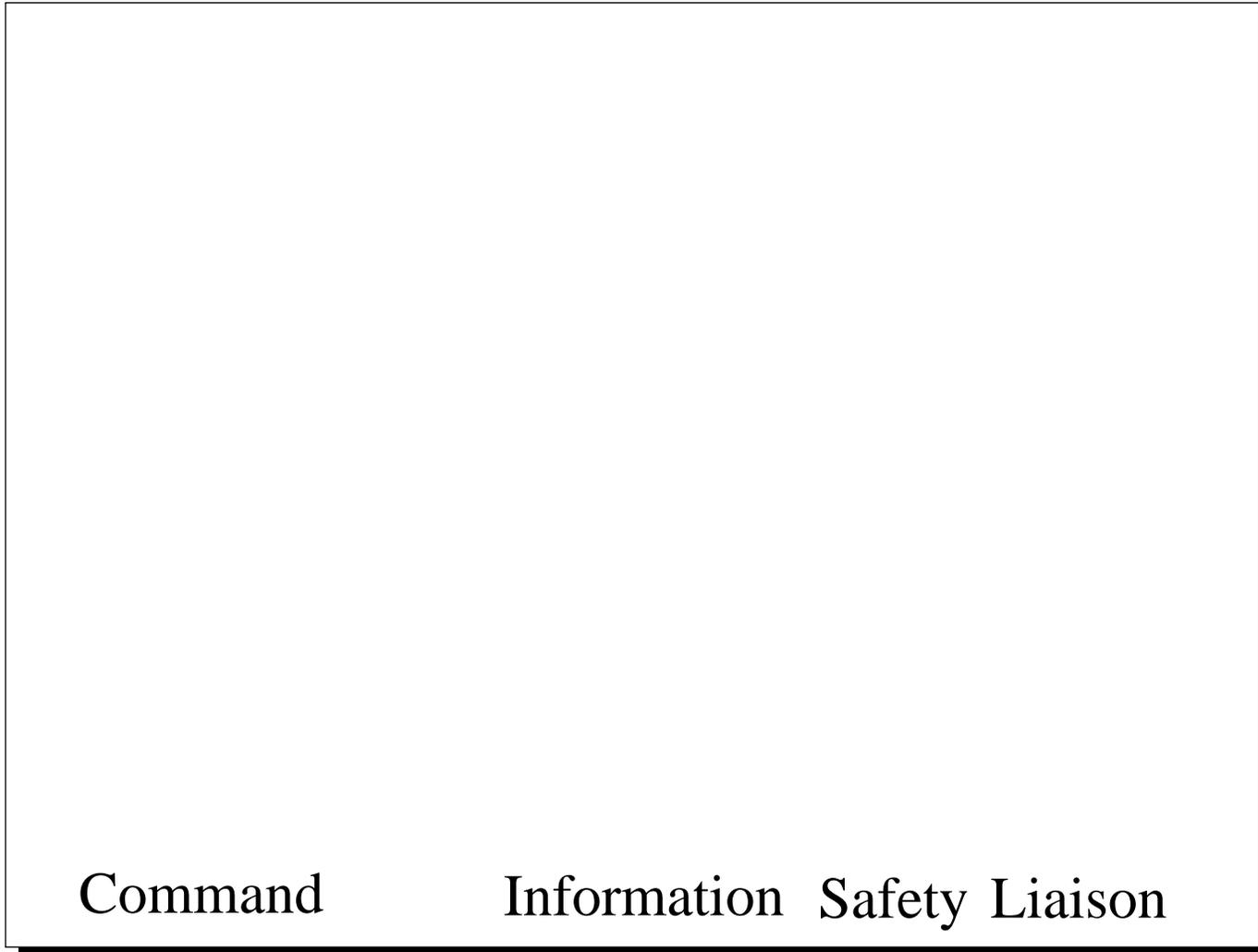
# **Finance/Administration Section Chief Major Responsibilities**

- 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 operating plan for the Finance/Administration Section; fill Section supply and support needs.
- Determine need to set up and operate an incident commissary.

# **Finance/Administration Section Chief Major Responsibilities (cont.)**

- Meet with assisting and cooperating agency representatives as needed.
- Maintain daily contact with agency(s) administrative headquarters on finance matters.
- Ensure that all personnel time records are accurately completed and transmitted to home agencies, according to policy.
- Provide financial input for demobilization planning.
- 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 follow-up.

# The ICS Command Staff Officers



# Guidelines for Command Staff

- Only one person will be designated for each of the Command Staff positions.
- Command Staff positions should not be combined.
- Command Staff positions may be filled by persons from other agencies or jurisdictions.
- There are no deputy positions at the Command Staff level.
- Each of the positions may have one or more assistants as necessary.

# Guidelines for Command Staff (cont.)

- Assistants are recommended for larger incidents.
- Assistants can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies as appropriate.
- Command Staff members report directly to the Incident Commander.
- Command Staff members may interact with any position within the ICS for purposes of information exchange.

# Reasons to Designate an Information Officer

- Is it a high visibility incident?
- Are the media taking IC's time?
- Will they get their information anyway?
- Are there multiple agencies involved?

# Major Responsibilities of the Information Officer

- Determine from the Incident Commander any limits on information release.
- Develop information for use in press/media briefings.
- Obtain Incident Commander's approval of media news releases.
- Conduct periodic media briefings.
- Arrange for tours and other interviews or briefings that may be required.

# Major Responsibilities of the Information Officer (cont.)

- 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 the planning meeting.

# Safety Officer

- Monitor for hazardous situations
- Develop safety procedures and Safety Plan
- Has authority to stop unsafe acts

# Major Responsibilities of the Safety Officer

- Participate in planning meetings.
- Identify and mitigate hazardous situations.
- Assign assistants qualified to evaluate special hazards.
- Review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications.
- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents within the incident area.
- Review and approve the Medical Plan.
- Ensure safety messages and briefings are made.

# Reasons to Establish a Liaison Officer

- Several agencies are sending agency representatives
- IC no longer has time for individual coordination

# Major Responsibilities of the Liaison Officer

- 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 capability of agency resources.
- Provide agency-specific demobilization information and requirements.

# Agency Representatives

- Comes from assisting or cooperating agencies
- Has authority to make decisions for the agency
- Reports to the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander

# Major Responsibilities of the Agency Representative

- Ensure that all agency resources have checked-in.
- Obtain briefing from the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander.
- Inform agency personnel on the incident that the Agency Representative position has been filled.
- Attend planning meetings as required.
- Provide input on use of agency resources.
- Cooperate fully with the Incident Commander and the Command and General Staff.

## **Major Responsibilities of the Agency Representative (cont.)**

- Oversee the well-being and safety of agency personnel.
- Advise the Liaison Officer of special needs or requirements.
- Report to agency dispatch or headquarters on a pre-arranged schedule.
- Ensure that all agency personnel and equipment are properly accounted for and released prior to departure.
- Ensure that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are complete.
- Have a debriefing session with the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander prior to departure.

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 13  
UNIFIED COMMAND**

**October 1994**

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
Mike Munkres - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Gary Nelson - Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Bill Vargas - State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety

The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT INSTRUCTORS OF THIS MODULE READ THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE **INSTRUCTOR CURRICULUM GUIDE** AND MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED THEREIN.**



## **Detailed Lesson Outline**

- COURSE:** Module 13 - Unified Command
- SUGGESTED TIME:** 6 Hours
- TRAINING AIDS:** Overhead projector, overhead pens, reference text
- SUBJECT:** Describes the purposes and advantages of multijurisdiction and/or multi-agency Unified Command, and how Unified Command can be applied to incident situations. It describes the Unified Command organization, how Unified Command is established, and the roles of its major elements. The module discusses a number of factors to be considered in implementing Unified Command.
- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Define Unified Command.
  2. Define the advantages of Unified Command and define the kinds of situations which may call for a Unified Command organization.
  3. Identify the primary features of a Unified Command organization.
  4. Given a simulated situation, describe roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command which involves agencies from within the same jurisdiction, and under multijurisdiction conditions.
  5. Describe areas of cost sharing which might apply under a Unified Command structure.
  6. Given a simulated situation, describe an appropriate Unified Command organization.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
REVIEW SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED	13-01-I300-VG
REVIEW INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	13-02-I300-VG Page 1 of 2 Page 2 of 2
<p data-bbox="191 510 1149 552">I. Background on Unified Command</p> <p data-bbox="289 594 1149 720">Early in the development of ICS, it was recognized that many incidents crossed jurisdictional boundaries or the limits of individual agency functional responsibility.</p>	13-03-I300-VG
<p data-bbox="191 751 1149 825">DISCUSS SOME OF THESE KIND OF INCIDENTS. ASK STUDENTS FOR THEIR EXPERIENCES.</p>	13-04-I300-VG
<p data-bbox="289 867 1149 1182">The standard ICS organizational framework with a single Incident Commander from one jurisdiction or agency did not lend itself to creating an effective organization for multijurisdictional incidents, or for incidents involving several agencies from the same political jurisdiction. In fact, the use of a single Incident Commander would, in some cases, not be legally possible or politically advisable.</p>	
<p data-bbox="289 1224 1149 1423">On the other hand, it was also recognized that every incident must have <u>one</u> person with the responsibility and the authority to direct tactical actions. Lacking a single authority, chaos easily prevails on multijurisdictional or multi-agency incidents.</p>	
<p data-bbox="289 1465 1149 1497">Two solutions were considered:</p>	13-05-I300-VG
<p data-bbox="289 1549 1149 1749">A. Divide the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization in a well-defined geographical or functional area of responsibility.</p>	
<p data-bbox="386 1791 1149 1894">This was the simplest political solution, but there were obvious cost and effectiveness reasons why this solution was unacceptable.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p data-bbox="285 310 1105 428">B. Create a single ICS incident structure with a <u>built-in process</u> for an effective and responsible multijurisdictional or multi-agency approach.</p> <p data-bbox="380 470 1133 705">This was the challenge to the early ICS designers, and the solution was an incident management process called Unified Command. Unified Command has been used many times, and has become a major feature of the Incident Command System.</p> <p data-bbox="191 747 1130 865">POINT OUT TO STUDENTS THE MEANINGS ATTACHED TO AGENCY AND JURISDICTION AS USED IN THIS DISCUSSION.</p> <p data-bbox="191 907 1120 1381"><u>AGENCY IS USED TO DESCRIBE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE A LEGAL AND FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AT AN INCIDENT. THESE MAY BE FROM THE SAME JURISDICTION, OTHER JURISDICTIONS, OR REPRESENT FUNCTIONAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES WHICH DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE A GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCE. THEY CAN ALSO REPRESENT INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR. EXAMPLES COULD INCLUDE THE CORONERS OFFICE, THE FAA, THE XYZ CHEMICAL CORPORATION, ETC.</u></p> <p data-bbox="191 1423 1049 1583"><u>JURISDICTIONAL DESCRIBES AN AUTHORITY OR RESPONSIBILITY, AND CAN ALSO MEAN A GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, E.G., A CITY, COUNTY, STATE, FEDERAL LANDS, ETC.</u></p> <p data-bbox="191 1625 797 1667">II. Description of Unified Command</p> <p data-bbox="285 1709 1130 1896">Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with responsibility for an incident, either geographical or functional, to establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or</p>	<p data-bbox="1170 310 1409 352">13-06-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>abdication of agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.</p> <p>Unified Command is not a new process, or one that is unique to the Incident Command System. The U.S. military has used a similar concept in integrating military services in joint operations for years. In describing Unified Command, an imperfect analogy can be drawn with a United Nations multi-nation military force used to respond to global situations requiring outside intervention.</p> <p><b>YOU MAY WANT TO USE THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE TO SHOW HOW THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIFIED COMMAND HAS BEEN EMPLOYED. IF YOU THINK EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE COMPARISON, MOVE AHEAD.</b></p> <p>There are essentially four elements to consider in applying Unified Command:</p> <p><b>COVER THE RIGHT TWO COLUMNS OF THE VIEWGRAPHS AS YOU INTRODUCE AND DESCRIBE THE FOUR ELEMENTS IN THE FIRST COLUMN.</b></p> <p>A. Policies, Objectives, Strategies</p> <p>In joint military operations, setting the policy, objectives, and strategy is the responsibility of the coalition of countries operating within the United Nations mandate. In ICS, this responsibility belongs to the various jurisdictional and agency administrators who set policy and are accountable to their agencies. This activity is done in advance of tactical operations, and may be coordinated from some other location than where the direct action takes place.</p>	<p>13-07-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p data-bbox="285 310 578 348">B. Organization</p> <p data-bbox="380 390 1123 663">In joint military operations, the organization consists of the unified Force Command established at the scene. In ICS, the organization consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene senior representatives (agency incident commanders) operating within a Unified Command structure.</p> <p data-bbox="285 709 535 747">C. Resources</p> <p data-bbox="380 789 1114 1062">In joint military operations, resources consist of all of the U.S. armed services, plus various service elements from other countries. In ICS Unified Command, resources are the personnel and equipment supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility.</p> <p data-bbox="285 1108 545 1146">D. Operations</p> <p data-bbox="380 1188 1130 1461">In joint military operations, after the objectives, strategies and interagency agreements are decided, a single Force Commander is designated to develop tactical action plans and to direct tactical operations. In ICS Unified Command that person is the incident Operations Section Chief.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1503 1123 1818">In both joint military operations and ICS Unified Command, resources stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. However, operationally they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Force Commander or Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the action plan.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>While by no means a perfect analogy, it does serve to show how a unified team approach can be successfully implemented.</p> <p>Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multijurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.</p>	
<p>III. Advantages of Using Unified Command</p> <p>Below are the principal advantages of using Unified Command.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.</li> <li>• A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident goals.</li> <li>• Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.</li> <li>• All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.</li> <li>• No agency's authority or legal requirements will be compromised or neglected.</li> <li>• Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions and constraints of <b>all</b> others.</li> <li>• The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>13-08-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.</li> </ul>	
<p>IV. Applications</p> <p>Several examples below show the use of an ICS Unified Command application.</p> <p><b>THIS IS A SUMMARY VIEWGRAPH. THREE DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS ARE AVAILABLE TO SHOW THESE THREE APPLICATIONS. YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OR AGENCIES DEPENDING UPON YOUR STUDENTS' NEEDS AND BACKGROUNDS.</b></p>	13-09-I300-VG
<p>A. Incidents that impact more than one political jurisdiction.</p> <p>The classic example is a wildland fire starting in one jurisdiction and burning into the jurisdiction of one or more others. Responding agencies from each jurisdiction all have the same basic mission (fire control), and it is the political and/or geographical boundaries that mandate multi-agency cooperation and involvement.</p>	13-10-I300-VG
<p>B. Incidents involving multiple agencies (or departments) within the same political jurisdiction.</p> <p>Hazardous materials incidents provide an example for this kind of a situation. The fire department has responsibility for fire control and rescue, the police department has responsibility for evacuation and area security, and public health agencies and others have responsibility for site clean-up.</p>	13-11-I300-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Major commercial airplane crashes are another example. Here, the management challenge increases.</p> <p>In one geographical location, fire, law enforcement, health services, the FAA, and others all have legal responsibilities to perform their different missions at the site of the same incident.</p> <p>All may be active at the same time and in the same place. <u>It is the functional role and the legal obligation -- not the geography -- that brings about the multiple involvement.</u></p>	
<p>C. Incidents that impact on (or involve) several political and functional agencies.</p> <p>These kind of incidents occur with storms, earthquakes, and other major natural disasters, and they present the greatest incident management challenges.</p> <p>In these incidents, large numbers of local, state, and federal agencies become immediately involved. These emergencies cross political boundaries and involve multiple functional authorities. Roles, missions, and responsibilities are all intermixed.</p>	13-12-I300-VG
<p>ICS' Unified Command approach to incidents like those just mentioned is a practical and cost-effective solution. By using Unified Command, participating agencies can improve overall incident management and achieve goals in a timely and cost-effective manner.</p>	13-13-I300-VG
<p>V. Primary Features of a Unified Command Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single integrated incident organization</li> </ul>	13-14-I300-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collocated (shared) facilities</li> <li>• A single planning process and Incident Action Plan</li> <li>• Shared planning, logistical, and finance/administration operations</li> <li>• A coordinated process for resource ordering</li> </ul> <p>A. A Single Integrated Incident Organization</p> <p>Under Unified Command, the various jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated unified <u>team</u>. The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.</p> <p>The proper mix of participants in a Unified Command organization will depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <u>location</u> of the incident, which often determines the jurisdictions that must be involved.</li> <li>• The <u>kind</u> of incident, which dictates the functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s), as well as other agencies that may be involved.</li> </ul> <p>In a multijurisdictional situation, a Unified Command structure could consist of one responsible official from each jurisdiction. In other cases, Unified Command may consist of several functional department managers or assigned representatives from within a single political jurisdiction.</p>	<p>13-15-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Because of common ICS organization and terminology, personnel from other jurisdictions or agencies can be easily integrated into a single organization.</p> <p>B. Collocated (shared) Facilities</p> <p>By bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post a coordinated effort can be maintained for as long as the Unified Command structure is required.</p> <p>One base can serve the needs of multiple agencies. Similarly, resources from several agencies can be brought together in Staging Areas.</p> <p>C. A Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan</p> <p><b>IF POSSIBLE, CONDUCT A SIMULATED MEETING OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDERS TO DEMONSTRATE THE POINTS BELOW. PREPARE A BRIEF SCRIPT AROUND A SITUATION THAT WILL BE FAMILIAR TO YOUR STUDENTS' BACKGROUNDS. SELECT TWO OR THREE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL SIMULATE THE INCIDENT COMMANDERS OF A UNIFIED COMMAND COMING TOGETHER FOR A COMMAND MEETING.</b></p> <p>The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident.</p> <p>One important distinction is the need for every jurisdictional or functional agency's Incident Commander to get together before the first operational period planning meeting in a command meeting.</p>	

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<p>This meeting provides the responsible agency officials with an opportunity to discuss and concur on important issues prior to joint incident action planning. The agenda for the command meeting should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State jurisdictional/agency priorities and objectives.</li> <li>• Present jurisdictional limitations, concerns, restrictions.</li> <li>• Develop a collective set of incident objectives.</li> <li>• Establish and agree on acceptable priorities.</li> <li>• Adopt an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives.</li> <li>• Agree on the basic organization structure.</li> <li>• Designate the best qualified and acceptable Operations Section Chief.</li> <li>• Agree on General Staff personnel designations and planning, logistical, and finance agreements and procedures.</li> <li>• Agree on the resource ordering process to be followed.</li> <li>• Agree on cost-sharing procedures.</li> <li>• Agree on informational matters.</li> <li>• Designate one agency official to act as the Unified Command spokesperson.</li> </ul>	<p>13-16-I300-VG</p>

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<p>Command Meeting Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Command Meeting should include <u>only</u> agency Incident Commanders.</li> <li>• The meeting should be brief, and important points should be documented.</li> <li>• Prior to the meeting, the respective responsible officials should have reviewed the purposes and agenda items described above, and be prepared to discuss them.</li> </ul>	13-17-I300-VG
<p>Incident Action Planning meetings will use the results of the Command Meeting to decide on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactical operations for the next operational period.</li> <li>• Establishing resource requirements and determining resource availability and sources.</li> <li>• Making resource assignments.</li> <li>• Establishing the unified Operations Section organization.</li> <li>• Establishing combined planning, logistics, and finance/administration operations as needed.</li> </ul> <p>The end result of the planning process will be an Incident Action Plan which addresses multijurisdiction or multi-agency priorities, and provides tactical operations and resource assignments for the unified effort.</p>	13-18-I300-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p data-bbox="285 310 1003 386">D. Shared Planning, Logistical, and Finance Sections</p> <p data-bbox="380 432 1127 583">The Unified Command incident organization can also benefit by integrating multijurisdictional and/or multi-agency personnel into various other functional areas.</p> <p data-bbox="191 630 1062 781"><b>POINT OUT THAT INTEGRATING OTHER AGENCY PERSONNEL INTO AN ORGANIZATION CAN BE EQUALLY BENEFICIAL IN A SINGLE INCIDENT COMMAND SITUATION.</b></p> <p data-bbox="380 827 1127 1024">For example, in Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction which may in future operational periods have the primary responsibility for these functions.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1071 1078 1268">By placing other agency's personnel in the Planning Section's Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units, there can be significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1314 1133 1583">In Logistics, a deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide Communications Plan.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1629 1127 1864">Although the Finance/Administration Section often has detailed agency specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.</p>	<p data-bbox="1169 348 1409 386">13-19-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p data-bbox="284 310 961 348">E. Unified Command Resource Ordering</p> <p data-bbox="380 394 1122 548">An important advantage of Unified Command is advance establishment of resource ordering procedures. These decisions are made during the Command Meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="380 594 1114 785">The Planning Meeting will determine resource requirements for all levels of the organization. However, the nature and location of the incident will, to some extent, dictate the most effective off-incident resource ordering process.</p> <p data-bbox="380 831 1062 1022">The resource requirements established at the planning meeting are given to the Logistics Section, which then creates a resource order which is transmitted to one agency's dispatch center to be filled.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1068 1118 1260">Some situations may require resource orders to be made to different agencies from the incident. Multiple resource orders are generally less desirable than the use of a single resource order, and should be avoided when possible.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1306 1130 1581">If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be pre-designated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the responsible agency officials in the Unified Command meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="380 1627 1122 1780">If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency dispatch center receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.</p>	

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<p>VI. Guidelines for the Use of Unified Command</p> <p>A. Understand ICS Unified Command</p> <p>It is essential to understand how ICS Unified Command functions. Knowledge of ICS principles and structure will enable managers to accept and easily adapt to a Unified Command mode of operation when it is required. Lack of knowledge about ICS can limit the willingness of some jurisdictions or agencies to participate in a Unified Command incident organization. It is impossible to implement Unified Command unless agencies have agreed to participate in the process.</p> <p>B. Collocate Essential Functions</p> <p>Establish a single Incident Command Post and, as needed, other facilities where all agencies can operate together. Avoid the confusion created by separate command, planning, and logistical set-ups.</p> <p>C. Implement Unified Command at an Early Stage of a Multijurisdictional or Multi-agency Incident</p> <p>It is essential to begin joint planning as early as possible. Initiate Unified Command as soon as two or more agencies having jurisdictional or functional responsibilities come together on an incident. It is especially important on those incidents where there may be conflicting priorities based on agency responsibilities.</p> <p>D. Concur on an Operations Section Chief and other General Staff members</p> <p>The Operations Section Chief will normally be from the jurisdiction or agency which has the</p>	<p>13-20-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>greatest involvement in the incident, although that is not essential.</p> <p>The Operations Section Chief should be the most qualified and experienced person available. The selection of the Operations Section Chief <u>must be agreed upon</u> by the Unified Command, as the Operations Section Chief will have <u>full authority</u> to implement the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan. It is also necessary to agree on other General Staff personnel who will be implementing their portions of the Incident Action Plan.</p> <p>E. If Necessary, Designate One of the Incident Commanders to be a Spokesperson (Operational Period Duty Officer)</p> <p>The Incident Commanders may see the need to identify one of them to act as an Operational Period Duty Officer and/or spokesperson for the Unified Command.</p> <p>This can provide a designated channel of communications from General and Command Staff members into the Unified Command. That person does not make Unified Command decisions, but does provide a point of contact as necessary for the General and Command Staffs.</p> <p>F. Train Often as a Team</p> <p>Finally, it is important to conduct training exercises in using Unified Command with adjacent jurisdictions and functional agencies whenever possible.</p>	

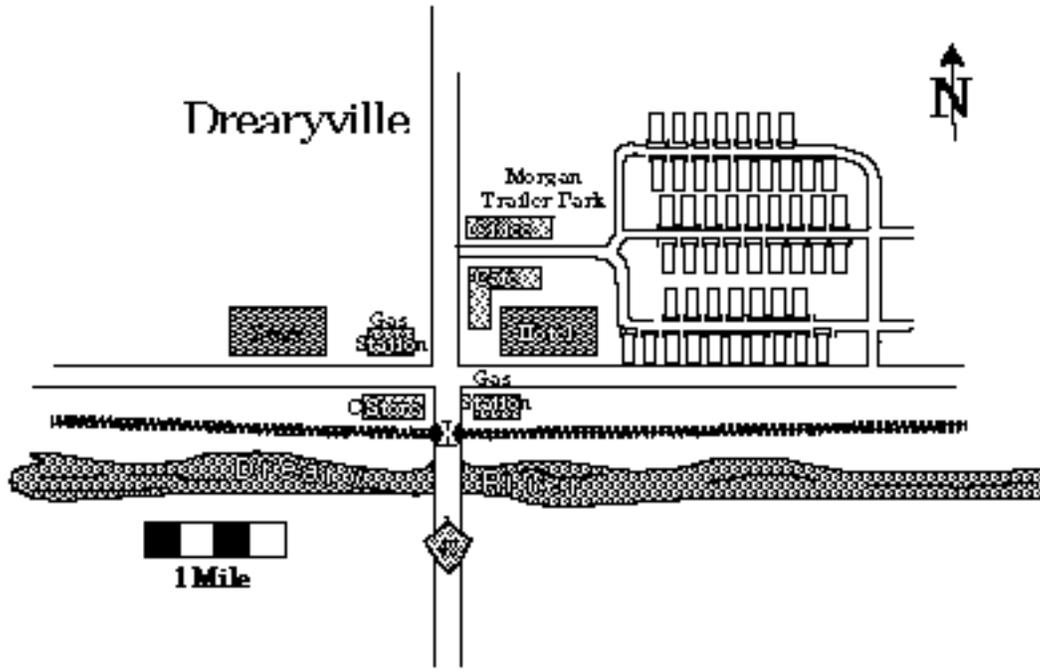
OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>VII. Functioning in Unified Command</p>	
<p>Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command have the following responsibilities at an incident:</p>	
<p>A. They must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations. Any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions must be identified and made known to all.</p> <p>B. They must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent. These actions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordering of additional resources in support of the Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>• The possible loaning or sharing of resources to other jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Agreeing to financial cost-sharing arrangements with participating agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>13-21-I300-VG</p>
<p>C. The Unified Command has the responsibility to manage the incident to the best of its abilities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with the other IC's in the Unified Command.</li> <li>• Providing sufficient qualified staff and resources.</li> <li>• Anticipating and resolving problems.</li> <li>• Delegating authority as needed.</li> </ul>	<p>13-22-I300-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspecting and evaluating performance.</li> <li>• Communicating with their own agency on priorities, plans, problems, and progress.</li> </ul> <p>D. The members of the Unified Command must function together as a team. They must ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command.</p>	
<p>There are two distinct levels of coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with other members of the Unified Command team. It is essential that all participants be kept mutually informed, involved, and consulted.</li> <li>• Coordination with higher authorities, agency administrators, etc. It is important to keep their respective authorities well informed and confident that the incident is being competently managed.</li> </ul>	13-23-I300-VG
<p>VIII. Exercise</p> <p>THE PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE WILL BE TO DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION FOR A UNIFIED COMMAND AT AN INCIDENT.</p> <p>A SAMPLE SCENARIO FOR A HAZMAT INCIDENT IS INCLUDED. IF THIS IS NOT SATISFACTORY, YOU MAY SELECT ANOTHER SCENARIO FROM THE SCENARIO CATALOG, OR DEVELOP ONE OF YOUR OWN.</p> <p>DIVIDE THE STUDENTS INTO GROUPS OF FIVE PERSONS.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>INSTRUCT STUDENTS TO DEVELOP A UNIFIED COMMAND ORGANIZATION. THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE AS DETAILED AS POSSIBLE. THEY SHOULD INCLUDE MULTI-AGENCY AND MULTIJURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS THE USE OF DEPUTIES AND ASSISTANTS IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THEY SHOULD ALSO DETERMINE THE AGENCY WHO WILL PROVIDE THE OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL STAFF.</p> <p>ALLOW 45 MINUTES FOR THEIR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PREPARATION. REASSEMBLE THE GROUPS AND HAVE A SPOKESPERSON FROM EACH GROUP GIVE THE PRESENTATION.</p> <p>PROVIDE FOR QUESTIONS AND A CRITIQUE OF EACH PRESENTATION. (See attached questions.)</p> <p>Scenario for Unified Command Exercise</p> <p>A semi-trailer containing forty 55-gallon drums of potassium chlorate is involved in an accident on State Highway 42 in the City of Drearyville. The truck severely damaged a railroad overpass over the state highway. The driver was killed. There is no fire at the present time, however, several of the drums have ruptured and contents are flowing on to the highway and into an adjacent stream.</p> <p>The State Police have closed the highway in both directions and traffic is rapidly backing up. The Wilson Co. Fire Dept. HAZMAT team is on the scene along with Drearyville fire, police, and public works departments. There are commercial businesses along both sides of the highway, and a trailer park with seventy-five units is located 1/4 mile east.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Weather: Temp 65, wind from the SW at 5 mph</p> <p>Day/Time: 4 p.m. on a Saturday</p> <p>City, County, and State agencies are not yet in a Unified Command mode, although all are familiar with ICS.</p> <p>The media is on scene with a helicopter and ground vehicles.</p> <p>Provide other assumptions and/or ground rules as necessary to all groups.</p> <p><b>USE THE ATTACHED RESOURCE TABLE TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE RESOURCES THAT MAY BE NEEDED FOR THIS EXERCISE. REMIND STUDENTS THAT THIS IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL EXERCISE. ANY CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS SHOULD ONLY BE DONE TO DETERMINE ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS.</b></p> <p>Questions for consideration in the review.</p> <p>These questions should apply for any scenario that is selected.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Were the agencies with primary jurisdiction responsibility represented in the Unified Command Structure?</li> <li>2. Were other agencies adequately considered? Were they represented as Agency Representatives?</li> <li>3. Which agency was designated responsible for Operations Section Chief, and other General Staff and Command Staff positions?</li> </ol>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>4. What were the reporting relationships for the General and Command Staffs into the Unified Command?</p>	
<p>5. Were deputies in Operations considered? Did they represent other agencies? Was the selection based on the possible or probable change in future responsibility? That is, when another agency might take over operational responsibility in the future.</p>	
<p>6. Were deputies considered in other General Staff positions? Was the rationale for their use reasonable?</p>	
<p>7. Were assistants from other agencies considered in the Command Staff?</p>	
<p>8. Was there adequate consideration of joint use facilities?</p>	
<p>9. Did the groups come up with a single resource ordering procedure?</p>	



### RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

Exercise Planners: Change names or add to this list as you desire. Depending on the exercise needs, use blank columns to show: # resources available, typing, resources needed, resources ordered, resources in Staging Areas, resources assigned by agency, etc.

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				



**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 13  
UNIFIED COMMAND**

**October 1994**

**REFERENCE TEXT**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
Mike Munkres - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Gary Nelson - Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Bill Vargas - State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety

The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California



This module describes the purposes and advantages of multijurisdiction and/or multi-agency Unified Command, and how Unified Command can be applied to incident situations. It describes the Unified Command organization, how Unified Command is established, and the roles of its major elements. The module discusses a number of factors to be considered in implementing Unified Command.

Objectives:

1. Define Unified Command.
2. Define the advantages of Unified Command and define the kinds of situations which may call for a Unified Command organization.
3. Identify the primary features of a Unified Command organization.
4. Given a simulated situation, describe roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command which involves agencies from within the same jurisdiction, and under multijurisdiction conditions.
5. Describe areas of cost sharing which might apply under a Unified Command structure.
6. Given a simulated situation, describe an appropriate Unified Command organization.

## I. Background on Unified Command

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

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

On the other hand, it was also recognized that every incident must have one person with the responsibility and the authority to direct tactical actions. Lacking a single authority, chaos easily prevails on multijurisdictional or multi-agency incidents.

Two solutions were considered:

- A. Divide the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization in a well-defined geographical or functional area of responsibility.

This was the simplest political solution, but there were obvious cost and effectiveness reasons why this solution was unacceptable.

- B. Create a single ICS incident structure with a built-in process for an effective and responsible multijurisdictional or multi-agency approach.

This was the challenge to the early ICS designers, and the solution was an incident management process called Unified Command. Unified Command has been used many times, and has

become a major feature of the Incident Command System.

## II. Description of Unified Command

Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with responsibility for an incident, either geographical or functional, to establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

Unified Command is not a new process, or one that is unique to the Incident Command System. The U.S. military has used a similar concept in integrating military services in joint operations for years. In describing Unified Command, an imperfect analogy can be drawn with a United Nations multi-nation military force used to respond to global situations requiring outside intervention.

There are essentially four elements to consider in applying Unified Command:

### A. Policies, Objectives, Strategies

In joint military operations, setting the policy, objectives, and strategy is the responsibility of the coalition of countries operating within the United Nations mandate. In ICS, this responsibility belongs to the various jurisdictional and agency administrators who set policy and are accountable to their agencies. This activity is done in advance of tactical operations, and may be coordinated from some other location than where the direct action takes place.

### B. Organization

In joint military operations, the organization consists of the unified Force Command established at the scene. In ICS, the organization consists of

the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene senior representatives (agency incident commanders) operating within a Unified Command structure.

C. Resources

In joint military operations, resources consist of all of the U.S. armed services, plus various service elements from other countries. In ICS Unified Command, resources are the personnel and equipment supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility.

D. Operations

In joint military operations, after the objectives, strategies and interagency agreements are decided, a single Force Commander is designated to develop tactical action plans and to direct tactical operations. In ICS Unified Command that person is the incident Operations Section Chief.

In both joint military operations and ICS Unified Command, resources stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. However, operationally they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Force Commander or Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the action plan.

While by no means a perfect analogy, it does serve to show how a unified team approach can be successfully implemented.

Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multijurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more

agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.

### III. Advantages of Using Unified Command

Below are the principal advantages of using Unified Command.

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

### IV. Applications

Several examples below show the use of an ICS Unified Command application.

- A. Incidents that impact more than one political jurisdiction.

The classic example is a wildland fire starting in one jurisdiction and burning into the jurisdiction of one or more others. Responding agencies from each jurisdiction all have the same basic mission (fire control), and it is the political and/or geographical boundaries that mandate multi-agency cooperation and involvement.

- B. Incidents involving multiple agencies (or departments) within the same political jurisdiction.

Hazardous materials incidents provide an example for this kind of a situation. The fire department has responsibility for fire control and rescue, the police department has responsibility for evacuation and area security, and public health agencies and others have responsibility for site clean-up.

Major commercial airplane crashes are another example. Here, the management challenge increases.

In one geographical location, fire, law enforcement, health services, the FAA, and others all have legal responsibilities to perform their different missions at the site of the same incident.

All may be active at the same time and in the same place. It is the functional role and the legal obligation -- not the geography -- that brings about the multiple involvement.

- C. Incidents that impact on (or involve) several political and functional agencies.

These kind of incidents occur with storms, earthquakes, and other major natural disasters,

and they present the greatest incident management challenges.

In these incidents, large numbers of local, state, and federal agencies become immediately involved. These emergencies cross political boundaries and involve multiple functional authorities. Roles, missions, and responsibilities are all intermixed.

ICS' Unified Command approach to incidents like those just mentioned is a practical and cost-effective solution. By using Unified Command, participating agencies can improve overall incident management and achieve goals in a timely and cost-effective manner.

#### V. Primary Features of a Unified Command Organization

- A single integrated incident organization
- Collocated (shared) facilities
- A single planning process and Incident Action Plan
- Shared planning, logistical, and finance/administration operations
- A coordinated process for resource ordering

##### A. A Single Integrated Incident Organization

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

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

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

In a multijurisdictional situation, a Unified Command structure could consist of one responsible official from each jurisdiction. In other cases, Unified Command may consist of several functional department managers or assigned representatives from within a single political jurisdiction.

Because of common ICS organization and terminology, personnel from other jurisdictions or agencies can be easily integrated into a single organization.

#### B. Collocated (shared) Facilities

By bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post a coordinated effort can be maintained for as long as the Unified Command structure is required.

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

### C. A Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan

The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident.

One important distinction is the need for every jurisdictional or functional agency's Incident Commander to get together before the first operational period planning meeting in a command meeting.

This meeting provides the responsible agency officials with an opportunity to discuss and concur on important issues prior to joint incident action planning. The agenda for the command meeting should include the following:

- State jurisdictional/agency priorities and objectives.
- Present jurisdictional limitations, concerns, restrictions.
- Develop a collective set of incident objectives.
- Establish and agree on acceptable priorities.
- Adopt an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives.
- Agree on the basic organization structure.
- Designate the best qualified and acceptable Operations Section Chief.
- Agree on General Staff personnel designations and planning, logistical, and finance agreements and procedures.

- Agree on the resource ordering process to be followed.
- Agree on cost-sharing procedures.
- Agree on informational matters.
- Designate one agency official to act as the Unified Command spokesperson.

#### Command Meeting Requirements

- The Command Meeting should include only agency Incident Commanders.
- The meeting should be brief, and important points should be documented.
- Prior to the meeting, the respective responsible officials should have reviewed the purposes and agenda items described above, and be prepared to discuss them.

Incident Action Planning meetings will use the results of the Command Meeting to decide on:

- Tactical operations for the next operational period.
- Establishing resource requirements and determining resource availability and sources.
- Making resource assignments.
- Establishing the unified Operations Section organization.
- Establishing combined planning, logistics, and finance/administration operations as needed.

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

D. Shared Planning, Logistical, and Finance Sections

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

For example, in Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction which may in future operational periods have the primary responsibility for these functions.

By placing other agency's personnel in the Planning Section's Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units, there can be significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.

In Logistics, a deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide Communications Plan.

Although the Finance/Administration Section often has detailed agency specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.

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An important advantage of Unified Command is advance establishment of resource ordering procedures. These decisions are made during the Command Meeting.

The Planning Meeting will determine resource requirements for all levels of the organization. However, the nature and location of the incident will, to some extent, dictate the most effective off-incident resource ordering process.

The resource requirements established at the planning meeting are given to the Logistics Section, which then creates a resource order which is transmitted to one agency's dispatch center to be filled.

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If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency dispatch center receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.

## VI. Guidelines for the Use of Unified Command

### A. Understand ICS Unified Command

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

### B. Collocate Essential Functions

Establish a single Incident Command Post and, as needed, other facilities where all agencies can operate together. Avoid the confusion created by separate command, planning, and logistical set-ups.

### C. Implement Unified Command at an Early Stage of a Multijurisdictional or Multi-agency Incident

It is essential to begin joint planning as early as possible. Initiate Unified Command as soon as two or more agencies having jurisdictional or functional responsibilities come together on an incident. It is especially important on those incidents where there may be conflicting priorities based on agency responsibilities.

### D. Concur on an Operations Section Chief and Other General Staff Members

The Operations Section Chief will normally be from the jurisdiction or agency which has the greatest involvement in the incident, although that is not essential.

The Operations Section Chief should be the most qualified and experienced person available. The selection of the Operations Section Chief must be agreed upon by the Unified Command, as the Operations Section Chief will have full authority to implement the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan. It is also necessary to agree on other General Staff personnel who will be implementing their portions of the Incident Action Plan.

- E. If Necessary, Designate One of the Incident Commanders to be a Spokesperson (Operational Period Duty Officer)

The Incident Commanders may see the need to identify one of them to act as an Operational Period Duty Officer and/or spokesperson for the Unified Command.

This can provide a designated channel of communications from General and Command Staff members into the Unified Command. That person does not make Unified Command decisions, but does provide a point of contact as necessary for the General and Command Staffs.

- F. Train Often as a Team

Finally, it is important to conduct training exercises in using Unified Command with adjacent jurisdictions and functional agencies whenever possible.

## VII. Functioning in Unified Command

Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command have the following responsibilities at an incident:

- A. They must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations. Any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions must be identified and made known to all.
- B. They must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent. These actions could include:
- Ordering of additional resources in support of the Incident Action Plan.
  - The possible loaning or sharing of resources to other jurisdictions.
  - Agreeing to financial cost-sharing arrangements with participating agencies.
- C. The Unified Command has the responsibility to manage the incident to the best of its abilities. This includes:
- Working closely with the other IC's in the Unified Command.
  - Providing sufficient qualified staff and resources.
  - Anticipating and resolving problems.
  - Delegating authority as needed.
  - Inspecting and evaluating performance.
  - Communicating with their own agency on priorities, plans, problems, and progress.

- D. The members of the Unified Command must function together as a team. They must ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command.

There are two distinct levels of coordination:

- Coordination with other members of the Unified Command team. It is essential that all participants be kept mutually informed, involved, and consulted.
- Coordination with higher authorities, agency administrators, etc. It is important to keep their respective authorities well informed and confident that the incident is being competently managed.

**MODULE 13**  
**UNIFIED COMMAND**

**Exercise Scenario**



## VIII. Exercise

### Scenario for Unified Command Exercise

A semi-trailer containing forty 55-gallon drums of potassium chlorate is involved in an accident on State Highway 42 in the City of Drearyville. The truck severely damaged a railroad overpass over the state highway. The driver was killed. There is no fire at the present time, however several of the drums have ruptured and contents are flowing on to the highway and into an adjacent stream.

The State Police have closed the highway in both directions and traffic is rapidly backing up. The Wilson Co. Fire Dept. HAZMAT team is on the scene along with Drearyville fire, police, and public works departments. There are commercial businesses along both sides of the highway, and a trailer park with seventy-five units is located 1/4 mile east.

#### Additional Information:

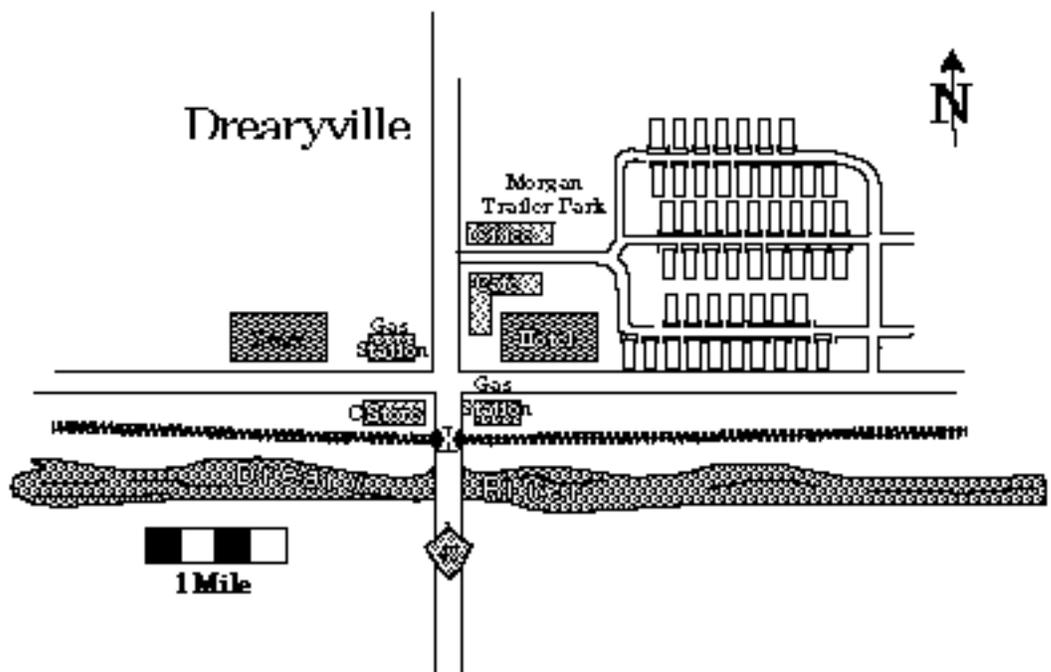
Weather: Temp 65, wind from the SW at 5 mph

Day/Time: 4 p.m. on a Saturday

City, County, and State agencies are not yet in a Unified Command mode, although all are familiar with ICS.

The media is on scene with a helicopter and ground vehicles.

Provide other assumptions and/or ground rules as necessary to all groups.



**RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES**

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				



# Module 13 Unified Command

## Subjects covered in this module include:

- Origin of Unified Command
- Description of Unified Command
- Advantages of using Unified Command
- Applications
- Primary features of Unified Command
- Guidelines for using Unified Command
- Unified Commander's responsibilities

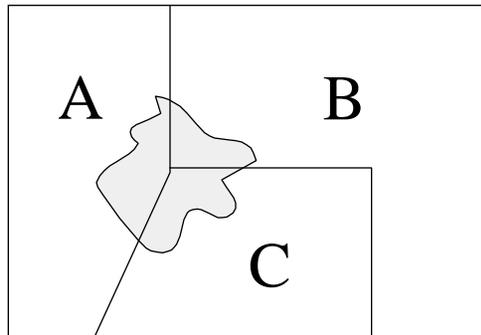
# **Module 13 Objectives:**

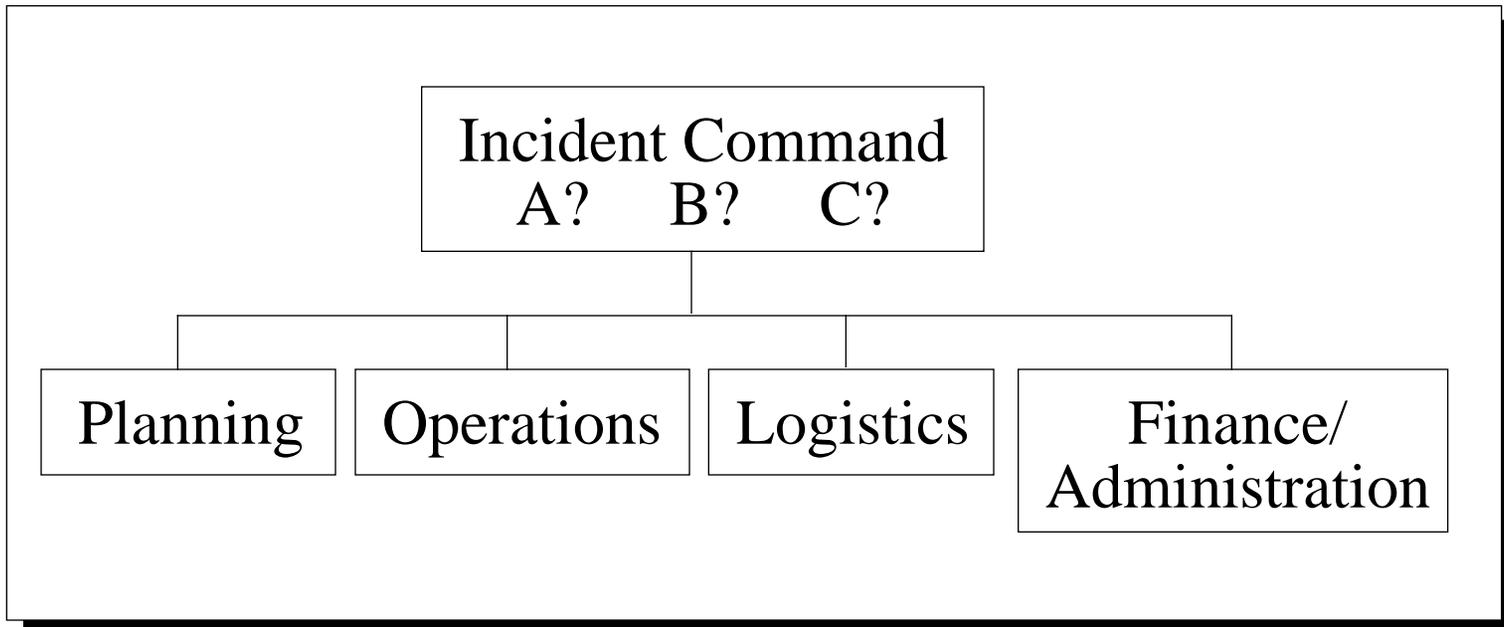
1. Define Unified Command
2. Define the advantages of Unified Command and define the kinds of situations which may call for a Unified Command organization.
3. Identify the primary features of a Unified Command organization.

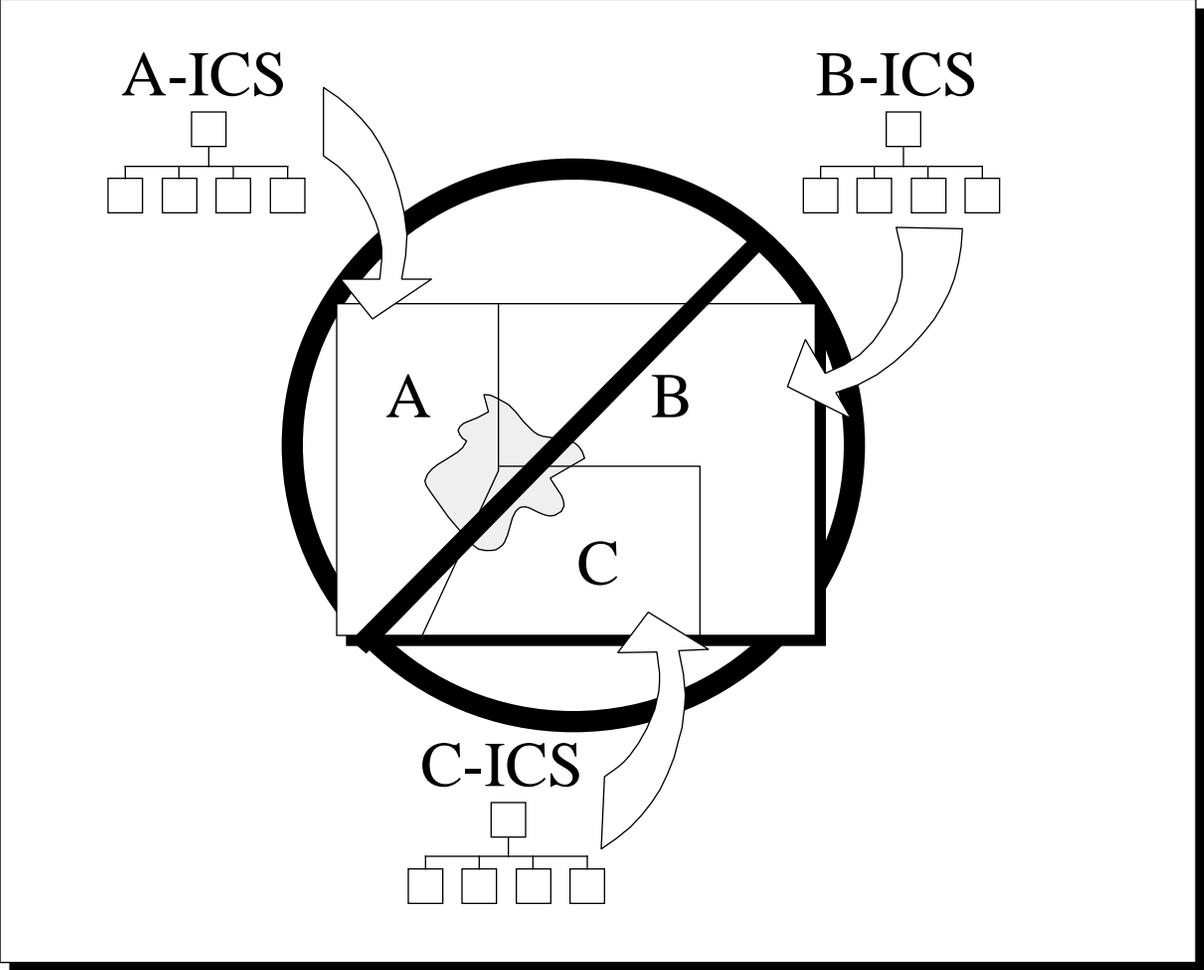
## **Module 13 Objectives (cont.)**

4. Given a simulated situation, describe roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command which involves agencies from within the same jurisdiction, and under multijurisdiction conditions.
5. Describe areas of cost sharing which might apply under a Unified Command structure.
6. Given a simulated situation, describe an appropriate Unified Command organization.

# Incidents Involving Three Jurisdictions Create a Need for Unified Command

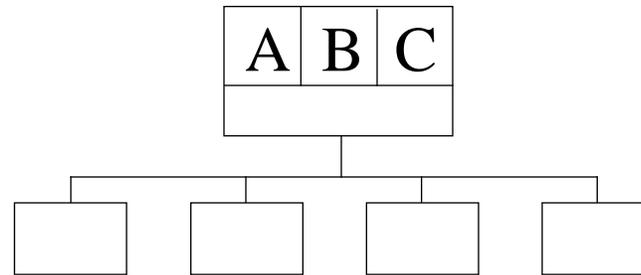
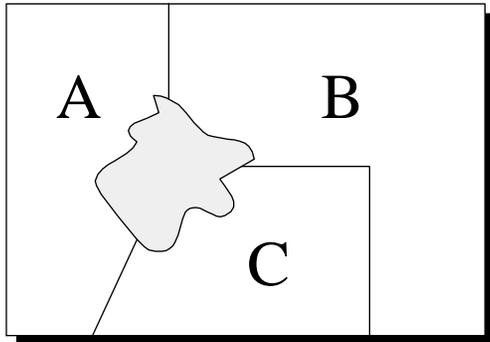






# Unified Command

## Incident Involving Three Jurisdictions

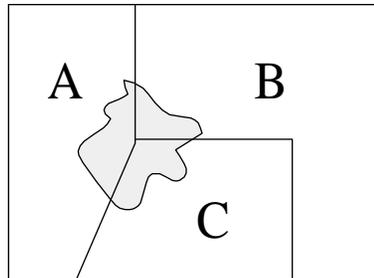


Elements	Military Joint Operations	ICS Unified Command
Objectives Policy	UN Coalition	Jurisdictions Agencies
Organization	Force Command Structure	Unified Command Structure
Resources	Coalition Service Elements	Agency Personnel Equipment
Operations	Force Commander	Operations Section Chief

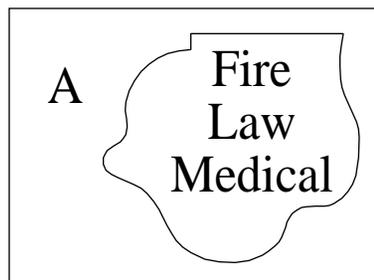
# Advantages of Using Unified Command

- One set of objectives.
- Collective approach to strategies.
- Improved information flow and coordination.
- Better understanding of objectives, priorities, limitations and restrictions.
- No compromise of authority.
- Each agency's plans, actions, and constraints are known.
- Optimizes combined efforts of all agencies.
- Cost effective.

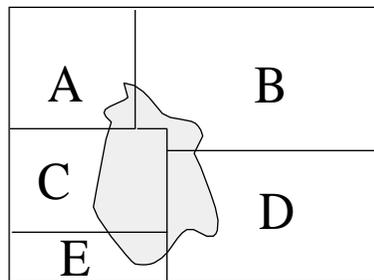
# Unified Command Applications



Incidents that affect more than one political jurisdiction

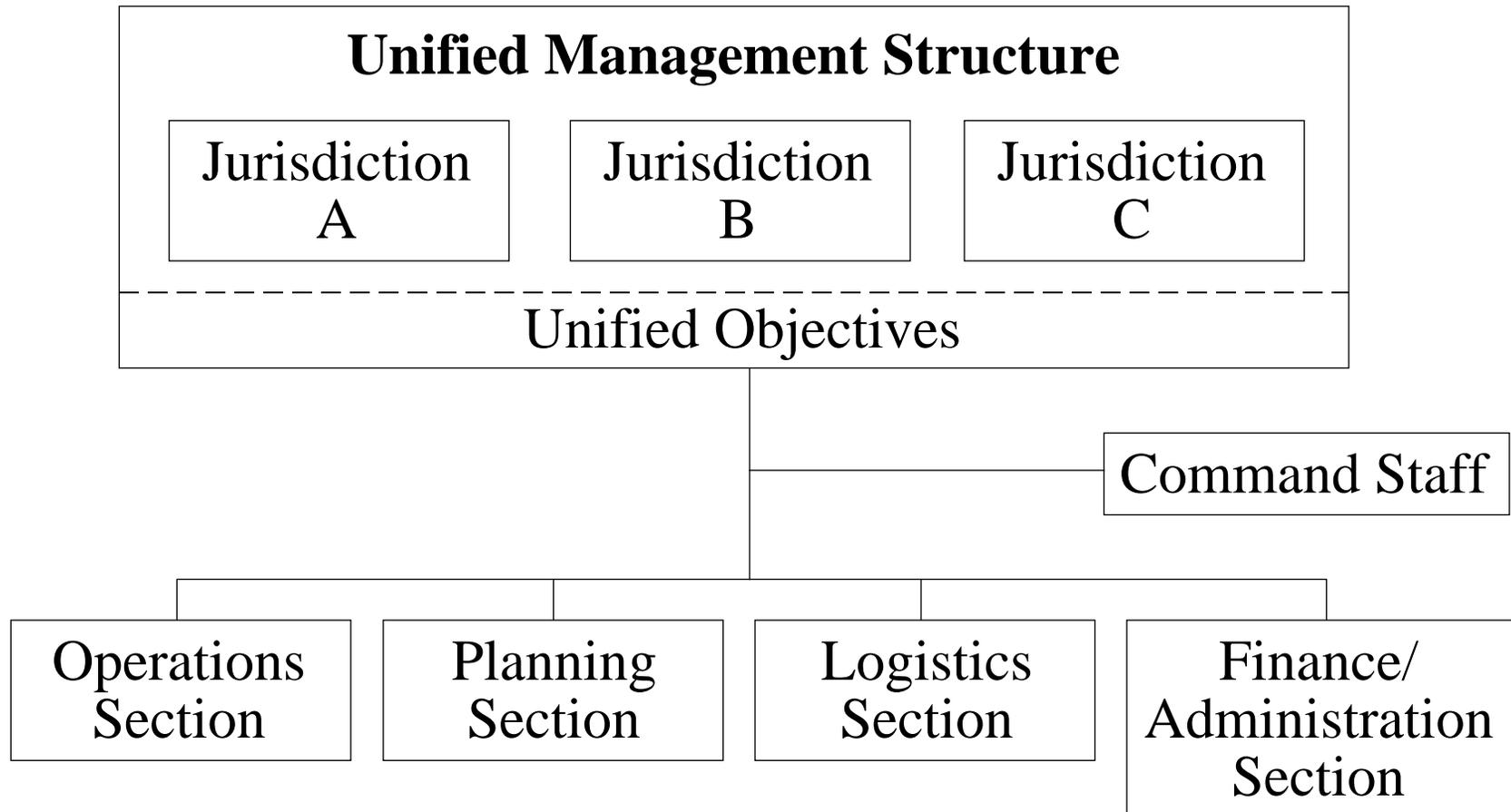


Incidents involving multiple agencies within a jurisdiction

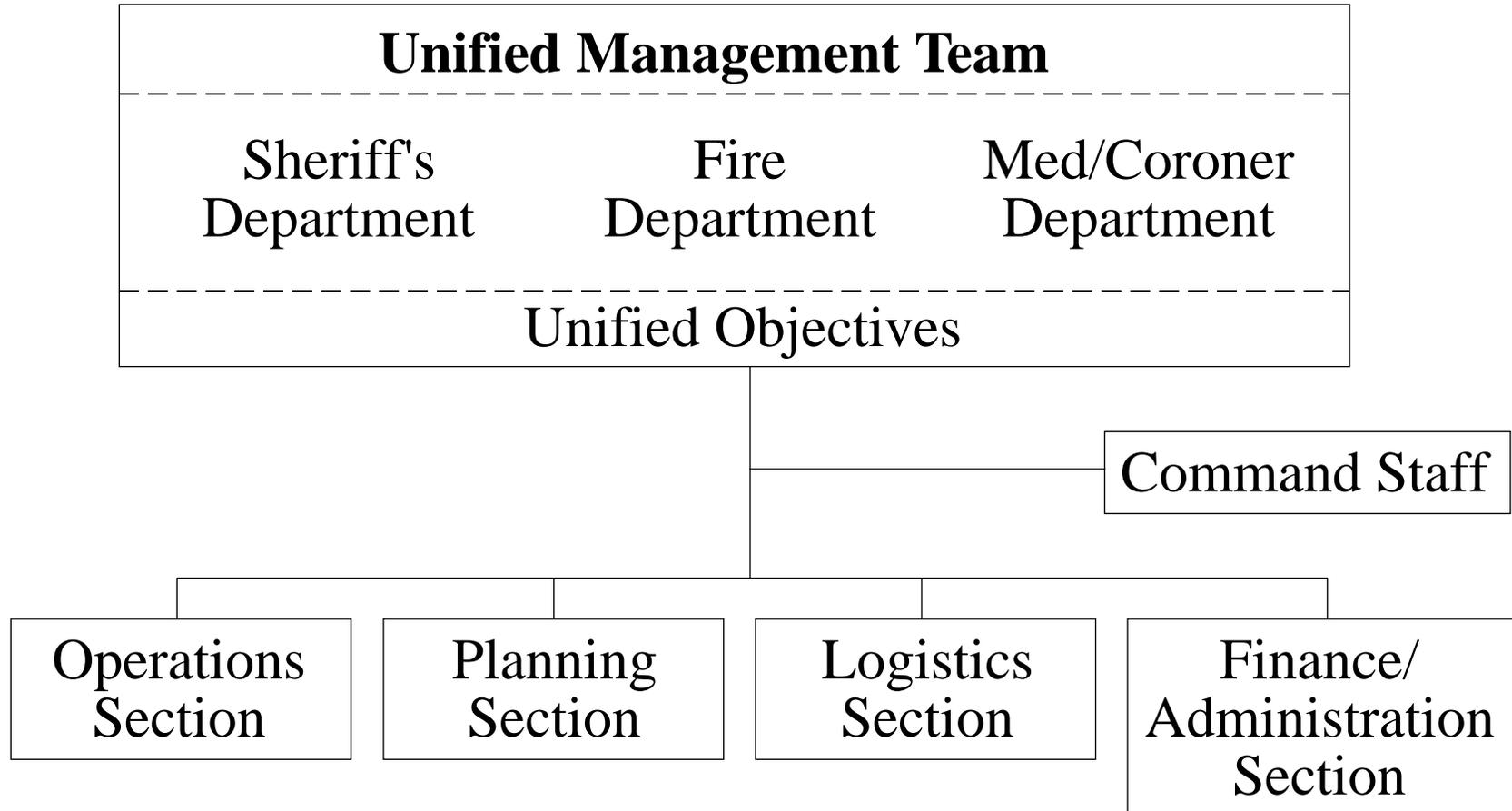


Incidents that impact on multiple geographic and functional agencies

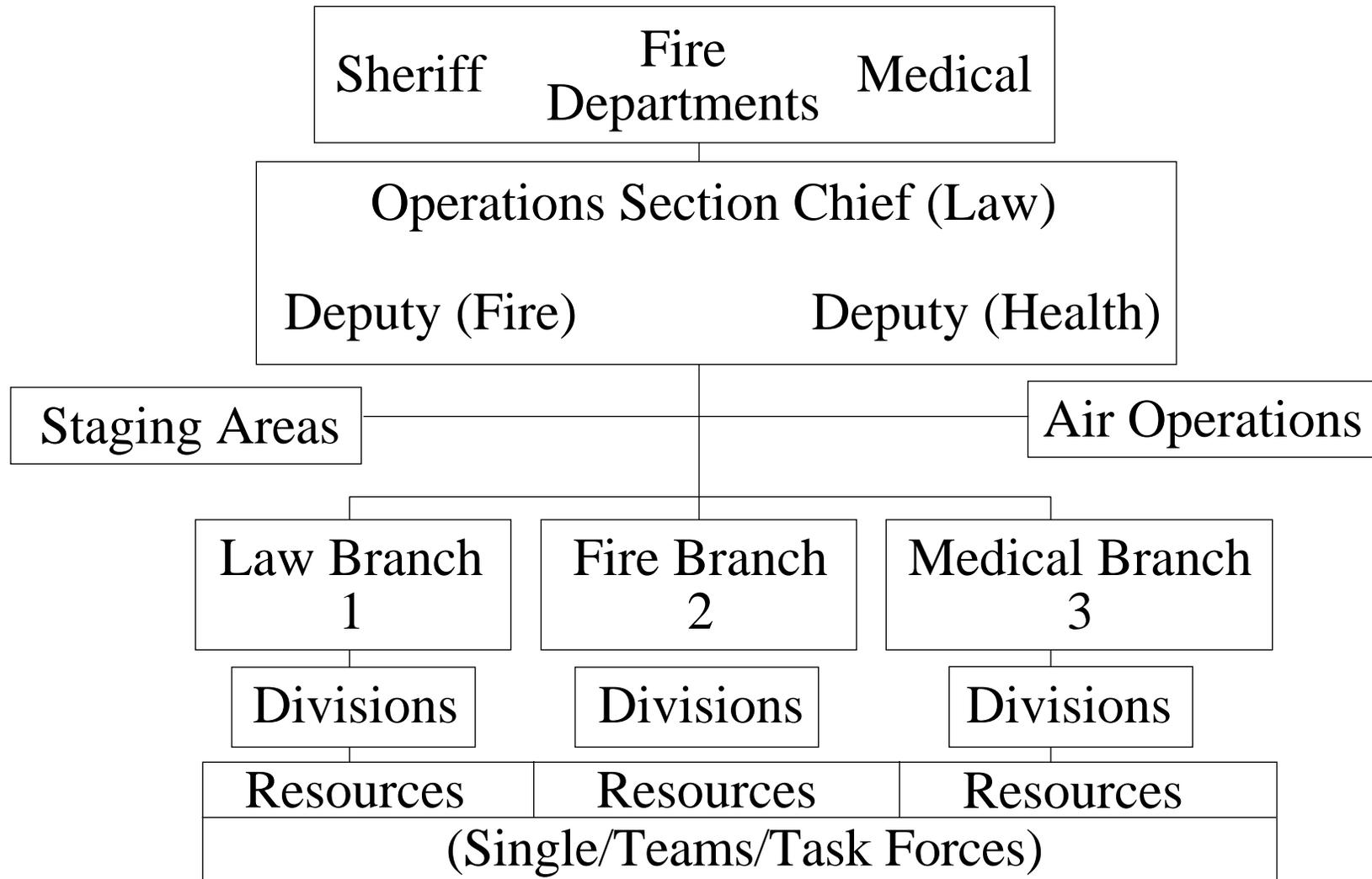
# Multijurisdiction



# Multidepartment



# Unified Incident Command

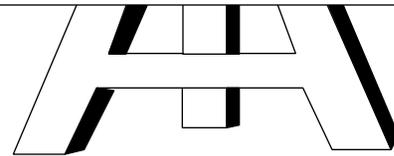


# ICS Unified Command

- Practical
- Cost effective
- Improves incident management

# Unified Command Features

- Single integrated incident organization
- Collocated facilities
- Integrated planning process - action plan
- Shared planning, logistical, finance functions
- Coordinated resource ordering



# Participants in a Unified Command Organization Depends on:

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

# Purposes of the Command Meeting

- State jurisdictional/agency priorities and objectives.
- Present jurisdictional limitations, concerns, restrictions.
- Develop a collective set of incident objectives.
- Establish and agree on acceptable priorities.
- Adopt an overall strategy or strategies.
- Agree on the basic organization structure.

## **Purposes of the Command Meeting (cont.)**

- Designate an acceptable Operations Section Chief.
- Agree on planning, logistical, and finance procedures.
- Agree on the resource ordering process.
- Agree on cost-sharing procedures.
- Agree on informational matters.
- Designate one agency official as a Unified Command spokesperson.

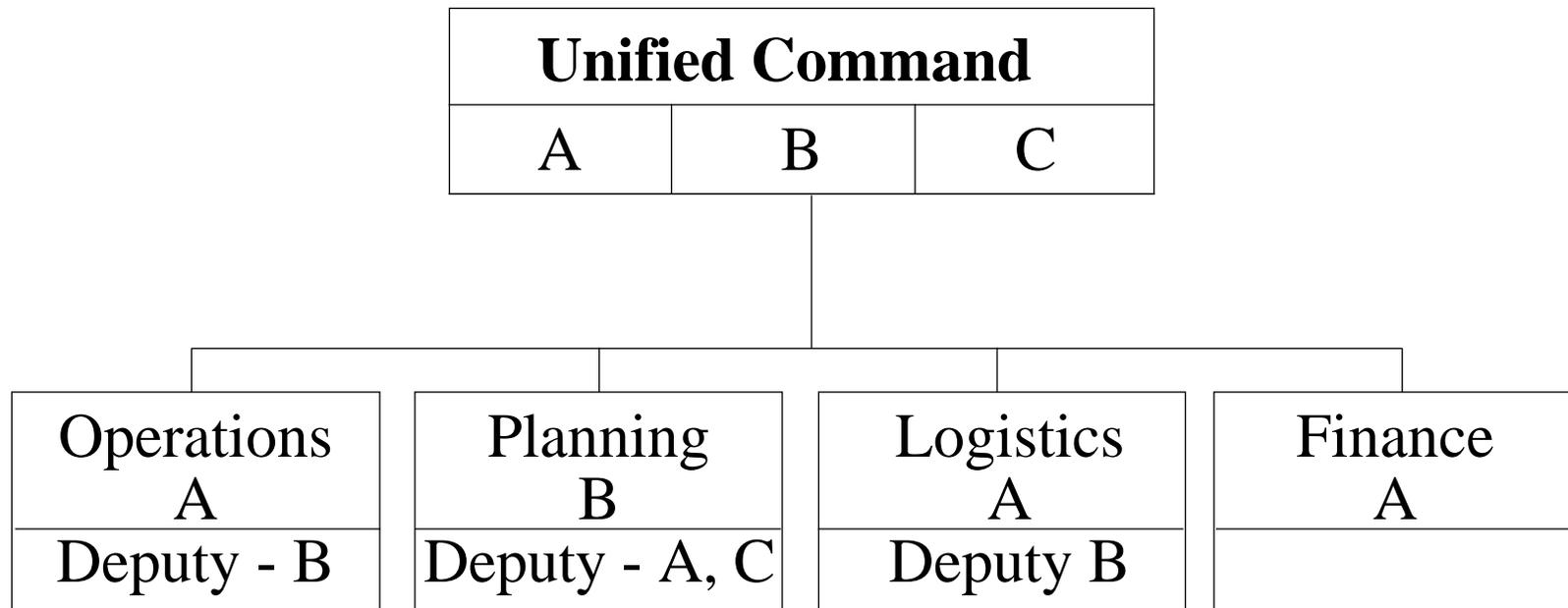
# Command Meeting Requirements

- The Command Meeting should include **only** agency Incident Commanders.
- The meeting should be brief, and important points should be documented.
- Prior to the meeting, the responsible officials should review the purposes and agenda items, and be prepared to discuss them.

## **Incident Action Planning Meetings will use Command Meeting Results to:**

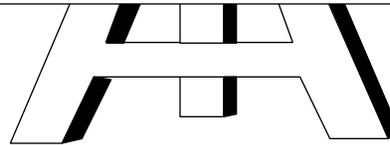
- Decide on tactical operations for the next operational period.
- Establish resource requirements and determining resource availability and sources.
- Make resource assignments.
- Establish the unified Operations Section organization.
- Establish combined planning, logistics, and finance operations as needed.

# Use of Deputies Under Unified Command



### **Guidelines for Using Unified Command**

- Understand ICS Unified Command
- Collocate essential functions
- Start early to use U.C.
- Agree on Operations Section Chief
- Designate a spokesperson if necessary
- Train often as a team



### **Unified Commander's Responsibilities**

- Be clear on agency policy & limitations
- Have proper authorization
- Manage effectively
- Work as a team!!!

# Managing in Unified Command Means:

- Working closely and together with other IC's
- Providing sufficient, qualified staff/resources
- Anticipating and resolving problems
- Delegating authority as needed
- Inspecting and evaluating performance
- Communicating with own agency on priorities, plans, problems, and progress

# **Levels of Coordination Required in Unified Command**

- With other members of the Unified Command
- With higher authorities, agency administrators

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 14  
MAJOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

**October 1994**

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
Mike Munkres - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Gary Nelson - Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Bill Vargas - State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety

The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT INSTRUCTORS OF THIS MODULE READ THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE **INSTRUCTOR CURRICULUM GUIDE** AND MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED THEREIN.**



## **Detailed Lesson Outline**

- COURSE:** Module 14 - Major Incident Management
- SUGGESTED TIME:** 4 Hours
- TRAINING AIDS:** Overhead projector, overhead pens, reference text
- SUBJECT:** This module describes how major or complex incidents and events can create special problems related to incident organization. It discusses how anticipating these potential problems can result in increased organizing options for the incident that will lead to more effective management. The module describes several models on how to divide major, single incidents for more effective management.
- OBJECTIVES:**
1. List the principal factors often found in, or related to, major and/or complex incidents.
  2. List the four expansion options for incident organization, and describe the conditions under which they would be applied.
  3. Demonstrate, through an exercise, how to apply the various options related to major or complex incident management.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
REVIEW THE SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED IN THIS MODULE	14-01-I400-VG
REVIEW INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	14-02-I400-VG
<p>I. Problems in Major or Complex Incident Management</p> <p>Major incidents are infrequent and represent less than ten percent of the total incidents which occur. However, they create dramatic spectacles which generate significant management problems.</p>	
<p>AS A BEGINNING (OPTIONAL) STEP, HAVE STUDENTS PRESENT THEIR IDEAS ON WHY THEY THINK MAJOR INCIDENTS CREATE THE MOST MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS. DO THIS AS A GROUP OR BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS AND GIVE THEM 10 MINUTES FOR DISCUSSION. COMPARE THEIR RESULTS AGAINST THE LIST BELOW.</p> <p>Taken as a whole, major incidents generally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve more than one agency (often many).</li> <li>• May involve more than one political jurisdiction.</li> <li>• Have the more complex management and communication problems.</li> <li>• Require more experienced, qualified supervisory personnel.</li> <li>• Require large numbers of tactical and support resources.</li> <li>• Cause more injury, death, illness.</li> <li>• Produce the most damage to property and the environment.</li> </ul>	<p>14-03-I400-VG Page 1 2 Page 2 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have extreme elements of crisis/psychological trauma that diminishes human capacity to function.</li> <li>• Are longer in duration.</li> <li>• Are the most costly to control and mitigate.</li> <li>• Require extensive mitigation, recovery, and rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Have greater media interest.</li> </ul> <p>ASK STUDENTS TO COMMENT AND TO FURTHER DISCUSS THIS LIST. RECORD ANY ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE PRESENTED.</p> <p>Incidents can become major in two ways:</p> <p>A. <u>They start as major incidents</u> - Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tanker spills, major HAZMAT situations, simultaneous civil disorders, outbreaks of pests, etc., can all produce major and/or complex incident management situations, some with only minimal or no advance warning.</p> <p>B. <u>They become major incidents</u> - Smaller incidents such as fires and hazardous substance spills can become major as result of wind or surface conditions, and also as a result of response time delays, poor initial management, and/or lack of resources or support.</p> <p>Major incidents are often thought of as covering a large geographical area. For example, many acres burning, an entire area flooded, or several floors in a building.</p>	<p>14-04-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Major incidents can also be incidents with great complexity, requiring the application of a variety of tactics and resources to successfully bring the situation under control.</p> <p>There is virtually no geographic location that is free from the potential of having a major or complex incident.</p> <p>Smaller jurisdictions can and do have major and complex incidents. Even though the smaller jurisdictions do not have all of the personnel and equipment resources necessary, they can effectively use ICS. To do so requires adequate training, and planning with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies to jointly develop the capability to effectively manage major incidents.</p>	
<p>II. Characteristics of Major/Complex Incidents</p> <p>This module will examine several ways in which ICS can be extended for major or complex incidents. Characteristics of these kinds of incidents can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the Command and General Staff positions are filled, and a large organization is in place or is developing.</li> <li>• Most or all of the functional organizational units within sections are needed.</li> <li>• Divisions/groups are established to geographically facilitate making work assignments.</li> <li>• The number of Divisions may be such that Operations Section Branches are needed to reduce span of control.</li> </ul>	<p>14-05-I400-VG Page 1 of 3</p> <p>14-05-I400-VG Page 2 of 3</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple operational periods are probably required.</li> <li>• There will be a transition to a more qualified Incident Commander, and the most qualified personnel will be used throughout the organization.</li> <li>• Other agencies or jurisdictions will be assisting.</li> <li>• Written action plans will be required.</li> <li>• Operations personnel may exceed several hundred per operational period.</li> <li>• Costs associated with maintaining the incident are high.</li> </ul> <p>Major incidents are clearly the exception. It is likely that most incident managers may never deal with incidents so major or complex that they require taking one or more of the measures described in this module.</p> <p>However, because major and complex incidents do occur, it is necessary to develop and to describe the ways in which the Incident Command System can be effectively used in these kinds of situations. ICS has great versatility. Some of the examples of that are described in this module.</p> <p><b>HAVE STUDENTS PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS THEY THINK WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN CLASSIFYING MAJOR OR COMPLEX INCIDENTS.</b></p> <p><b>III. Major Incident Management Organizations</b></p> <p>Primary factors in determining the size of the overall organization will be:</p>	<p>14-05-I400-VG Page 3 of 3</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative and jurisdictional complexity.</li> <li>• Geographical area involved.</li> <li>• Span of control considerations. This includes span of control in Operations as well as all other organizational elements.</li> <li>• Functional specialties required.</li> <li>• Incident logistical, planning, and other support needs.</li> <li>• Potential for growth.</li> </ul>	14-06-I400-VG
<p>Using a recommended span of control guideline of a 5-to-1 reporting ratio, an Operations Section could have up to five branches. Each branch could have up to five divisions/groups. Each division/group could have task forces or strike teams assigned. This is the preferred method of assembling resources. The actual number of personnel would be determined by the kinds of task forces and or strike teams involved.</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE IS DRAWN FROM THE FIRE SERVICES. IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO USE AS AN EXAMPLE, YOU MAY ADD EXAMPLES FROM OTHER APPLICATION AREAS.</p> <p>THE POINT IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT EFFECTIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WILL ENABLE THE SUPERVISOR TO HAVE AND MAINTAIN A REASONABLE SPAN OF CONTROL, AND BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF RESOURCES.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>A division on a wildland fire incident could be a mixture of resources including hand crews, engines,</p>	14-07-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES						
<p>and bulldozers. If these resources were formed into strike teams as shown below, the total personnel complement for the division could be 130.</p>							
<p>Example Division (wildland fire model)</p>	<p>14-08-I400-VG</p>						
<p>Personnel</p>							
<table> <tr> <td>3 Hand Crew Strike Teams</td> <td>108</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Bulldozer Strike Team</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Engine Strike Team</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table>	3 Hand Crew Strike Teams	108	1 Bulldozer Strike Team	6	1 Engine Strike Team	16	
3 Hand Crew Strike Teams	108						
1 Bulldozer Strike Team	6						
1 Engine Strike Team	16						
<p>Extending this same configuration across a twenty-five division/group incident, the total Operations Section personnel could exceed 3000 personnel <u>for each operational period</u>.</p>							
<p>Obviously, this is an extreme example, however it gives an indication of the flexibility of ICS to accommodate a very large combination of resources if necessary. If the span of control guideline was increased to 1 to 6 or 1 to 7, which would still be within acceptable limits, the organization could be much larger.</p>							
<p>While the standard ICS structure is adaptable to meet the needs of most major incidents, not all situations are alike. Other forms of ICS organization may be needed to meet extraordinary situations.</p>							
<p>The management principles that relate to ICS are important, however, it is also important that the system work effectively to meet the needs of the incident. On major and/or complex incidents this may require tailoring the organization to meet the needs of the situation.</p>							
<p>Agencies faced with the possibility of having to manage very major incidents have several options available to them under ICS. Four of these will be described:</p>	<p>14-09-I400-VG</p>						

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple incident management with a single ICS organization (an Incident Complex).</li> <li>• Dividing a single incident into two (or more) incidents.</li> <li>• Expanding the ICS planning capability for incidents.</li> <li>• Expanding the ICS organization to accommodate a second Operations or Logistics Section.</li> </ul> <p>Another example of major incident management is the use of Area Command. Area Command differs from the above examples in that it is <u>another organization</u> established over two or more incidents, to ensure inter-incident coordination. Area Command is covered in Module 15.</p> <p>A. Incident Complex - Multiple Incident Management With a Single ICS Organization</p> <p><b>THE CONCEPTS DISCUSSED HERE WILL REQUIRE VISUAL SUPPORT. MAKE SURE STUDENTS GRASP THE INTENT. USE ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES AS NECESSARY.</b></p>	
<p>An Incident Complex is two or more individual incidents located in the same general proximity which are assigned to a single incident management team or unified command to facilitate management.</p> <p>When an Incident Complex is established over several individual incidents, the general guideline is that the previously identified incidents would become branches within the Operations Section of the Incident Complex structure.</p>	14-10-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>If any of the incidents within an Incident Complex has major potential, it is best to establish it as a separate incident and utilize Area Command.</p>	
<p><u>Examples where an Incident Complex may be used:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An earthquake, tornado, flood, etc., situation where there are many separate incidents occurring close together.</li> <li>• Several separate fires are burning in close proximity to one another.</li> <li>• One incident is underway with an ICS management team assigned, and other smaller incidents occur in the same proximity.</li> </ul>	<p>14-11-I400-VG</p>
<p>Considerations for the use of a complex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complex may be managed under a single or a unified command.</li> <li>• The incidents are close enough to be managed by the same incident management team.</li> <li>• Some staff and/or logistical support economies could be achieved through a combined management approach.</li> <li>• The number of overall incidents within the jurisdiction requires consolidations wherever possible to conserve staff and reduce costs.</li> <li>• Planning, Logistical, and Finance/ Administration activities can be adequately provided to the Incident Complex from a single management team.</li> </ul>	<p>14-12-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>As a general guideline, it is usually advisable to establish each of the separate incidents within an Incident Complex as a <u>branch</u>. This provides more potential for future expansion if required.</p> <p>The reason for this is that more flexibility is then available within each branch to later establish divisions or groups if required. Also, because divisions and groups may already have been established at each of the incidents, the same basic structure can be carried on.</p> <p>B. Dividing a Single Incident into Two Incidents</p>	14-13-I400-VG
<p><b>THE CONCEPTS DISCUSSED HERE WILL REQUIRE VISUAL SUPPORT. MAKE SURE STUDENTS GRASP THE INTENT. USE ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES AS NECESSARY.</b></p>	
<p>Some incidents become so large that they could best be managed as separate incidents. Examples of these could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An incident has spread into another jurisdiction(s) and can best be managed separately. For example, flooding situations which continue to expand into downstream low-lying areas. Unified Command would still be the first choice, but may not always be the only solution.</li> <li>• Earthquake and wildland fire situations where terrain and access considerations have an effect on operational or logistical mobility, and the ability to manage from one location.</li> <li>• HAZMAT or major spill situations which affect both an initial location and expand to affect other areas.</li> </ul>	14-14-I400-VG

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**OUTLINE**

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**AIDS & CUES**

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- Incidents which are naturally separating or where there are clearly different objectives.

If only one of the principal ICS sections is overtaxed then one of the other examples discussed below might be used. However, if two of the principal sections are overtaxed due to the size of the incident, then the incident should be divided into two incidents. An example of this would be when:

- The Planning Section can no longer adequately provide planning services. This would be because of the size of the incident or because of the varying objectives and strategies needed, and just adding people to the staff is not the answer.
- The Logistics Section can no longer, or will soon not be able to, serve the widespread facilities and operations from a single incident base.

At this point, the Incident Commander, (or Unified Command) in consultation with the jurisdictional agencies involved, could recommend that the incident be divided into two separate incidents.

Each of these would have its own name and separate incident management team.

The following steps are required:

A decision would be reached on how best to divide the incident. This could be done in several ways, depending upon:

- Terrain and access considerations

14-15-I400-VG  
Page 1 of 2

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locations of future resource and logistical support</li> <li>• Jurisdictional/administrative boundaries</li> <li>• Current Operations Section structure (branches, divisions, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Incident Commanders and the Command and General Staff would be selected for each incident.</p> <p>Supporting organization facilities, location, etc., would be designated.</p> <p>An appropriate time would be designated for establishing two separate incidents with individual names.</p> <p>The two incident management organizations could be directed to coordinate planning strategies and the use of critical resources between the incidents for at least the next operational period.</p> <p>An Area Command could be established to assist in overall coordination.</p>	<p>14-15-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p>C. Expanding the ICS Planning Capability for Incidents</p> <p><b>THE CONCEPTS DISCUSSED HERE WILL REQUIRE VISUAL SUPPORT. MAKE SURE STUDENTS GRASP THE INTENT. USE ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES AS NECESSARY.</b></p> <p>Expanding the planning capability at an incident can take several forms. Two examples will be used.</p>	<p>14-16-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>1. Branch Tactical Planning</p> <p>If the incident becomes so large that there is no logical set of objectives that pertain to the entire incident, <u>or</u> if the preparation and/or distribution of the Incident Action Plan could not be feasibly accomplished within the required timeframe, then a modified planning structure could be adopted.</p> <p>The solution would be to have <u>detailed action planning</u> done at the operations branch level. This could be accomplished by the Planning Section providing the following to each Operations Section branch.</p>	<p>14-17-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General incident objectives</li> <li>• Strategy for the branch for the next operational period</li> <li>• Branch resource summary for the next operational period</li> <li>• Weather and safety information</li> <li>• Any changes to logistical support</li> <li>• Personnel to support planning as required</li> </ul> <p>With this information, individual branches can perform detailed action planning. The Planning Section would have to ensure that necessary inter-branch coordination took place wherever necessary.</p>	<p>14-18-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Additional resource requirements over those authorized would have to be made known to the Operations Section Chief.</p> <p>A modification to this model could be accomplished by designating only certain branches, e.g., those with less complex situations, as branches which would perform branch action planning. Other branches would continue under a central planning structure.</p> <p>In either case, the Planning Section would provide each branch doing individual branch planning with the required support in terms of personnel and other support resources to get the planning accomplished.</p> <p>2. Advance Incident Planning (Contingency Planning)</p> <p>One of the functions of the Planning Section is to assess all available intelligence and to provide periodic predictions on incident potential.</p> <p>On very major or complicated incidents, and for incidents that require extensive planning for each operational period, it is often difficult to find the personnel or the time to take a long-range look at the future incident planning needs.</p> <p>A solution to this is for the Planning Section Chief to designate staff to concentrate <u>only</u> on advance planning.</p> <p><u>The ways this can be accomplished are:</u></p>	

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a Deputy Planning Section Chief the advance planning function. Provide staff as necessary.</li> <li>• Assign a Technical Specialist(s) to perform the function.</li> <li>• Establish a special unit within the Planning Section to handle advance planning.</li> </ul>	14-19-I400-VG
<p>Incident advance planning should look ahead at least 36-72 hours. The staff responsible for advance planning should use the following as they consider the long-range future of the incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall goal and incident objectives</li> <li>• Previous and present operational period plans adequacy</li> <li>• Future agency and mutual-aid resource availability</li> <li>• Strategy assessment and alternatives</li> <li>• Environmental factors (terrain, weather, etc.)</li> <li>• Organizational assessment and alternatives</li> <li>• Political issues</li> <li>• Economic issues</li> <li>• Long-term recovery/rehabilitation needs</li> </ul>	14-20-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>The goal of this advance planning effort should be to provide the Planning Section Chief and the Incident Commander or (Unified Command) with a range of alternatives related to management of the incident beyond the next operational period.</p> <p>D. Expanding the ICS Organization to Accommodate Another Operations Section or Logistics Section</p> <p>While not likely, it is possible to establish a second Operations or Logistics Section within a single incident.</p>	
<p>DEPENDING UPON THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS, IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FULL DETAILS ON THE FOLLOWING.</p>	
<p>THE CONCEPTS DISCUSSED HERE WILL REQUIRE VISUAL SUPPORT. MAKE SURE STUDENTS GRASP THE INTENT. USE ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES AS NECESSARY.</p>	
<p>1. A Second Operations Section</p>	
<p>This model describes a major incident where the sheer volume of resources required means that the Operations Section cannot be further expanded without exceeding ICS span of control guidelines. Examples:</p>	<p>14-21-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods covering several political jurisdictions.</li> </ul>	<p>14-22-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major wildland fire that continues to expand.</li> </ul>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major (foreign substance) spill in a waterway.</li> </ul> <p>As indicated earlier, the size of the Operations Section is determined by the composition of resources within each division or group.</p> <p>If the organization has grown to the point where it is not desirable to expand the Operations Section further, a second Operations Section could be established.</p> <p><u>Major steps should include:</u></p>	<p>14-23-I400-VG</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that other Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion.</li> </ul> <p>This <u>could</u> require establishing a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations to provide management supervision over the two Operations Section Chiefs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished.</li> </ul>	<p>14-24-1400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that Logistics, Facilities, and Communications are adequate to support the additional section.</li> <li>• Establishing the second Operations Section at the beginning of an operational period.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.</li> </ul>	<p>14-24-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>This situation may arise when the incident is already operating under Unified Command. Unified Command is not a requirement however.</p> <p>The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations (if established) has the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the original and the additional Operations Section are fully coordinated with each other and with other sections.</p> <p>The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations is normally collocated with the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post.</p> <p>Separate staging areas are established to support each operations section.</p> <p>Depending upon the nature of the incident and the use of aircraft, one Air Operations Branch could be designated to serve both sections.</p> <p>This requires separate airborne coordinators for each section who communicate with each other. It also requires ensuring that the Air Support Group can provide the necessary support.</p> <p>An alternative approach, again depending upon the nature of the incident, would be to establish separate Air Operations branches for each section.</p> <p>A single incident helibase could serve both sections. Separate helispots would be designated for each section.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>2. A Second Logistics Section</p>	
<p>THE CONCEPTS DISCUSSED HERE WILL REQUIRE VISUAL SUPPORT. MAKE SURE STUDENTS GRASP THE INTENT. USE ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES AS NECESSARY.</p>	
<p>If an incident were so large geographically that it would not be possible for the Incident Base or off-site suppliers to support the required number of camps and other incident logistical needs, it may be necessary to establish another Logistics Section to support one part of the incident.</p>	<p>14-25-I400-VG</p>
<p>In this situation, an incident base for each Logistics Section could be established. Additional camps supported by that base could be established.</p>	<p>14-26-I400-VG</p>
<p>At this point, a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics could be added to the command structure if necessary to ensure coordination of the two logistics efforts.</p>	
<p>The Deputy IC for Logistics would normally function from the Incident Command Post. The Deputy IC would ensure that all necessary coordination was taking place between the two Logistics Sections.</p>	
<p><u>Major steps to establish a second Logistics Section include:</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion.</li> </ul>	<p>14-27-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>This may require designating a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics. This person will provide management supervision over the two logistics section chiefs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished. A new Incident Action Plan would be required to reflect these changes.</li> <li>• Establishing the second Logistics Section at the beginning of an operational period.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.</li> </ul> <p>IV. Small Group Exercise</p> <p>TWO EXAMPLES USED ARE TO CONSIDER THE ORGANIZATION FOR AN INCIDENT COMPLEX. IF YOU DESIRE, YOU MAY SELECT ANOTHER SCENARIO FROM THE SCENARIO CATALOG AND COVER OTHER FORMS OF MAJOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT.</p> <p>In this exercise, we will examine how separate incidents could be brought into a single ICS management structure called an Incident Complex.</p> <p>Two scenarios are offered. Scenario A covers an earthquake, tornado, or hurricane situation which has affected the jurisdiction. Scenario B covers wildland fires.</p> <p>The small groups should develop an Incident Complex organization. They should address the questions accompanying the scenarios.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>The groups should be reassembled and give their respective briefings.</p> <p><b>GUIDELINE IN CRITIQUING SMALL GROUPS. FOLLOW THE ATTACHED EVALUATION EXERCISES.</b></p> <p>Guidelines for evaluating training curriculum exercises.</p> <p>There are no perfect school solutions given for curriculum organizational exercises. In evaluating small group exercises, use the following guidelines (<u>as appropriate to the exercise</u>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear Incident Objectives.</li> <li>2. Strategies make sense for objectives.</li> <li>3. Organization would appear to meet the workload.</li> <li>4. Have defined Operational Periods.</li> <li>5. Considered the need for written Incident Action Plan.</li> <li>6. Logistics, Planning, Finance/Administration support considered.</li> <li>7. Organization could easily be expanded.</li> <li>8. Organization span of control is adequate.</li> <li>9. Considered the use of Unified Command.</li> <li>10. Considered the use of deputies, also from other agencies.</li> <li>11. Considered the need for Technical Specialists.</li> </ol>	

<b>OUTLINE</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; CUES</b>
12. Use of Staging Areas considered.	
13. Other facilities are designated.	
14. Aviation organization is established.	
15. Student groups have used appropriate ICS terminology.	
16. Student groups were proactive in their approach.	

## Scenario

### Exercise A

A major portion of the city has been affected by the \_\_\_\_\_.  
Three incidents are reported within a two block area. Initially, each of these was designated as an individual incident and resources were separately assigned to each.

Incident A:      Damage to a hospital requiring evacuation, search and rescue, and relocation of 50 persons.

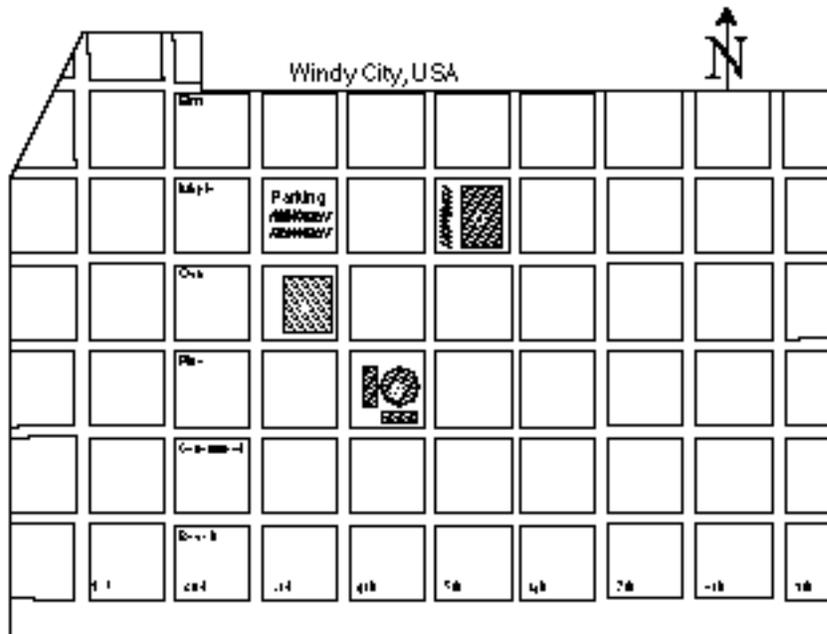
Incident B:      Fire and possible HAZMAT situation at a commercial chemical storage facility.

Incident C:      Partial collapse of a roof in an open supermarket. Persons injured and looting is taking place.

Because of the large number of simultaneous incidents throughout the community, the City Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has directed that one incident management team assume on-scene responsibility for all three of these incidents.

The most qualified Incident Commander is currently located at Incident B.

Task: Develop the incident organization structure for this Incident Complex.



Address the following questions in small group settings.

1. What would the overall organizational structure look like?
2. How would the Operations Section be set up to address these problems? Should it be functional or geographic, or both?
3. How would Staging Areas be handled?
4. How would you recommend that incident action planning be done?
5. How would the Command Staff positions be established?
6. How could Air Operations best be managed?
7. What are the two or three major problems you would have in operating either one or both of these incidents as Incident Complexes?

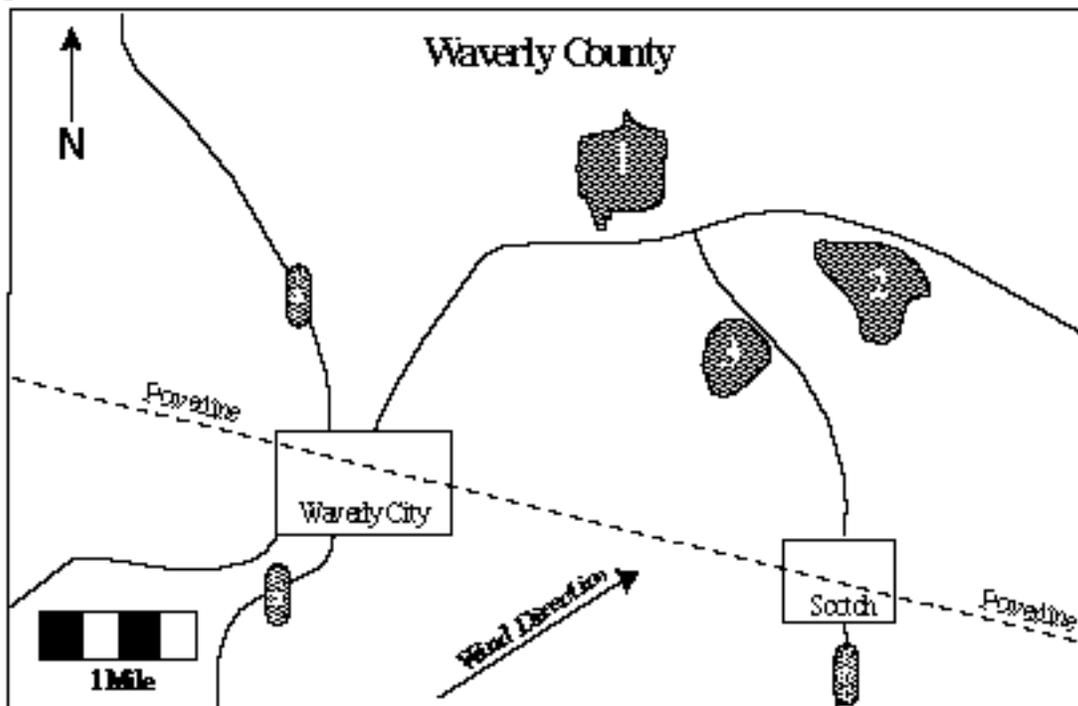
## Scenario

### Exercise B

A wildland fire (1) was initially reported. Resources were dispatched. Within 30 minutes two additional fires (2, 3) were reported. Additional units were dispatched.

Because of the high fire danger, and the shortage of qualified personnel to manage these incidents, the jurisdictional agency designated these three incidents as an Incident Complex. The Incident Commander for incident #1 was made the Incident Complex Commander.

Task: Develop the incident organization structure for this Incident Complex.



Address the following questions in small group settings.

1. What would the overall organizational structure look like?
2. How would the Operations Section be set up to address these problems? Should it be functional or geographic, or both?

3. How would Staging Areas be handled?
4. How would you recommend that incident action planning be done?
5. How would the Command Staff positions be established?
6. How could Air Operations best be managed?
7. What are the two or three major problems you would have in operating either one or both of these incidents as Incident Complexes?

## RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

Exercise Planners: Change names or add to this list as you desire. Depending on the exercise needs, use blank columns to show: # resources available, typing, resources needed, resources ordered, resources in Staging Areas, resources assigned by agency, etc.

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				



**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 14  
MAJOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

**October 1994**

**REFERENCE TEXT**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
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The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California



This module describes how major or complex incidents and events can create special problems related to incident organization. It discusses how anticipating these potential problems can result in increased organizing options for the incident that will lead to more effective management. The module describes several models on how to divide major, single incidents for more effective management.

Objectives:

1. List the principal factors often found in, or related to, major and/or complex incidents.
2. List the four expansion options for incident organization, and describe the conditions under which they would be applied.
3. Demonstrate, through an exercise, how to apply the various options related to major or complex incident management.

## I. Problems in Major or Complex Incident Management

Major incidents are infrequent and represent less than ten percent of the total incidents which occur. However they create dramatic spectacles which generate significant management problems.

Taken as a whole, major incidents generally:

- Involve more than one agency (often many).
- May involve more than one political jurisdiction.
- Have the more complex management and communication problems.
- Require more experienced, qualified supervisory personnel.
- Require large numbers of tactical and support resources.
- Cause more injury, death, illness.
- Produce the most damage to property and the environment.
- Have extreme elements of crisis/psychological trauma that diminishes human capacity to function.
- Are longer in duration.
- Are the most costly to control and mitigate.
- Require extensive mitigation, recovery, and rehabilitation.
- Have greater media interest.

Incidents can become major in two ways:

- A. They start as major incidents - Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tanker spills, major HAZMAT situations, simultaneous civil disorders, outbreaks of pests, etc., can all produce major and/or complex incident management situations, some with only minimal or no advance warning.
- B. They become major incidents - Smaller incidents such as fires and hazardous substance spills can become major as result of wind or surface conditions, and also as a result of response time delays, poor initial management, and/or lack of resources or support.

Major incidents are often thought of as covering a large geographical area. For example, many acres burning, an entire area flooded, or several floors in a building.

Major incidents can also be incidents with great complexity, requiring the application of a variety of tactics and resources to successfully bring the situation under control.

There is virtually no geographic location that is free from the potential of having a major or complex incident.

Smaller jurisdictions can and do have major and complex incidents. Even though the smaller jurisdictions do not have all of the personnel and equipment resources necessary, they can effectively use ICS. To do so requires adequate training, and planning with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies to jointly develop the capability to effectively manage major incidents.

## II. Characteristics of Major/Complex Incidents

This module will examine several ways in which ICS can be extended for major or complex incidents. Characteristics of these kinds of incidents can include the following:

- All of the Command and General Staff positions are filled, and a large organization is in place or is developing.
- Most or all of the functional organizational units within sections are needed.
- Divisions/groups are established to geographically facilitate making work assignments.
- The number of Divisions may be such that Operations Section Branches are needed to reduce span of control.
- Multiple operational periods are probably required.
- There will be a transition to a more qualified Incident Commander, and the most qualified personnel will be used throughout the organization.
- Other agencies or jurisdictions will be assisting.
- Written action plans will be required.
- Operations personnel may exceed several hundred per operational period.
- Costs associated with maintaining the incident are high.

Major incidents are clearly the exception. It is likely that most incident managers may never deal with incidents so major or complex that they require taking one or more of the measures described in this module.

However, because major and complex incidents do occur, it is necessary to develop and to describe the ways in which the

Incident Command System can be effectively used in these kinds of situations. ICS has great versatility. Some of the examples of that are described in this module.

### III. Major Incident Management Organizations

Primary factors in determining the size of the overall organization will be:

- Administrative and jurisdictional complexity.
- Geographical area involved.
- Span of control considerations. This includes span of control in Operations as well as all other organizational elements.
- Functional specialties required.
- Incident logistical, planning, and other support needs.
- Potential for growth.

Using a recommended span of control guideline of a 5 to 1 reporting ratio, an Operations Section could have up to five branches. Each branch could have up to five divisions/groups. Each division/group could have task forces or strike teams assigned. This is the preferred method of assembling resources. The actual number of personnel would be determined by the kinds of task forces and or strike teams involved.

Example:

A division on a wildland fire incident could be a mixture of resources including hand crews, engines, and bulldozers. If these resources were formed into strike teams as shown below, the total personnel complement for the division could be 130 personnel.

Example Division (wildland fire model)

## Personnel

3 Hand Crew Strike Teams	108
1 Bulldozer Strike Team	6
1 Engine Strike Team	16

Extending this same configuration across a twenty-five division/group incident, the total Operations Section personnel could exceed 3000 personnel for each operational period.

Obviously, this is an extreme example, however it gives an indication of the flexibility of ICS to accommodate a very large combination of resources if necessary. If the span of control guideline was increased to 1 to 6 or 1 to 7, which would still be within acceptable limits, the organization could be much larger.

While the standard ICS structure is adaptable to meet the needs of most major incidents, not all situations are alike. Other forms of ICS organization may be needed to meet extraordinary situations.

The management principles that relate to ICS are important, however, it is also important that the system work effectively to meet the needs of the incident. On major and/or complex incidents this may require tailoring the organization to meet the needs of the situation.

Agencies faced with the possibility of having to manage very major incidents have several options available to them under ICS. Four of these will be described:

- Multiple incident management with a single ICS organization (an Incident Complex).
- Dividing a single incident into two (or more) incidents.
- Expanding the ICS planning capability for incidents.
- Expanding the ICS organization to accommodate a second Operations or Logistics Section.

Another example of major incident management is the use of Area Command. Area Command differs from the above examples in that it is another organization established over two or more incidents, to ensure inter-incident coordination. Area Command is covered in Module 15.

A. Incident Complex - Multiple Incident Management with a Single ICS Organization

An Incident Complex is two or more individual incidents located in the same general proximity which are assigned to a single incident management team or unified command to facilitate management.

When an Incident Complex is established over several individual incidents, the general guideline is that the previously identified incidents would become branches within the Operations Section of the Incident Complex structure.

If any of the incidents within an Incident Complex has major potential, it is best to establish it as a separate incident and utilize Area Command.

Examples where an Incident Complex may be used:

- An earthquake, tornado, flood, etc., situation where there are many separate incidents occurring close together.
- Several separate fires are burning in close proximity to one another.
- One incident is underway with an ICS management team assigned, and other smaller incidents occur in the same proximity.

Considerations for the use of a complex:

- A complex may be managed under a single or a unified command.

- The incidents are close enough to be managed by the same incident management team.
- Some staff and/or logistical support economies could be achieved through a combined management approach.
- The number of overall incidents within the jurisdiction requires consolidations wherever possible to conserve staff and reduce costs.
- Planning, Logistical, and Finance/ Administration activities can be adequately provided to the Incident Complex from a single management team.

As a general guideline, it is usually advisable to establish each of the separate incidents within an Incident Complex as a branch. This provides more potential for future expansion if required.

The reason for this is that more flexibility is then available within each branch to later establish divisions or groups if required. Also, because divisions and groups may already have been established at each of the incidents, the same basic structure can be carried on.

#### B. Dividing a Single Incident into Two Incidents

Some incidents become so large that they could best be managed as separate incidents. Examples of these could include:

- An incident has spread into another jurisdiction(s) and can best be managed separately. For example, flooding situations which continue to expand into downstream low-lying areas. Unified Command would still be the first choice, but may not always be the only solution.

- Earthquake and wildland fire situations where terrain and access considerations have an affect on operational or logistical mobility, and the ability to manage from one location.
- HAZMAT or major spill situations which affect both an initial location and expand to affect other areas.
- Incidents which are naturally separating or where there are clearly different objectives.

If only one of the principal ICS sections is overtaxed then one of the other examples discussed below might be used. However, if two of the principal sections are overtaxed due to the size of the incident, then the incident should be divided into two incidents. An example of this would be when:

- The Planning Section can no longer adequately provide planning services. This would be because of the size of the incident or because of the varying objectives and strategies needed, and just adding people to the staff is not the answer.
- The Logistics Section can no longer, or will soon not be able to, serve the widespread facilities and operations from a single incident base.

At this point, the Incident Commander, (or Unified Command) in consultation with the jurisdictional agencies involved, could recommend that the incident be divided into two separate incidents.

Each of these would have its own name and separate incident management team.

The following steps are required:

A decision would be reached on how best to divide the incident. This could be done in several ways, depending upon:

- Terrain and access considerations.
- Locations of future resource and logistical support.
- Jurisdictional/administrative boundaries.
- Current Operations Section structure (branches, divisions, etc.).

Incident Commanders and the Command and General Staff would be selected for each incident.

Supporting organization facilities, location, etc., would be designated.

An appropriate time would be designated for establishing two separate incidents with individual names.

The two incident management organizations could be directed to coordinate planning strategies and the use of critical resources between the incidents for at least the next operational period.

An Area Command could be established to assist in overall coordination.

#### C. Expanding the ICS Planning Capability for Incidents

Expanding the planning capability at an incident can take several forms. Two examples will be used.

##### 1. Branch Tactical Planning

If the incident becomes so large that there is no logical set of objectives that pertain to the entire incident, or if the preparation and/or distribution of the Incident Action Plan could not be feasibly accomplished within the required timeframe, then a modified planning structure could be adopted.

The solution would be to have detailed action planning done at the operations branch level. This could be accomplished by the Planning Section providing the following to each Operations Section branch.

- General incident objectives
- Strategy for the branch for the next operational period
- Branch resource summary for the next operational period
- Weather and safety information
- Any changes to logistical support
- Personnel to support planning as required

With this information, individual branches can perform detailed action planning. The Planning Section would have to ensure that necessary inter-branch coordination took place wherever necessary.

Additional resource requirements over those authorized would have to be made known to the Operations Section Chief.

A modification to this model could be accomplished by designating only certain branches, e.g., those with less complex situations, as branches which would perform branch action planning. Other branches would continue under a central planning structure.

In either case, the Planning Section would provide each branch doing individual branch planning with the required support in terms of personnel and other support resources to get the planning accomplished.

2. Advance Incident Planning (Contingency Planning)

One of the functions of the Planning Section is to assess all available intelligence and to provide periodic predictions on incident potential.

On very major or complicated incidents, and for incidents that require extensive planning for each operational period, it is often difficult to find the personnel or the time to take a long-range look at the future incident planning needs.

A solution to this is for the Planning Section Chief to designate staff to concentrate only on advance planning.

The ways this can be accomplished are:

- Assign a Deputy Planning Section Chief the advance planning function. Provide staff as necessary.
- Assign a Technical Specialist(s) to perform the function.
- Establish a special unit within the Planning Section to handle advance planning.

Incident advance planning should look ahead at least 36-72 hours. The staff responsible for advance planning should use the following as they consider the long-range future of the incident:

- Overall goal and incident objectives
- Previous and present operational period plans adequacy
- Future agency and mutual-aid resource availability

- Strategy assessment and alternatives
- Environmental factors (terrain, weather, etc.)
- Organizational assessment and alternatives
- Political issues
- Economic issues
- Long-term recovery/rehabilitation needs

The goal of this advance planning effort should be to provide the Planning Section Chief and the Incident Commander or (Unified Command) with a range of alternatives related to management of the incident beyond the next operational period.

D. Expanding the ICS Organization to Accommodate Another Operations Section or Logistics Section.

While not likely, it is possible to establish a second Operations or Logistics Section within a single incident.

1. A Second Operations Section

This model describes a major incident where the sheer volume of resources required means that the Operations Section cannot be further expanded without exceeding ICS span of control guidelines.

Examples:

- Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods covering several political jurisdictions.
- Major wildland fire that continues to expand.

- Major (foreign substance) spill in a waterway.

As indicated earlier, the size of the Operations Section is determined by the composition of resources within each division or group.

If the organization has grown to the point where it is not desirable to expand the Operations Section further, a second Operations Section could be established.

Major steps should include:

- Ensuring that other Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion.

This could require establishing a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations to provide management supervision over the two Operations Section Chiefs.

- Ensuring that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished.
- Ensuring that Logistics, Facilities, and Communications are adequate to support the additional section.
- Establishing the second Operations Section at the beginning of an operational period.
- Ensuring that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.

This situation may arise when the incident is already operating under Unified Command. Unified Command is not a requirement however.

The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations (if established) has the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the original and the additional Operations Section are fully coordinated with each other and with other sections.

The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations is normally collocated with the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post.

Separate staging areas are established to support each operations section.

Depending upon the nature of the incident and the use of aircraft, one Air Operations Branch could be designated to serve both sections.

This requires separate airborne coordinators for each section who communicate with each other. It also requires ensuring that the Air Support Group can provide the necessary support.

An alternative approach, again depending upon the nature of the incident, would be to establish separate Air Operations branches for each section.

A single incident helibase could serve both sections. Separate helispots would be designated for each section.

## 2. A Second Logistics Section

If an incident were so large geographically that it would not be possible for the Incident Base or off-site suppliers to support the required number of camps and other incident logistical needs, it may be necessary to establish another Logistics Section to support one part of the incident.

In this situation, an incident base for each Logistics Section could be established. Additional camps supported by that base could be established.

At this point, a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics could be added to the command structure if necessary to ensure coordination of the two logistics efforts.

The Deputy IC for Logistics would normally function from the Incident Command Post. The Deputy IC would ensure that all necessary coordination was taking place between the two Logistics Sections.

Major steps to establish a second Logistics Section include:

- Ensuring that Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion.

This may require designating a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics. This person will provide management supervision over the two logistics section chiefs.

- Ensuring that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished. A new Incident Action Plan would be required to reflect these changes.
- Establishing the second Logistics Section at the beginning of an operational period.
- Ensuring that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.

#### IV. Small Group Exercise

In this exercise, we will examine how separate incidents could be brought into a single ICS management structure called an Incident Complex.

Two scenarios are offered. Scenario A covers an earthquake, tornado, or hurricane situation which has affected the jurisdiction. Scenario B covers wildland fires.

In small groups, develop an Incident Complex organization. Address the questions accompanying the scenarios.

Give a briefing on your organization.



**MODULE 14**  
**MAJOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

**Exercise Scenario A**  
**Exercise Scenario B**  
**Resource Table**



## Scenario

Exercise A:

A major portion of the city has been affected by the \_\_\_\_\_. Three incidents are reported within a two block area. Initially, each of these was designated as an individual incident and resources were separately assigned to each.

Incident A:      Damage to a hospital requiring evacuation, search and rescue, and relocation of 50 persons.

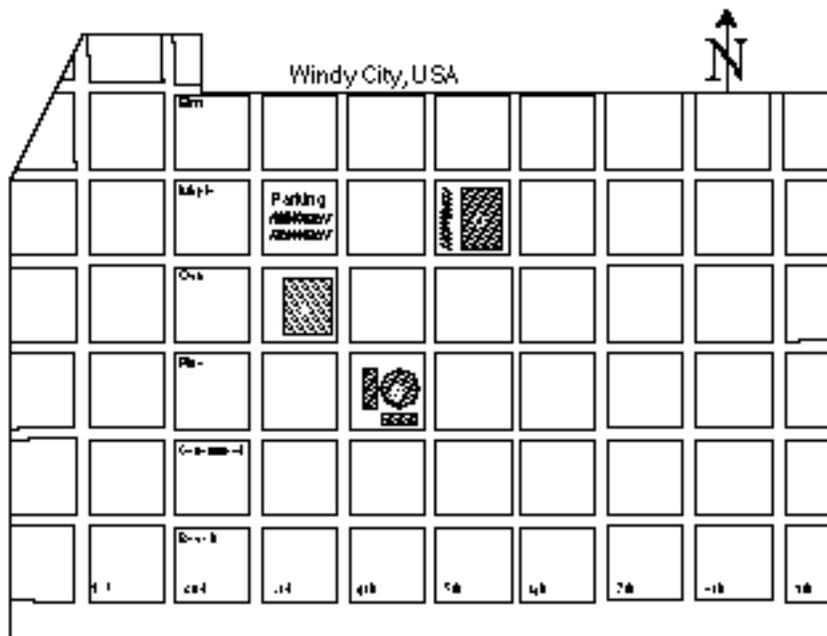
Incident B:      Fire and possible HAZMAT situation at a commercial chemical storage facility.

Incident C:      Partial collapse of a roof in an open supermarket. Persons injured and looting is taking place.

Because of the large number of simultaneous incidents throughout the community, the City Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has directed that one incident management team assume on-scene responsibility for all three of these incidents.

The most qualified Incident Commander is currently located at Incident B.

Task: Develop the incident organization structure for this Incident Complex.



Address the following questions in small group settings.

1. What would the overall organizational structure look like?
2. How would the Operations Section be set up to address these problems? Should it be functional or geographic, or both?
3. How would Staging Areas be handled?
4. How would you recommend that incident action planning be done?
5. How would the Command Staff positions be established?
6. How could Air Operations best be managed?
7. What are the two or three major problems you would have in operating either one or both of these incidents as Incident Complexes?

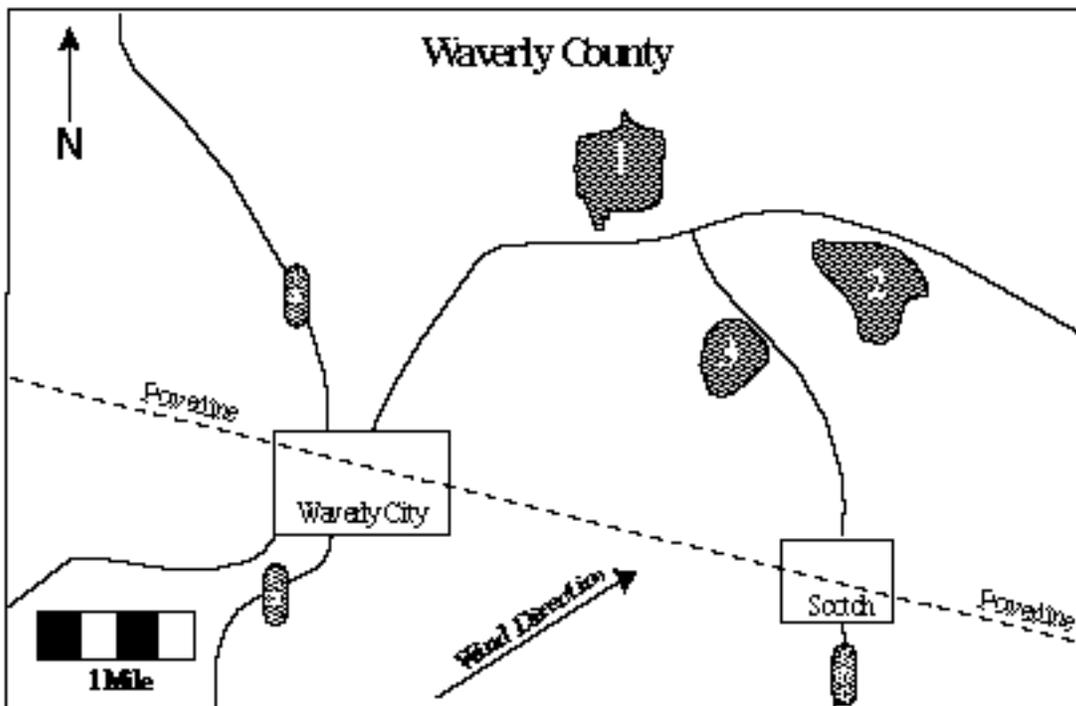
## Scenario

### Exercise B

A wildland fire (1) was initially reported. Resources were dispatched. Within 30 minutes two additional fires (2, 3) were reported. Additional units were dispatched.

Because of the high fire danger, and the shortage of qualified personnel to manage these incidents, the jurisdictional agency designated these three incidents as an Incident Complex. The Incident Commander for incident #1 was made the Incident Complex Commander.

Task: Develop the incident organization structure for this Incident Complex.



Address the following questions in small group settings.

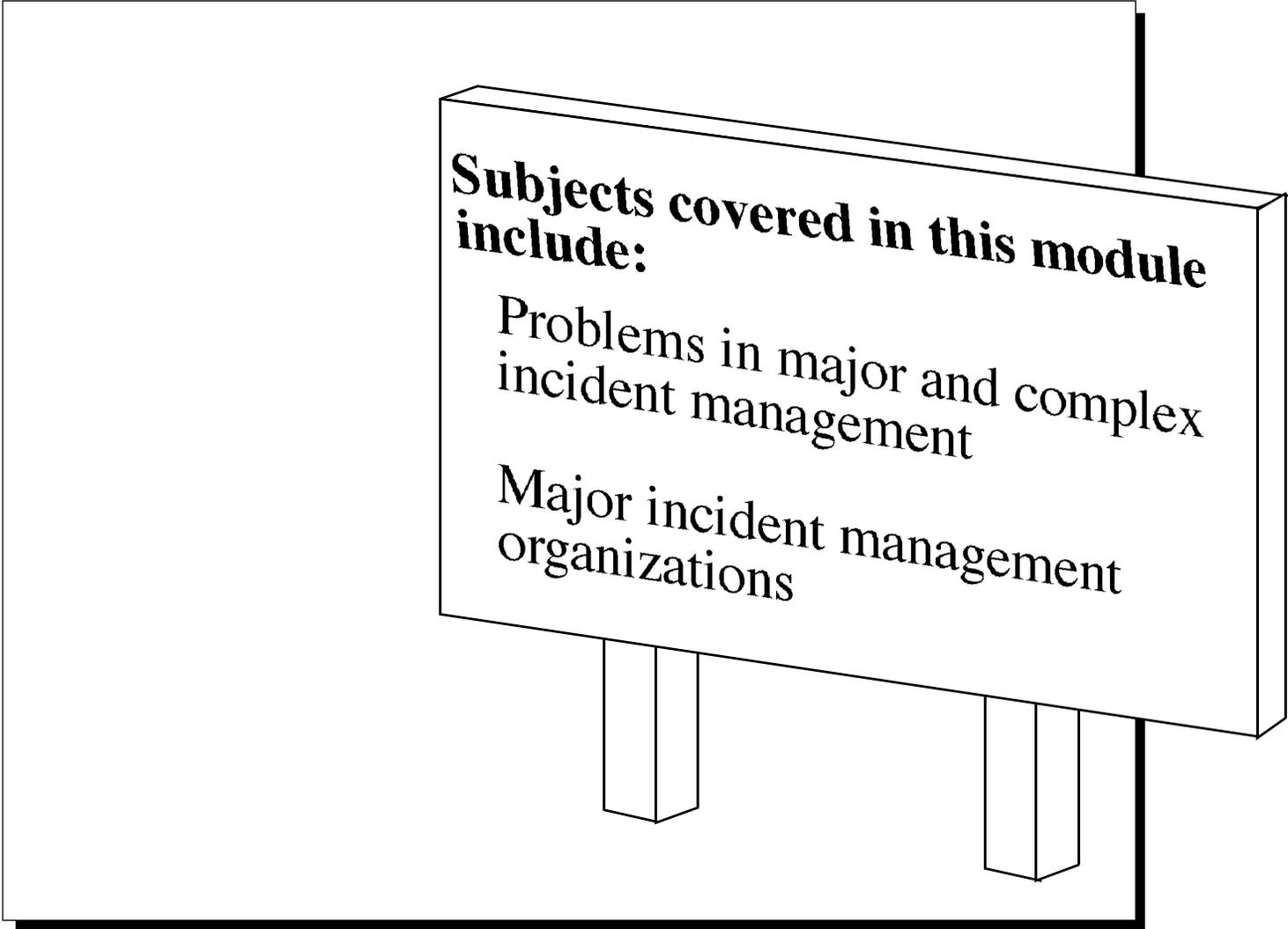
1. What would the overall organizational structure look like?
2. How would the Operations Section be set up to address these problems? Should it be functional or geographic, or both?
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## RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				



# Module 14 - Major Incident Management



**Subjects covered in this module include:**

Problems in major and complex incident management

Major incident management organizations

## **Module 14 Objectives:**

1. List the principal factors often found in, or related to, major and/or complex incidents.
2. List the expansion options for incident organization, and describe the conditions under which they be applied.
3. Demonstrate, through an exercise, how to apply the various options related to major or complex incident management.

# Characteristics of Major Incidents

- Involve more than one agency (often many).
- May involve more than one political jurisdiction.
- Have the more complex management and communication problems.
- Require more experienced, qualified supervisory personnel.
- Require large numbers of tactical and support resources.
- Cause more injury, death, illness.

# Characteristics of Major Incidents (cont.)

- Produce the most damage to property and the environment.
- Have extreme elements of crisis/psychological trauma that diminishes human capacity to function.
- Are longer in duration.
- Are the most costly to control and mitigate.
- Require extensive mitigation, recovery and rehabilitation.
- Have greater media interest.

## **Incidents can become major in two ways:**

- They start as major incidents.
- They become major incidents.

There is virtually no location free from the potential of having a major or complex incident.

# Characteristics of Major Incidents:

- All of the Command and General Staff positions are filled, a large organization is in place or is developing.
- Most or all of the functional organizational units within sections are needed.
- Divisions/groups are established to geographically facilitate making work assignments.

## **Characteristics of Major Incidents (cont.):**

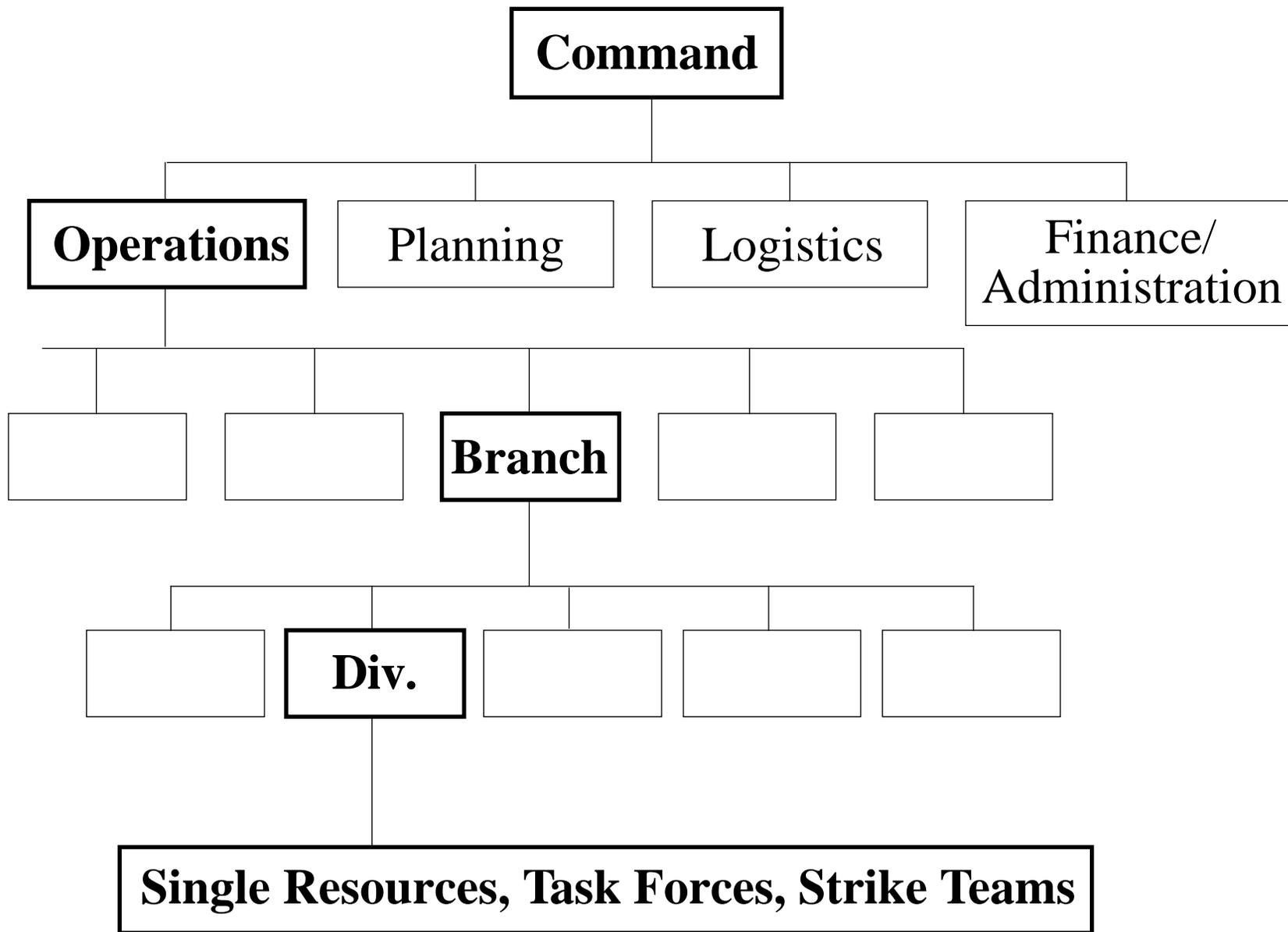
- The number of Divisions may be such that Operations Section Branches are needed to reduce span of control.
- Multiple operational periods are probably required.
- There will be a transition to a more qualified Incident Commander and the most qualified personnel will be used throughout the organization.
- Other agencies or jurisdictions will be assisting.

## **Characteristics of Major Incidents (cont.):**

- Written action plans will be required.
- Operations personnel may exceed several hundred per operational period.
- Costs associated with maintaining the incident are high.

# Factors in Determining Size of ICS Organization

- Administrative and jurisdictional complexity.
- Geographical area involved.
- Span of control considerations. This includes span of control in operations as well as all other organizational elements.
- Functional specialities required.
- Incident logistical, planning, and other support needs.
- Potential for growth.



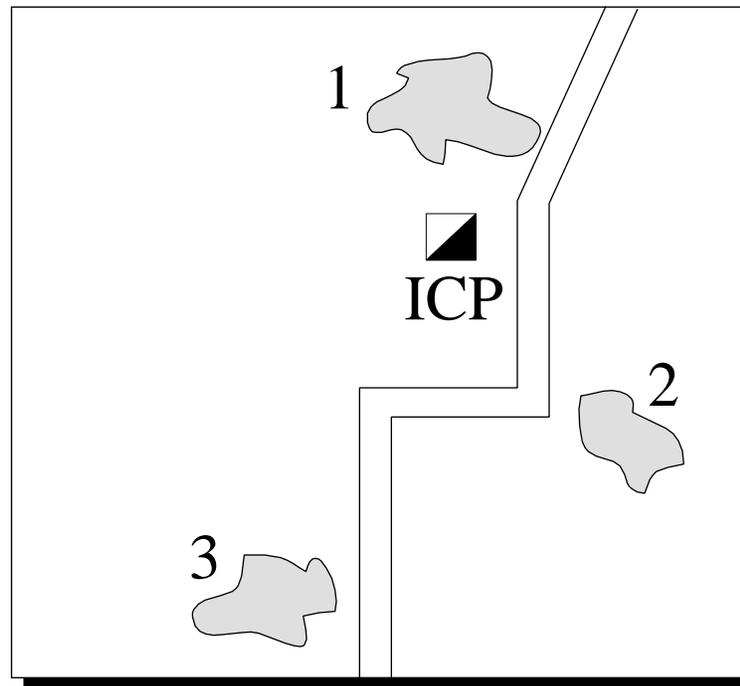
# Example Division (Wildland Fire Model)

	Personnel
3 Hand Crew Strike Teams	108
1 Bulldozer Strike Team	6
1 Engine Strike Team	16
Total Personnel	130

# Large Incident Management ICS Organizational Options

- Incident Complex - Multiple incident management with a single ICS Organization.
- Dividing a single incident into two (or more) incidents.
- Expanding the ICS planning capability for incidents.
- Expanding the ICS organization to accommodate a second Operations or Logistics Section.

# Three Fires Managed as a Complex



# Examples for the Use of an Incident Complex

- An earthquake, tornado, flood, etc., situation where there are many separate incidents occurring close together.
- Several separate fires are burning in close proximity to one another.
- One incident is underway with an ICS management team assigned, and other smaller incidents occur in the same proximity.

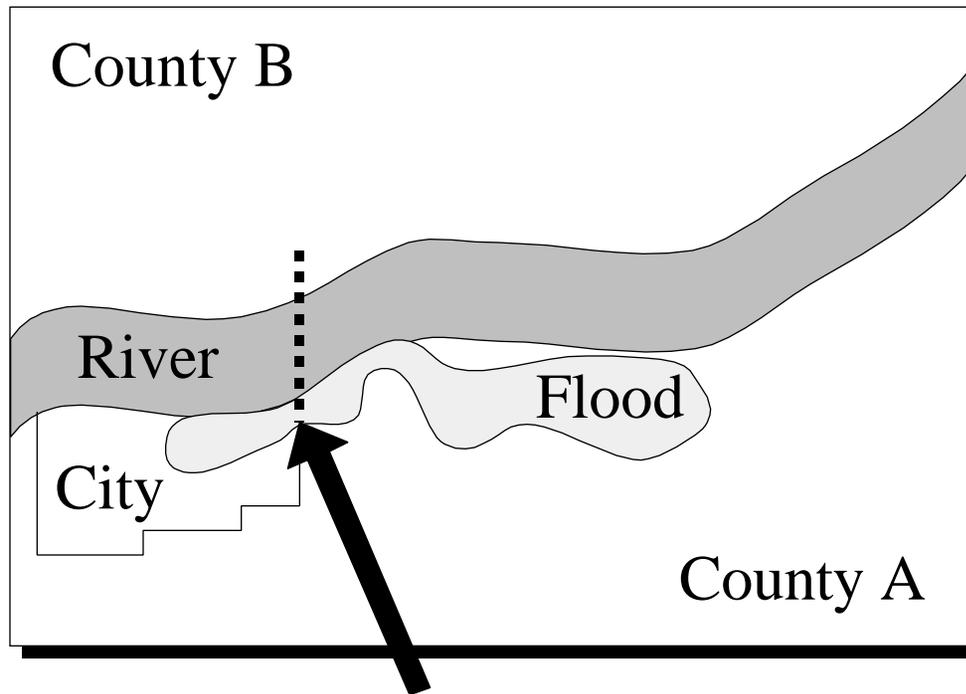
# Considerations for the Use of a Complex

- A complex may be managed under a single or unified command.
- The incidents are close enough to be managed by the same incident management team.
- Some staff and/or logistical support economies could be achieved through a combined management approach.
- The number of overall incidents within the jurisdiction requires consolidations to conserve staff and reduce costs.
- Planning, Logistical, and Finance/Administration activities can be adequately provided.

## **Guideline in Establishing an Incident Complex:**

Establish each of the separate incidents within an Incident Complex as branches of a single incident.

# Dividing a Single Incident into Two Incidents



Divide into two incidents

# Steps in Dividing an Incident

- Reach a decision on how to divide the incident.

Consider:

- Terrain and access considerations
- Locations of future resource and logistical support
- Jurisdictional/administrative boundaries
- Current Operations Section structure (branches, divisions, etc.)

- Select Incident Commanders and the Command and General Staff for each incident.

## Steps in Dividing an Incident (cont.)

- Designate supporting organization facilities, locations, etc.
- Designate time for establishing two separate incidents with individual names.
- Direct the two incident management organizations to coordinate strategy and critical resources.
- An Area Command could normally be established.

# Expanding the ICS Planning Capability

**Two ways:**

- Branch tactical planning
- Advanced incident planning

# Branch Level Tactical Planning

## Conditions:

- Major or complex incident.
- Widely varied objectives exist.
- Plan preparation and distribution can not be done within available time.

# Branch Tactical Planning

## Provide the following:

- General incident objectives.
- Specific strategy for the branch for the next operational period.
- Branch resource summary for the next operational period.
- Weather and safety information as appropriate.
- Any changes to logistical support.
- Personnel to support planning as required.

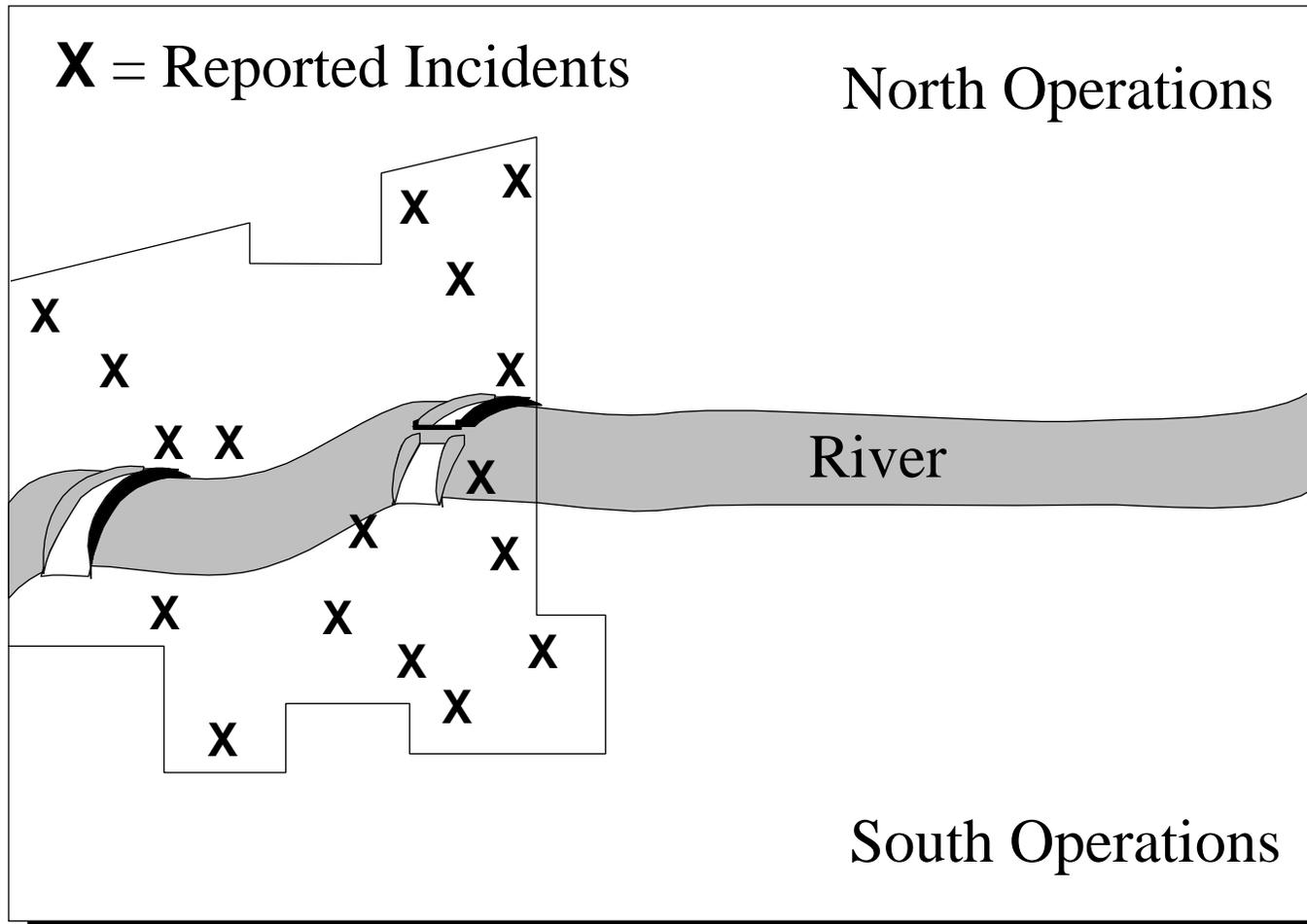
# Options for Accomplishing Advance Incident Planning:

- Assign a Deputy Planning Chief the advance planning function.
- Assign a Technical Specialist(s) to perform the function.
- Establish a special unit within the Planning Section to handle advance planning.

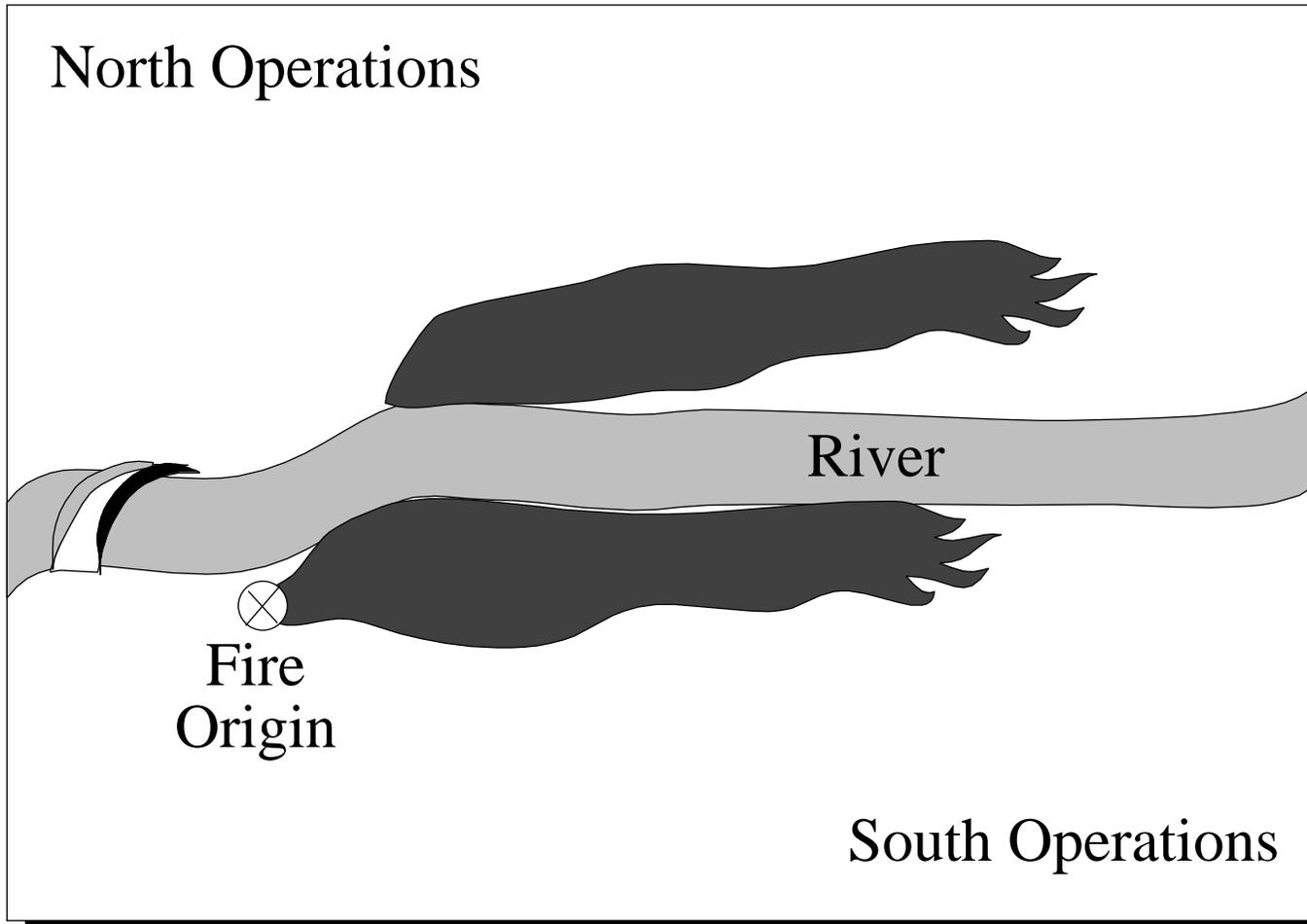
# Advanced Planning Considerations at an Incident

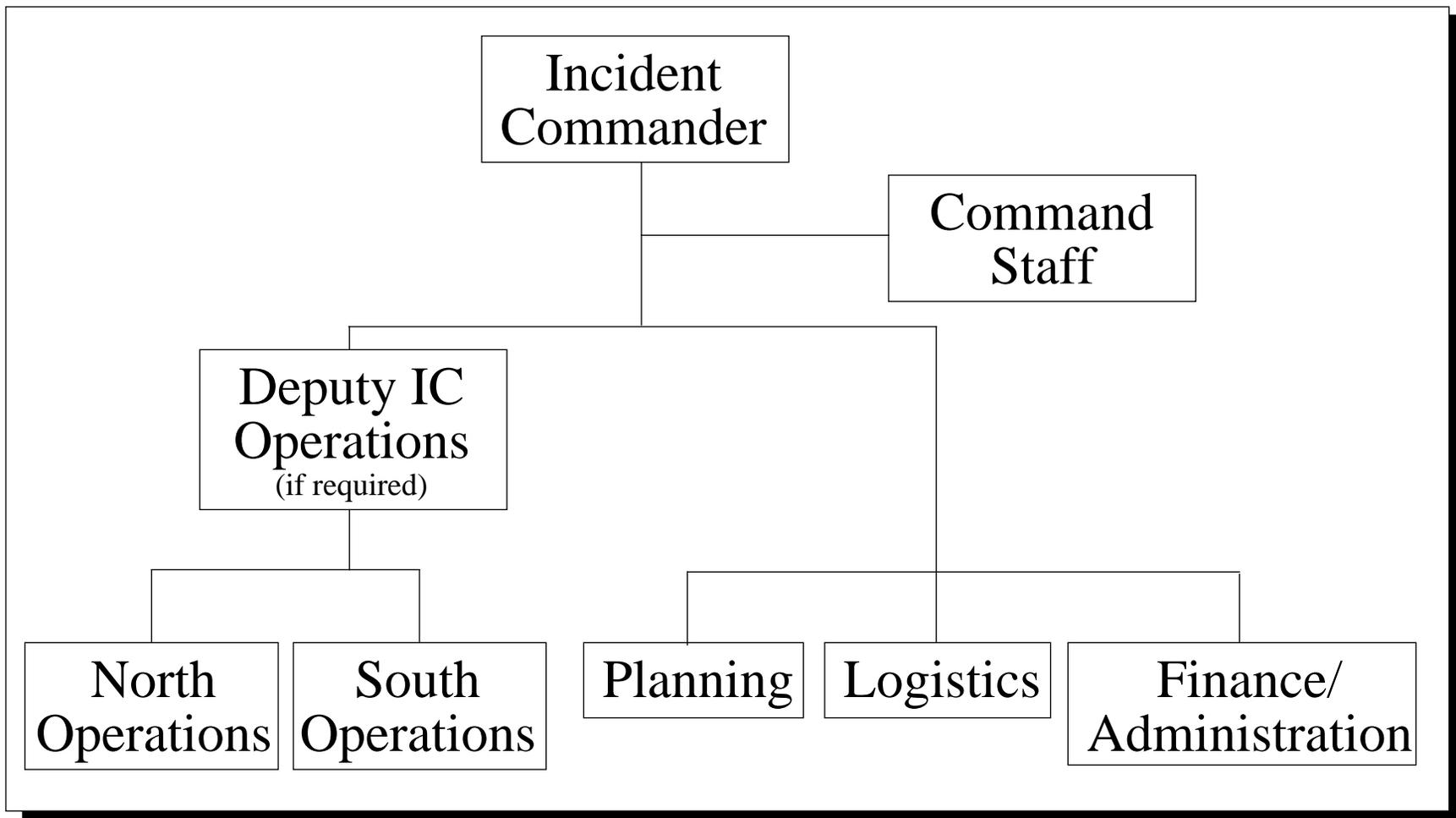
- Overall goal and incident objectives.
- Previous and present operational period plan adequacy.
- Future agency and mutual-aid resource availability.
- Strategy assessment and alternatives.
- Environmental factors (terrain, weather, etc.)
- Organizational assessment and alternatives.
- Political issues.
- Economic issues.
- Long-term recovery/rehabilitation needs.

# Example #1



# Example #2





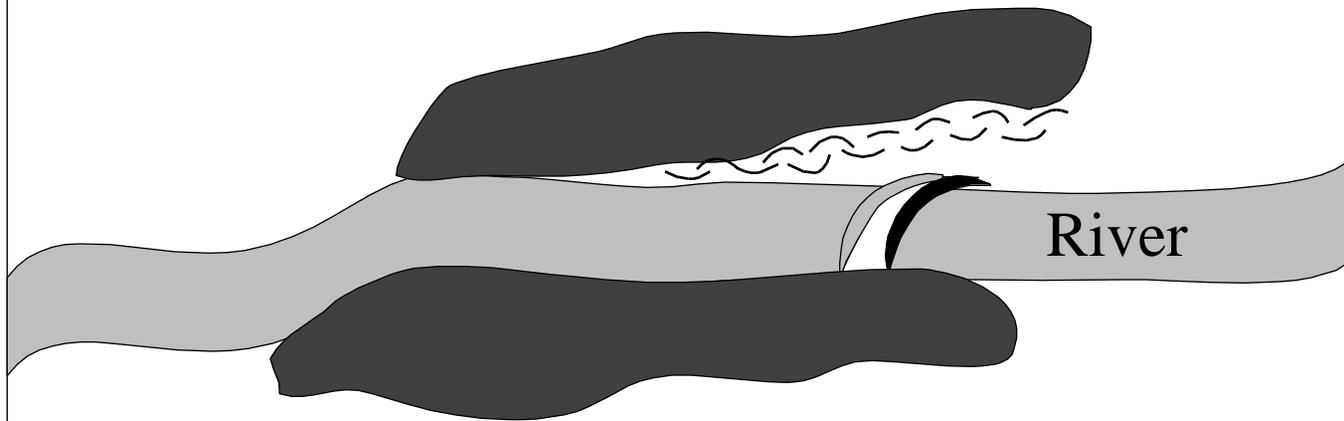
# Major Steps in Adding a Second Operations Section to an Existing ICS Organization:

- Ensure Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion. **Could** require establishing a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations.
- Ensure that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished.

# **Major Steps in Adding a Second Operations Section to an Existing ICS Organization (cont.):**

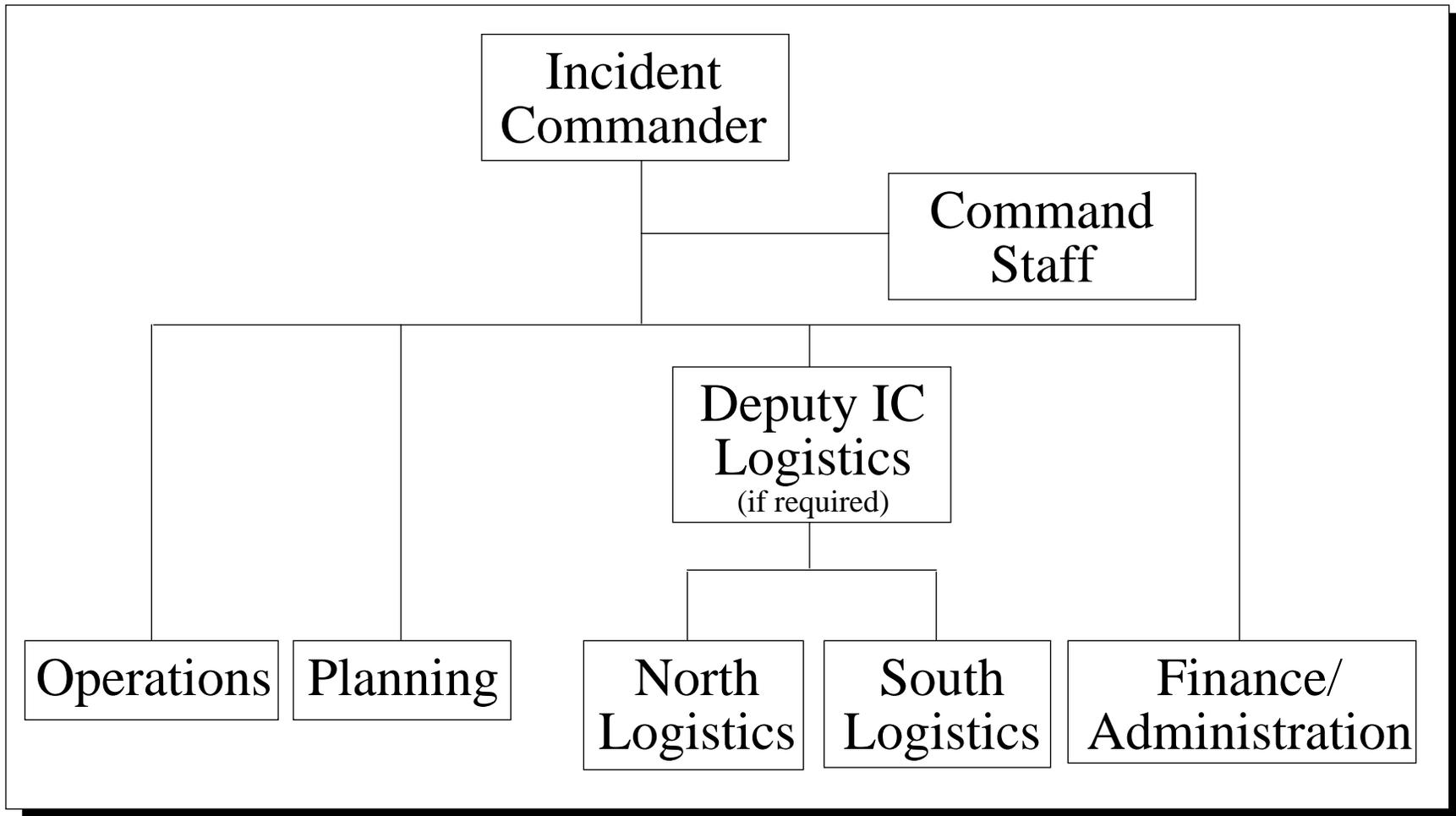
- Ensure that Logistics, Facilities, and Communications are adequate to support the additional section.
- Establish the second Operations Section at the beginning of an operational period.
- Ensure that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.

North Logistics



River

South Logistics



# Major Steps in Adding Another Logistics Section to an Existing ICS Organization:

- Ensure Command and General Staff functions can adequately support the expansion. May require designating a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics.
- Ensure that adequate incident action planning can be accomplished.
- Establish the second Logistics Section at the beginning of an operational period.
- Ensure that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 15**

**AREA COMMAND**

**October 1994**

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Dan Francis - California Department of Forestry  
Ken Mallette - New Jersey State Police  
Mike Munkres - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
Gary Nelson - Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Bill Vargas - State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety

The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
Woodland Hills, California

<p>IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT INSTRUCTORS OF THIS MODULE READ THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE <b>INSTRUCTOR CURRICULUM GUIDE</b> AND MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED THEREIN.</p>
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## **Detailed Lesson Outline**

- COURSE:** Module 15 - Area Command
- SUGGESTED TIME:** 6 Hours
- TRAINING AIDS:** Overhead projector, overhead pens, reference text
- SUBJECT:** The module describes why, when, where, and how Area Command is established, and the organization, facilities, and communications required. It covers the organizational relationships between Area Command and incidents, and between Area Command and jurisdictional authorities. The demobilization process under an Area Command organization is described.
- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Define Area Command.
  2. Identify differences between Area Command, Unified Command, Multi-agency Coordination Systems, and Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).
  3. List the principal advantages of using Area Command.
  4. Describe how, when, and where Area Command would be established.
  5. Describe the Area Command organization.
  6. Identify six primary functional responsibilities of Area Command.
  7. Working with a simulated scenario, develop an Area Command organization.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
DISCUSS SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED	15-01-I400-VG
DISCUSS INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	15-02-I400-VG
INFORM STUDENTS THAT AT THE END OF THE SESSION THEY WILL PARTICIPATE IN SMALL GROUP EXERCISES INVOLVING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AREA COMMAND ORGANIZATION AROUND A SIMULATED SCENARIO.	Page 1 of 2 Page 2 of 2
BRIEF STUDENTS ON THE REQUIRED OUTPUTS OF THE EXERCISE. EXERCISE AREA COMMAND TEAMS WILL:	15-03-I400-VG  Reference Text p. 15-30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Area Command organization.</li> <li>• Determine Area Command staffing requirements.</li> <li>• Describe Area Command facility and support needs.</li> <li>• Develop a statement of policy to be given to Incident Commanders.</li> <li>• Establish resource priorities.</li> <li>• Establish Area Command supplemental resource needs.</li> <li>• Develop a list of questions they would like to ask the Agency Executive at the next briefing.</li> </ul>	
I. Description of Area Command	15-04-I400-VG
A. Definition	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Area Command is an <u>organization</u> established to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization; or</li> <li>2. To oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams assigned to it.</li> </ol> <p>Area Command is used when there are a number of incidents generally in the same area, and often of the same kind. For example, two or more HAZMAT spills, fires, etc. It is usually these kinds of incidents that may be vying for the same resources.</p> <p>When incidents are of different kinds and/or do not have similar resource demands, they would usually be handled as separate incidents or would be coordinated through an EOC.</p> <p>If the incidents under the authority of the Area Command are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established. This allows each jurisdiction to have representation in the Area Command.</p> <p>B. Terminology Related to Area Command</p> <p>Experience has demonstrated that there is often confusion in how terminology is used and applied. For purposes of this module, it is important to remember the following:</p> <p><b>REVIEW CONTENTS OF THE VIEWGRAPH COLUMN BY COLUMN. ADDRESS QUESTIONS. EMPHASIZE THAT INCIDENT COMMAND AND UNIFIED COMMAND APPLY TO THE DIRECT ON-SCENE MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL INCIDENTS.</b></p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>AREA COMMAND DOES NOT REPLACE INDIVIDUAL INCIDENT COMMANDER'S AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY, BUT DOES PROVIDE AN INTERMEDIATE DEDICATED LEVEL OF COMMAND BETWEEN INCIDENT COMMANDERS AND AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS.</p>	
<p>MACS AND EOCS DIFFER IN THAT THEY PROVIDE OFF-SCENE COORDINATION AND SUPPORT TO AGENCIES.</p>	<p>15-05-I400-VG Reference Text p. 15-25</p>
<p>A more detailed coverage of Multi-agency Coordination and EOCs will be presented in Module 16 on Multi-agency Coordination.</p>	<p>15-06-I400-VG Reference Text p. 15-27</p>
<p>C. Responsibility</p>	<p>15-07-I400-VG</p>
<p>For the incidents under its authority, Area Command has the responsibility to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set overall agency incident-related priorities.</li> <li>• Allocate critical resources based on priorities.</li> <li>• Ensure that incidents are properly managed.</li> <li>• Ensure that incident(s) objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy.</li> </ul>	
<p>D. Reporting Relationships</p>	<p>15-08-I400-VG</p>
<p>When Area Command is established, Incident Commander(s) for the incidents under the authority of the Area Command will report to the Area Commander. The Area Commander is</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>accountable to the agency or jurisdictional executive or administrator.</p> <p>If one or more of the incidents within the Area Command are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established. Incident Commanders would report to the Unified Area Commander for their jurisdiction.</p>	
<p>II. The Use of Area Command</p> <p>Major natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires, or major storms create a large number of incidents affecting multijurisdictional areas. Due to their size and potential impact, these incidents provide an appropriate environment for the possible use of Area Command.</p> <p>The most common situations in which Area Command has been used are for wildland fires. Area Command was also used in response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill.</p>	15-09-I400-VG
<p>A. The Need For Area Command</p> <p>In situations where multiple incidents are occurring, the use of an Area Command makes the jobs of Incident Commanders and Agency Executives easier for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each IC will be accomplished at the Area Command level. Using an Area Command allows the Incident Commanders and their incident management teams to focus their attention on their assigned incident.</li> </ul>	15-10-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Command sets priorities between incidents and allocates critical resources according to priorities established by the Agency Executive.</li> <li>• Area Command helps the Agency Executive by ensuring that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being made known to the respective Incident Commanders.</li> <li>• Area Command also reduces the workload of the Agency Executive, especially if there are multiple incidents going on at the same time.</li> </ul> <p>B. Establishing Area Command</p> <p>It is best to be proactive when considering the use of Area Command. Area Command should be established for like incidents in the same proximity to ensure that conflicts do not arise. Often, agency dispatchers will recognize inter-incident coordination problems first.</p> <p>It may take some hours to establish the Area Command. If there are existing facilities and communication systems that can be used, e.g., at a jurisdictional EOC, then the time needed to set up the Area Command may be reduced.</p> <p>Some criteria for using Area Command are:</p> <p><b>HAVE STUDENTS PROVIDE CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING AREA COMMAND. LIST ON BOARD.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several major or complex incidents of the same kind are in close proximity.</li> </ul>	<p>15-11-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical human or property values are at risk due to incidents.</li> <li>• Incidents will continue into the next operational period.</li> <li>• Incidents are using similar and limited critical resources.</li> <li>• Difficulties are encountered with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination.</li> </ul> <p>Area Command is established by the Agency Executive.</p> <p>When Area Command is activated, an Area Commander will be designated and given appropriate delegated authority.</p> <p>The authority given to the Area Commander should be written as a Delegation of Authority statement. This will eliminate confusion and provides the Area Commander with authority to oversee the management of the incidents.</p> <p>Depending upon the agencies and incidents involved, the Area Command may issue delegation of authority or re-delegations to the respective Incident Commanders. This will help to ensure that Agency direction is made clear to all parties.</p> <p>If the incidents under the Area Command are in adjacent jurisdictions, then a Unified Area Command should be established. The following could apply to either an Area Command or a Unified Area Command.</p>	<p>15-12-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incident Commanders covered by the Area Command must be notified that an Area Command is being established.</li> <li>2. The Area Command team should consist of the best-qualified personnel with respect to their functional areas. The functions of Area Command require personnel that have experience in, and are qualified to oversee, complex incident situations.</li> <li>3. The Area Command organization operates under the same basic principles as does the Incident Command System.</li> <li>4. The Area Command organization should always be kept as small as possible. Area Command organizational positions could consist of:</li> </ol>	
<p>The Area Commander and, only as necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Command Logistics Chief</li> <li>• Area Command Planning Chief</li> <li>• Area Command Critical Resources Unit Leader</li> <li>• Area Command Situation Unit Leader</li> <li>• Area Command Information Officer</li> <li>• Area Command Liaison Officer to help in maintaining off-incident interagency contacts</li> </ul>	15-13-I400-VG
<p>It is important to remember, that Area Command does not in any way replace the incident level ICS organizations or functions. The above positions,</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>if established, are strictly related to Area Command operations. Specific duties and responsibilities will be established by the Area Commander.</p> <p>Incident Commanders under the designated Area Commander are responsible to, and should be considered as part of, the overall Area Command organization. They must be provided adequate and clear delegation of authority.</p> <p>Technical Specialists can be added to the Area Command organization. This will depend on the kinds of incidents involved. Technical Specialists at the Area Command would provide specific information and expertise relating to their specialty.</p> <p>For example, in incidents involving use of aircraft, and where hazardous materials are involved, it may be useful to have the following specialists assigned to the Area Command team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aviation Specialist</li> <li>• Hazardous Materials Specialist</li> <li>• Environmental Specialist</li> <li>• Communications Specialist</li> </ul> <p>The responsibilities of the principal Area Command functional elements are presented in checklist form at the end of this module.</p> <p>C. The Location for Area Command</p> <p>The Area Command should, to the extent possible, be located in close proximity to the incidents under its authority. This will make it easier to have meetings and direct contact between the Area Commander and Incident Commanders.</p>	<p>15-14-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>It is best not to collocate Area Command with one of the incidents. Doing so might cause confusion with that incident's operations, and it could also be seen by other incidents as adding status to that single incident.</p> <p>The facility used to house the Area Command organization should be large enough to accommodate a full Area Command staff, and have the capability to accommodate meetings between the Area Command Staff, Incident Commanders, Agency Executive(s), and with news media representatives.</p> <p>Jurisdiction EOC facilities may be used for Area Command facilities if they are located reasonably close to the incidents.</p>	
<p>Some of the criteria that should be considered when selecting an Area Command facility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close proximity to incidents (but not at an ICP).</li> <li>• Sufficient size (for staff, displays, and conferences).</li> <li>• Capable of continuous operation.</li> <li>• Adequate communications facilities (telephones, FAX, computer connections).</li> </ul>	<p>15-15-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of backup power.</li> <li>• Capable of supporting radio communications to incidents and agency offices.</li> <li>• Adequate and secure parking.</li> </ul>	<p>15-15-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Near commercial sources of support for food and lodging.</li> </ul> <p>If radios are a primary means of communication, the Area Command facility should have line of sight coverage to Incident Command Posts or to repeaters serving those incident facilities. The facility should allow for suitable locations to temporarily install rooftop radio antennas.</p>	15-16-I400-VG
<p>III. Primary Functions of Area Command</p> <p>Because of the use and proven value of Area Command, considerable work has gone into describing how Area Command should function.</p> <p>Area Command has six primary functions. Each will be briefly discussed:</p>	
<p><b>BEFORE USING THE VIEWGRAPH, ASK STUDENTS TO STATE WHAT THEY THINK ARE PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF AREA COMMAND. HAVE A LIST PLACED ON THE BOARD. DISCUSS AND REVIEW.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.</li> <li>Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to the incident among Incident Commanders.</li> </ul>	15-17-I400-VG Page 1 of 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish critical resource use priorities between various incidents based on incident needs and agency policy and direction.</li> <li>Ensure appropriate incident management team personnel assignments and organizations for the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.</li> </ul>	15-17-I400-VG Page 2 of 2

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.</li> <li>• Coordinate the demobilization or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.</li> <li>A. Provide effective agency or jurisdictional management authority for assigned incidents. If the incidents are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established.</li> </ul> <p>Upon assignment, the Area Commander should arrange a meeting with the agency/jurisdiction executive to obtain the Delegation of Authority and receive agency/jurisdiction policy, objectives, limitations, and constraints. At this time, the Area Commander should determine the following:</p>	
<p><b>BEFORE REVIEWING THIS LIST, HAVE STUDENTS IDENTIFY WHAT THEY THINK ARE THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED. HAVE THESE RECORDED, AND THEN REVIEW.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General situation</li> <li>2. Incidents assigned</li> <li>3. Jurisdictional delegation of authority</li> <li>4. Assumption of command timing and notifications procedure</li> <li>5. Names and qualifications of assigned Incident Commanders</li> </ol>	<p>15-18-I400-VG Page 1 of 3</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Incidents operating under Unified Command</li> </ol>	<p>15-18-I400-VG Page 2 of 3</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
7. Limitations on the Area Commander's authority over Incident Commanders (should be in the Delegation of Authority)	
8. Incident Action Plans available	
9. Policies, political factors, or other constraints	
10. Agency advisor assigned	
11. Area Command facility designated	
12. Status of communications systems to incidents and agency/jurisdictional headquarters	15-18-I400-VG Page 3 of 3
13. Critical resource designations	
14. Policy and expectations for interaction with the media	
15. Area Command reporting responsibility to agency	
16. Schedules for required briefings and contacts	
<p>The Area Commander has the authority and the responsibility to do the following for incidents within the Area Command:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set overall objectives</li> <li>• Establish priorities</li> <li>• Allocate/reallocate critical resources</li> </ul>	15-19-I400-VG
<p>This should be done by working in cooperation with the agency/jurisdictional executive and the assigned Incident Commanders.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>The Area Commander should allow the respective Incident Commanders as much latitude as possible in implementing their respective Incident Action Plans.</p> <p>B. Ensure that Incident Commanders have a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to the incidents.</p> <p>It is possible that the assigned Incident Commanders may not have had a full briefing on agency/jurisdictional expectations related to their incidents prior to the time that Area Command is established.</p> <p>Some incidents operating under an Area Command may be multi-agency and/or multijurisdictional, and may have a Unified Command structure in place. If this is the case, then the Area Command should also be a Unified Area Command. This will require full jurisdictional representation at the Area Command.</p> <p>It is essential that all parties are clear on agency/jurisdictional expectations, intentions, and environmental and political constraints. Some considerations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Command will normally be established after incident management teams are in place on the various incidents.</li> <li>• It is likely that the Incident Commanders have already developed objectives, strategies, and Incident Action Plans.</li> <li>• The Area Commander must rapidly assess the situation for each incident and ensure that incident action planning is</li> </ul>	<p>15-20-I400-VG Page 1 of 2</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>addressing the priorities and direction set by the Agency Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Area Commander should establish, in writing, priorities related to assigned incidents, based upon Agency Executive directions and other available information.</li> </ul> <p>This information should be part of the written delegation of authority coming to the Area Commander from the Agency Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Area Commander should also develop procedures to be followed. These procedures should be reviewed with the respective Incident Commanders. These could include such things as:</li> </ul>	<p>15-20-I400-VG Page 2 of 2</p>
<p><b>ASK STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY WHAT PROCEDURES THEY AS AREA COMMANDERS CAN IDENTIFY. HAVE THESE RECORDED ON THE BOARD AND THEN REVIEW.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities</li> <li>• Priorities for assignments of critical resources</li> <li>• Schedules of meetings and briefings</li> <li>• Reports, and Incident Action Plans</li> <li>• Points of contact with Agency Executives</li> <li>• Media relations and contact procedures</li> <li>• Unusual situation or emergency procedures reporting</li> </ul>	<p>15-21-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demobilization procedures</li> </ul> <p>The Area Commander should have an initial joint meeting with Incident Commanders at one location. The meeting should follow a prescribed format. The agenda for this meeting should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain concise individual incident briefings.</li> <li>• Explain the role and responsibilities of an Area Commander.</li> <li>• Review the general policy and direction for the incidents as stated by the Agency Executive.</li> <li>• Resolve any conflicts that may exist between Agency Executive policy and situations at the incidents.</li> <li>• Review appropriate procedures as outlined above.</li> <li>• Be open for questions.</li> <li>• Collect available Incident Action Plans and any other essential documentation.</li> </ul> <p>The Area Commander must ensure that all appropriate decisions and procedures are made clear to agency dispatchers and any other organizations involved in the Area Command.</p> <p>Concerns or unresolved issues brought up at the meeting should immediately be discussed with Agency Executive(s). These could include environmental issues, cost concerns, etc.</p>	<p>15-22-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>C. Establish priorities among various incidents based on incident needs and agency policy and direction.</p> <p>When two or more incidents are competing for critical resources and services, someone must make quick decisions based on an objective analysis of the total situation. Establishing priorities is one of the most important functions an Area Commander performs. The intent is to establish critical priorities for the common good of the total situation.</p> <p>There are three different types of priorities that Area Command may need to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities among incidents (often related to the life and property values at risk)</li> <li>• Priorities related to allocating critically needed resources</li> <li>• Priorities related to demobilization</li> </ul> <p>Incident Commanders must acknowledge the requirement to establish critical priorities by an Area Command.</p> <p>Incident Commanders may not always concur with Area Command decisions on priorities and critical resource allocations.</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential that each Incident Commander understands that the ability to obtain critical resources and services is balanced with the priorities established for that incident.</p> <p>It is also essential that Incident Commanders understand that they may have to adjust incident strategies, tactical objectives, and resource</p>	<p>15-23-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>assignments due to the lack of critical resources during a given operational period.</p> <p>D. <u>Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate to the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.</u></p> <p>The Area Commander is responsible for the overall management of the assigned incidents. It is essential that appropriate assignments of personnel be made within the respective incident organizations.</p> <p>At the earliest opportunity, the Area Commander should review with the Incident Commanders their respective organizations and primary position personnel assignments.</p> <p>The Area Commander can recommend or make appropriate changes and shifts in personnel assignments as necessary. Sometimes one incident may have personnel assigned which would be better suited to another incident.</p> <p>Determine with Incident Commanders if aviation procedures and temporary flight restrictions are adequate, and if any changes should be made to air operations to provide better overall support to the incidents operating in the Area Command.</p>	<p>15-24-I400-VG</p>
<p>E. <u>Maintain liaison with officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.</u></p> <p>This function, if accomplished at the Area Command, may reduce the level of coordination that individual Incident Commanders and Command Staffs must perform, and will increase the flow of information to all interested parties.</p>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>There are three major coordinating services that the Area Command should perform.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="383 432 1117 506">1. Between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and Incident Commanders <p data-bbox="477 552 1133 863">Once an Area Command or a Unified Area Command is established, contact between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and the respective incidents should be channeled through the Area Command. This will ensure a proper chain of command, and help to eliminate mixed signals or confusion.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="383 909 1084 982">2. Between Area Command, Incidents, and Assisting and Cooperating Agencies <p data-bbox="477 1029 1133 1339">Agencies who are assisting and/or cooperating on more than one of the incidents but are not part of the Command could, if necessary, provide representatives to the Area Command. These representatives should be fully integrated into the Area Command organization as Agency Representatives.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="383 1386 1029 1417">3. Between the Media and the Incidents <p data-bbox="477 1463 1143 1619">Media relations will be especially important in an Area Command setting. Incidents of significant size or scope are likely to attract tremendous media attention.</p> <p data-bbox="477 1665 1143 1858">The Agency or Jurisdiction Executive should establish a policy with the Area Commander for handling the media. These decisions should be passed on to Incident Commanders and Information Officers.</p> </li> </ol>	<p data-bbox="1170 348 1409 386">15-25-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>One solution related to keeping the media informed is to schedule periodic media briefings at the Area Command facility location which will update the situation for all incidents. Information Officers from the various incidents can provide the updates and schedule future media tours as appropriate.</p> <p>F. Coordinate the Demobilization of Assigned Incidents</p> <p>The Area Command involvement in the demobilization process is important. Area Command does not demobilize resources directly. The role of Area Command is to coordinate the demobilization of critical resources with the respective incidents.</p> <p>A primary purpose of Area Command is to ensure that critical personnel and equipment resources being released from demobilizing incidents can be made available to other active or growing incidents.</p> <p>Another purpose is to ensure that transportation resources and other services are not being duplicated. Resources from an agency or jurisdiction which may have been divided to support other incidents can be consolidated prior to departure.</p> <p>It is essential that the Area Command establish procedures with the Incident Commanders and agency dispatch centers to coordinate the demobilization of designated resources with the Area Command.</p>	<p>15-26-I400-VG</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Demobilization planning will start at the incident level. The role of Area Command is to identify to the respective Incident Commanders what the priorities will be for demobilization, and what, if any, critical resources will be required to move to other assignments.</p> <p>This information should be provided to the Incident Commanders in the form of a list which describes the critical resources, and provides instructions on clearing those resources with Area Command before demobilization. Some agencies have developed forms for this purpose.</p> <p>Given this information, incident level demobilization planning can proceed. Incidents should provide copies of their demobilization schedules to the Area Command prior to actual demobilization and wait for approval.</p> <p>IV. Area Command Primary Function Responsibilities</p> <p>EVALUATE THE NEED FOR COVERING THESE IN DETAIL. IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO COVER ONLY THE HIGHLIGHTS.</p> <p>The following checklists cover the major activities and responsibilities of three primary Area Command positions.</p> <p>A. Area Commander (Unified Area Command)</p> <p>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, incident objectives are established, and strategies are selected for the use of critical resources.</p>	<p>Reference Text p. 15-19</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>Area Command also has the responsibility to coordinate with local, state, federal, and volunteer assisting and/or cooperating organizations.</p> <p><u>Checklist of Actions:</u></p> <p>These actions will generally be conducted in the order listed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain briefing from the Agency Executive(s) on agency expectations, concerns, and constraints.</li> <li>• Obtain and carry out delegation of authority from the Agency Executive for overall management and direction of the incidents within the designated Area Command.</li> <li>• If operating as a Unified Area Command, develop working agreement for how Area Commanders will function together.</li> <li>• Delegate authority to Incident Commanders based on agency expectations, concerns, and constraints.</li> <li>• Establish an Area Command schedule and timeline.</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts between incident "realities" and Agency Executive "wants."</li> <li>• Establish appropriate location for the Area Command facilities.</li> <li>• Determine and implement an appropriate Area Command organization. Keep it manageable.</li> </ul>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine need for Technical Specialists to support Area Command.</li> <li>• Obtain incident briefing and Incident Action Plans from Incident Commanders (as appropriate).</li> <li>• Assess incident situations prior to strategy meetings.</li> <li>• Conduct a joint meeting with all Incident Commanders.</li> <li>• Review objectives and strategies for each incident.</li> <li>• Periodically review critical resource needs.</li> <li>• Maintain a close coordination with the Agency Executive.</li> <li>• Establish priority use for critical resources.</li> <li>• Review procedures for interaction within the Area Command.</li> <li>• Approve Incident Commanders' requests for and release of critical resources.</li> <li>• Coordinate and approve demobilization plans.</li> <li>• Maintain log of major actions/decisions.</li> </ul>	
<p>B. Area Command Planning Chief</p> <p>The Area Command Planning Chief is responsible for collecting information from incident management teams in order to assess and evaluate potential conflicts in establishing incident</p>	<p>Reference Text p. 15-20</p>

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<p>objectives, strategies, and the priority use of critical resources.</p> <p><u>Checklist of Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain briefing from Area Commander.</li> <li>• Assemble information on individual incident objectives and begin to identify potential conflicts and/or ways for incidents to develop compatible operations.</li> <li>• Recommend the priorities for allocation of critical resources to incidents.</li> <li>• Maintain status on critical resource totals (not detailed status).</li> <li>• Ensure that advance planning beyond the next operational period is being accomplished.</li> <li>• Prepare and distribute Area Commander's decisions or orders.</li> <li>• Prepare recommendations for the reassignment of critical resources as they become available.</li> <li>• Ensure demobilization plans are coordinated between incident management teams and agency dispatchers.</li> <li>• Schedule strategy meeting with Incident Commanders to conform with their planning processes.</li> <li>• Prepare Area Command briefings as requested or needed.</li> </ul>	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain log of major actions/decisions.</li> </ul> <p>C. Area Command Logistics Chief</p> <p>The Area Command Logistics Chief is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials at the Area Command level, and for ensuring effective use of critical resources and supplies among the incident management teams.</p> <p><u>Checklist of Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain briefing from the Area Commander.</li> <li>• Provide facilities, services, and materials for the Area Command organization.</li> <li>• Ensure coordinated airspace temporary flight restrictions are in place and understood.</li> <li>• Ensure coordinated communication links and frequencies are in place.</li> <li>• Assist in the preparation of Area Command decisions.</li> <li>• Ensure the continued effective and priority use of critical resources among the incident management teams.</li> <li>• Maintain log of major actions/decisions.</li> </ul>	<p>Reference Text p. 15-22</p>
<p>V. Small Group Exercise</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO IS FOR USE BY A MULTI-AGENCY GROUP OF STUDENTS. IF YOU DESIRE, SELECT ANOTHER SCENARIO FROM THE SCENARIO CATALOG. MAKE SURE THAT EXERCISE OBJECTIVES CAN BE ACHIEVED.</p>	<p>Reference Text p. 15-29</p>

## Background Scenario:

The Murkey River flows south through the Granite Mountain foothills and then through Prosperous Valley. A major winter windstorm followed by flooding caused by the emergency release of water at a weakened upstream dam has caused several major incidents along the east bank of the river in Jackson County. More rain and wind is expected over the next several days.

1. The County Jail and juvenile detention facility has had extensive damage. All electrical power and water is out. Population is 450 adult males, 175 females, and 250 male juveniles. Relocation may be required. Only cold meals and limited water are available. A County Sheriff's Captain is the Incident Commander.
2. A ten block area of Baytown has had extensive flooding. Search and rescue and evacuations are underway. There is no electrical power, and the water and sewer systems have been damaged. An incident complex has been established to cover several incidents in this area. The Baytown Police Department has designated an Incident Commander from the department.
3. A southbound train was derailed at Saunders junction due to a bridge being undermined. Several cars are overturned. A tankcar with an unknown chemical is on its side in the river and leaking. This incident is operating under a Unified Command consisting now of the County Fire and Sheriff.
4. In Fryville, a gas leak and explosion has ignited a major grocery chain warehouse. Several people have been injured, and there is a danger of fire spread to adjacent buildings. Water pressure is low. The Fryville Volunteer Fire Department Chief is the Incident Commander.
5. The County EOC in Jackson has been flooded and there is no backup facility. Because all of these incidents affect the same general area in the County, the County Executive has established an Area Command at the Riverton Jr. High School in Baytown. Because all of these incidents are located within one county, a single Area Commander has been designated.

Requests for critical resources from the incidents thus far have included:

- Search and Rescue
- Helicopters
- Emergency Medical
- Traffic Control
- Shelters and mass feeding
- Debris clearance

There is currently a major problem in sharing limited resources between these incidents. Many volunteers have come forward, and the Incident Commanders are looking for ways to organize and use them effectively. Several news media representatives are on the scene at the various incidents.

**PRIOR TO THE EXERCISE, FILL OUT A RESOURCE LISTING USING THE ATTACHED FORM.**

**IF TIME IS LIMITED, SELECT A LIMITED NUMBER OF TASKS FOR EACH GROUP TO PERFORM FROM THE LIST BELOW. ALSO, DIFFERENT GROUPS COULD BE GIVEN DIFFERENT TASKS.**

1. Have one member of the instructor training group represent the Agency Executive. Substance of the briefing from the Agency Executive to the Area Commanders is as follows:

The Area Commander has been delegated authority to take whatever steps and use whatever resources that are necessary. Preservation of life is top priority. Minimizing property loss is second. Getting these incidents under control as soon as possible is third. Because of the high visibility of these incidents, it is important that the media be provided with complete and factual information and given as much access as possible. The prison is a new facility put in at a very high cost and much community objection. Operations there will be closely monitored by the Board of Supervisors and the media.

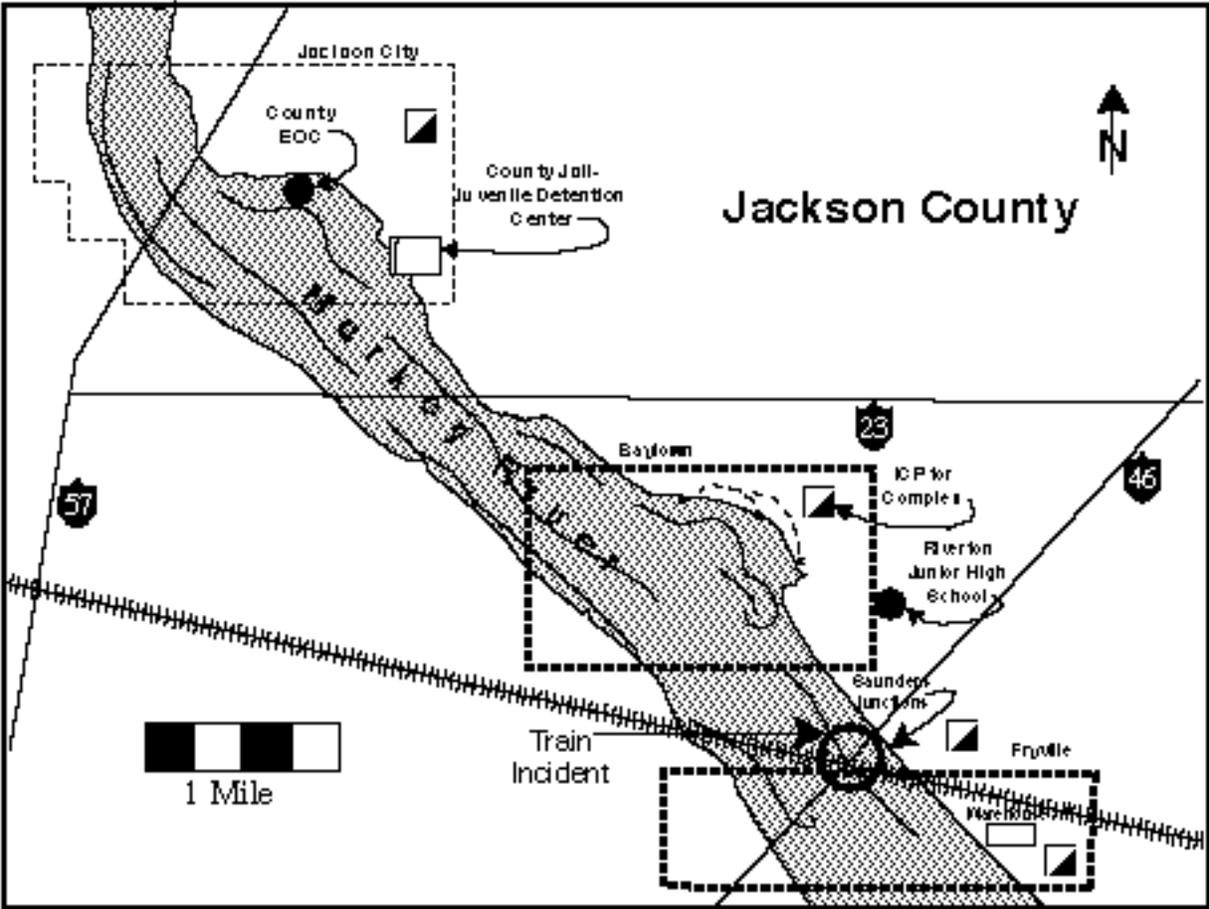
2. Divide students into teams of four or five persons. Teams are to be briefed by the Agency Executive. Allow a brief time for questions, and establish any overall assumptions as necessary. Each team will then independently:
  - Develop an Area Command organization chart.
  - Document staffing requirements for the Area Command.

- Document facility and support needs for the Area Command.
  - Document statement of Agency Executive's policy and broad priorities to be given to Incident Commanders.
  - Establish resource priorities for the incidents.
  - Develop a list of supplemental resource needs for the Area Command.
  - Develop a list of questions they would like to ask the Agency Executive at the next briefing.
3. Each team should provide a ten-minute briefing to the assembled students on the above subjects.

While there is no perfect school solution for an Area Command organization, the presentations should be critiqued on the following factors:

- Area Commanders have obtained necessary initial guidance from Agency Executive.
- Areas Commanders requested limits of their authority from Agency Executive briefing.
- Area Command organization is appropriately sized to meet the requirement.
- Coordination of Air Operations is considered and a plan developed for it.
- Use of Technical Specialists considered, and a list developed.
- Teams have developed a list of supplemental resource needs.
- Media relations between incidents and Area Command are covered.
- Teams have provided Incident Commanders with guidance on use of volunteers.
- Questions from teams to the Agency Executive reflect understanding of Area Command role and responsibility.

**THIS COMPLETES INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL FOR THIS MODULE. HAVE STUDENTS PREPARE FOR MODULE TEST.**



## RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

Exercise Planners: Change names or add to this list as you desire. Depending on the exercise needs, use blank columns to show: # resources available, typing, resources needed, resources ordered, resources in Staging Areas, resources assigned by agency, etc.

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM  
NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM**

**MODULE 15  
AREA COMMAND**

**October 1994**

**REFERENCE TEXT**

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# PREFACE

This module is one of seventeen modules which comprise the Incident Command System (ICS) National Training Curriculum. The entire curriculum has been developed by an interagency steering group and a contract consultant. The curriculum was sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and development was directed and supported by the National Interagency Fire Center, Division of Training. The Steering Group was represented by several application areas (Search & Rescue, Law Enforcement, Structural Fire, Wildfire, etc.) which guided the work of the contractor in the development of this package.

The Steering Group was:

David P. Anderson - USDA, Forest Service  
Mike Colgan - Orange County Fire Department  
Dave Engle - USDI, Bureau of Land Management  
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The Contract Consultant was:

The Terence Haney Company  
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The module describes why, when, where, and how Area Command is established, and the organization, facilities, and communications required. It covers the organizational relationships between Area Command and incidents, and between Area Command and jurisdictional authorities. The demobilization process under an Area Command organization is described.

Objectives:

1. Define Area Command.
2. Identify differences between Area Command, Unified Command, Multi-agency Coordination Systems, and Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs).
3. List the principal advantages of using Area Command.
4. Describe how, when, and where Area Command would be established.
5. Describe the Area Command organization.
6. Identify six primary functional responsibilities of Area Command.
7. Working with a simulated scenario, develop an Area Command organization.

## I. Description of Area Command

### A. Definition

Area Command is an organization established to:

1. Oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization; or
2. To oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams assigned to it.

Area Command is used when there are a number of incidents generally in the same area, and often of the same kind. For example, two or more HAZMAT spills, fires, etc. It is usually these kinds of incidents that may be vying for the same resources.

When incidents are of different kinds and/or do not have similar resource demands, they would usually be handled as separate incidents or would be coordinated through an EOC.

If the incidents under the authority of the Area Command are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established. This allows each jurisdiction to have representation in the Area Command.

### B. Terminology Related to Area Command

Experience has demonstrated that there is often confusion in how terminology is used and applied. For purposes of this module, it is important to remember the following:

A more detailed coverage of Multi-agency Coordination and EOCs will be presented in Module 16 on Multi-agency Coordination.

### C. Responsibility

For the incidents under its authority, Area Command has the responsibility to:

- Set overall agency incident-related priorities.
- Allocate critical resources based on priorities.
- Ensure that incidents are properly managed.
- Ensure that incident(s) objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy.

### D. Reporting Relationships

When Area Command is established, Incident Commander(s) for the incidents under the authority of the Area Command will report to the Area Commander. The Area Commander is accountable to the agency or jurisdictional executive or administrator.

If one or more of the incidents within the Area Command are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established. Incident Commanders would report to the Unified Area Commander for their jurisdiction.

## II. The Use of Area Command

Major natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires, or major storms create a large number of incidents affecting multijurisdictional areas. Due to their size and potential impact, these incidents provide an appropriate environment for the possible use of Area Command.

The most common situations in which Area Command has been used are for wildland fires. Area Command was also used in response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

#### A. The Need for Area Command

In situations where multiple incidents are occurring, the use of an Area Command makes the jobs of Incident Commanders and Agency Executives easier for the following reasons:

- Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each IC will be accomplished at the Area Command level. Using an Area Command allows the Incident Commanders and their incident management teams to focus their attention on their assigned incident.
- Area Command sets priorities between incidents and allocates critical resources according to priorities established by the Agency Executive.
- Area Command helps the Agency Executive by ensuring that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being made known to the respective Incident Commanders.
- Area Command also reduces the workload of the Agency Executive, especially if there are multiple incidents going on at the same time.

#### B. Establishing Area Command

It is best to be proactive when considering the use of Area Command. Area Command should be established for like incidents in the same proximity to ensure that conflicts do not arise. Often, agency dispatchers will recognize inter-incident coordination problems first.

It may take some hours to establish the Area Command. If there are existing facilities and communication systems that can be used, e.g., at a jurisdictional EOC, then the time needed to set up the Area Command may be reduced.

Some criteria for using Area Command are:

- Several major or complex incidents of the same kind are in close proximity.
- Critical human or property values are at risk due to incidents.
- Incidents will continue into the next operational period.
- Incidents are using similar and limited critical resources.
- Difficulties are encountered with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination.

Area Command is established by the Agency Executive.

When Area Command is activated, an Area Commander will be designated and given appropriate delegated authority.

The authority given to the Area Commander should be written as a Delegation of Authority statement. This will eliminate confusion and provides the Area Commander with authority to oversee the management of the incidents.

Depending upon the agencies and incidents involved, the Area Command may issue delegation of authority or re-delegations to the respective Incident Commanders. This will help to ensure that Agency direction is made clear to all parties.

If the incidents under the Area Command are in adjacent jurisdictions, then a Unified Area Command should be established. The following could apply to either an Area Command or a Unified Area Command.

1. Incident Commanders covered by the Area Command must be notified that an Area Command is being established.
2. The Area Command team should consist of the best-qualified personnel with respect to their functional areas. The functions of Area Command require personnel that have experience in, and are qualified to oversee, complex incident situations.
3. The Area Command organization operates under the same basic principles as does the Incident Command System.
4. The Area Command organization should always be kept as small as possible. Area Command organizational positions could consist of:

The Area Commander and, only as necessary:

- Area Command Logistics Chief
- Area Command Planning Chief
- Area Command Critical Resources Unit Leader

- Area Command Situation Unit Leader
- Area Command Information Officer
- Area Command Liaison Officer to help in maintaining off-incident interagency contacts

It is important to remember, that Area Command does not in any way replace the incident level ICS organizations or functions. The above positions, if established, are strictly related to Area Command operations. Specific duties and responsibilities will be established by the Area Commander.

Incident Commanders under the designated Area Commander are responsible to, and should be considered as part of, the overall Area Command organization. They must be provided adequate and clear delegation of authority.

Technical Specialists can be added to the Area Command organization. This will depend on the kinds of incidents involved. Technical Specialists at the Area Command would provide specific information and expertise relating to their specialty.

For example, in incidents involving use of aircraft, and where hazardous materials are involved, it may be useful to have the following specialists assigned to the Area Command team:

- Aviation Specialist
- Hazardous Materials Specialist
- Environmental Specialist
- Communications Specialist

The responsibilities of the principal Area Command functional elements are presented in checklist form at the end of this module.

## C. The Location for Area Command

The Area Command should, to the extent possible, be located in close proximity to the incidents under its authority. This will make it easier to have meetings and direct contact between the Area Commander and Incident Commanders.

It is best not to collocate Area Command with one of the incidents. Doing so might cause confusion with that incident's operations, and it could also be seen by other incidents as adding status to that single incident.

The facility used to house the Area Command organization should be large enough to accommodate a full Area Command staff, and have the capability to accommodate meetings between the Area Command Staff, Incident Commanders, Agency Executive(s), and with news media representatives.

Jurisdiction EOC facilities may be used for Area Command facilities if they are located reasonably close to the incidents.

Some of the criteria that should be considered when selecting an Area Command facility include:

- Close proximity to incidents (but not at an ICP).
- Sufficient size (for staff, displays, and conferences).
- Capable of continuous operation.
- Adequate communications facilities (telephones, FAX, computer connections).
- Availability of backup power.

- Capable of supporting radio communications to incidents and agency offices.
- Adequate and secure parking.
- Near commercial sources of support for food and lodging.

If radios are a primary means of communication, the Area Command facility should have line of sight coverage to Incident Command Posts or to repeaters serving those incident facilities. The facility should allow for suitable locations to temporarily install rooftop radio antennas.

### III. Primary Functions of Area Command

Because of the use and proven value of Area Command, considerable work has gone into describing how Area Command should function.

Area Command has six primary functions. Each will be briefly discussed:

- Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.
- Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to the incident among Incident Commanders.
- Establish critical resource use priorities between various incidents based on incident needs and agency policy and direction.
- Ensure appropriate incident management team personnel assignments and organizations for the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.
- Maintain contact with officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.

- Coordinate the demobilization or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.
- A. Provide effective agency or jurisdictional management authority for assigned incidents. If the incidents are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established.

Upon assignment, the Area Commander should arrange a meeting with the agency/jurisdiction executive to obtain the Delegation of Authority and receive agency/jurisdiction policy, objectives, limitations, and constraints. At this time, the Area Commander should determine the following:

1. General situation
2. Incidents assigned
3. Jurisdictional delegation of authority
4. Assumption of command timing and notifications procedure
5. Names and qualifications of assigned Incident Commanders
6. Incidents operating under Unified Command
7. Limitations on the Area Commander's authority over Incident Commanders (should be in the Delegation of Authority)
8. Incident Action Plans available
9. Policies, political factors, or other constraints
10. Agency advisor assigned
11. Area Command facility designated

12. Status of communications systems to incidents and agency/jurisdictional headquarters
13. Critical resource designations
14. Policy and expectations for interaction with the media
15. Area Command reporting responsibility to agency
16. Schedules for required briefings and contacts

The Area Commander has the authority and the responsibility to do the following for incidents within the Area Command:

- Set overall objectives
- Establish priorities
- Allocate/reallocate critical resources

This should be done by working in cooperation with the agency/jurisdictional executive and the assigned Incident Commanders.

The Area Commander should allow the respective Incident Commanders as much latitude as possible in implementing their respective Incident Action Plans.

- B. Ensure that Incident Commanders have a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to the incidents.

It is possible that the assigned Incident Commanders may not have had a full briefing on agency/jurisdictional expectations related to their incidents prior to the time that Area Command is established.

Some incidents operating under an Area Command may be multi-agency and/or multijurisdictional, and may have a Unified Command structure in place.

If this is the case, then the Area Command should also be a Unified Area Command. This will require full jurisdictional representation at the Area Command.

It is essential that all parties are clear on agency/jurisdictional expectations, intentions, and environmental and political constraints. Some considerations are:

- Area Command will normally be established after incident management teams are in place on the various incidents.
- It is likely that the Incident Commanders have already developed objectives, strategies, and Incident Action Plans.
- The Area Commander must rapidly assess the situation for each incident and ensure that incident action planning is addressing the priorities and direction set by the Agency Executive.
- The Area Commander should establish, in writing, priorities related to assigned incidents, based upon Agency Executive directions and other available information.

This information should be part of the written delegation of authority coming to the Area Commander from the Agency Executive.

- The Area Commander should also develop procedures to be followed. These procedures should be reviewed with the respective Incident Commanders. These could include such things as:
  - Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities

- Priorities for assignments of critical resources
- Schedules of meetings and briefings
- Reports, and Incident Action Plans
- Points of contact with Agency Executives
- Media relations and contact procedures
- Unusual situation or emergency procedures reporting
- Demobilization procedures

The Area Commander should have an initial joint meeting with Incident Commanders at one location.

The meeting should follow a prescribed format. The agenda for this meeting should:

- Obtain concise individual incident briefings.
- Explain the role and responsibilities of an Area Commander.
- Review the general policy and direction for the incidents as stated by the Agency Executive.
- Resolve any conflicts that may exist between Agency Executive policy and situations at the incidents.
- Review appropriate procedures as outlined above.
- Be open for questions.
- Collect available Incident Action Plans and any other essential documentation.

The Area Commander must ensure that all appropriate decisions and procedures are made clear to agency dispatchers and any other organizations involved in the Area Command.

Concerns or unresolved issues brought up at the meeting should immediately be discussed with Agency Executive(s). These could include environmental issues, cost concerns, etc.

- C. Establish priorities among various incidents based on incident needs and agency policy and direction.

When two or more incidents are competing for critical resources and services, someone must make quick decisions based on an objective analysis of the total situation.

Establishing priorities is one of the most important functions an Area Commander performs. The intent is to establish critical priorities for the common good of the total situation.

There are three different types of priorities that Area Command may need to establish:

- Priorities among incidents (often related to the life and property values at risk)
- Priorities related to allocating critically needed resources
- Priorities related to demobilization

Incident Commanders must acknowledge the requirement to establish critical priorities by an Area Command.

Incident Commanders may not always concur with Area Command decisions on priorities and critical resource allocations.

Therefore, it is essential that each Incident Commander understands that the ability to obtain critical resources and services is balanced with the priorities established for that incident.

It is also essential that Incident Commanders understand that they may have to adjust incident strategies, tactical objectives, and resource assignments due to the lack of critical resources during a given operational period.

- D. Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate to the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.

The Area Commander is responsible for the overall management of the assigned incidents. It is essential that appropriate assignments of personnel be made within the respective incident organizations.

At the earliest opportunity, the Area Commander should review with the Incident Commanders their respective organizations and primary position personnel assignments.

The Area Commander can recommend or make appropriate changes and shifts in personnel assignments as necessary. Sometimes one incident may have personnel assigned which would be better suited to another incident.

Determine with Incident Commanders if aviation procedures and temporary flight restrictions are adequate, and if any changes should be made to air operations to provide better overall support to the incidents operating in the Area Command.

- E. Maintain liaison with officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.

This function, if accomplished at the Area Command, may reduce the level of coordination that individual Incident Commanders and Command Staffs must perform, and will increase the flow of information to all interested parties.

There are three major coordinating services that the Area Command should perform.

1. Between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and Incident Commanders

Once an Area Command or a Unified Area Command is established, contact between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and the respective incidents should be channeled through the Area Command. This will ensure a proper chain of command, and help to eliminate mixed signals or confusion.

2. Between Area Command, Incidents, and Assisting and Cooperating Agencies

Agencies who are assisting and/or cooperating on more than one of the incidents but are not part of the Command could, if necessary, provide representatives to the Area Command. These representatives should be fully integrated into the Area Command organization as Agency Representatives.

3. Between the Media and the Incidents

Media relations will be especially important in an Area Command setting. Incidents of significant size or scope are likely to attract tremendous media attention.

The Agency or Jurisdiction Executive should establish a policy with the Area Commander for handling the media. These decisions should be passed on to Incident Commanders and Information Officers.

One solution related to keeping the media informed is to schedule periodic media briefings at the Area Command facility location which will update the situation for all incidents. Information Officers from the various incidents can provide the updates and schedule future media tours as appropriate.

F. Coordinate the Demobilization of Assigned Incidents

The Area Command involvement in the demobilization process is important. Area Command does not demobilize resources directly. The role of Area Command is to coordinate the demobilization of critical resources with the respective incidents.

A primary purpose of Area Command is to ensure that critical personnel and equipment resources being released from demobilizing incidents can be made available to other active or growing incidents.

Another purpose is to ensure that transportation resources and other services are not being duplicated. Resources from an agency or jurisdiction which may have been divided to support other incidents can be consolidated prior to departure.

It is essential that the Area Command establish procedures with the Incident Commanders and agency dispatch centers to coordinate the demobilization of designated resources with the Area Command.

Demobilization planning will start at the incident level. The role of Area Command is to identify to the respective Incident Commanders what the priorities will be for demobilization, and what, if any, critical resources will be required to move to other assignments.

This information should be provided to the Incident Commanders in the form of a list which describes the critical resources, and provides instructions on clearing those resources with Area Command before demobilization. Some agencies have developed forms for this purpose.

Given this information, incident level demobilization planning can proceed. Incidents should provide copies of their demobilization schedules to the Area Command prior to actual demobilization and wait for approval.

#### IV. Area Command Primary Function Responsibilities

The following checklists cover the major activities and responsibilities of three primary Area Command positions.

##### A. Area Commander (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, 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 assisting and/or cooperating organizations.

### Checklist of Actions:

These actions will generally be conducted in the order listed:

- Obtain briefing from the Agency Executive(s) on agency expectations, concerns, and constraints.
- Obtain and carry out delegation of authority from the Agency Executive for overall management and direction of the incidents within the designated Area Command.
- If operating as a Unified Area Command, develop working agreement for how Area Commanders will function together.
- Delegate authority to Incident Commanders based on agency expectations, concerns, and constraints.
- Establish an Area Command schedule and timeline.
- Resolve conflicts between incident "realities" and Agency Executive "wants."
- Establish appropriate location for the Area Command facilities.
- Determine and implement an appropriate Area Command organization. Keep it manageable.
- Determine need for Technical Specialists to support Area Command.
- Obtain incident briefing and Incident Action Plans from Incident Commanders. (As appropriate.)

- Assess incident situations prior to strategy meetings.
- Conduct a joint meeting with all Incident Commanders.
- Review objectives and strategies for each incident.
- Periodically review critical resource needs.
- Maintain a close coordination with the Agency Executive.
- Establish priority use for critical resources.
- Review procedures for interaction within the Area Command.
- Approve Incident Commanders' requests for and release of critical resources.
- Coordinate and approve demobilization plans.
- Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

B. Area Command Planning Chief

The Area Command Planning Chief 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.

Checklist of Actions:

- Obtain briefing from Area Commander.
- Assemble information on individual incident objectives and begin to identify potential

conflicts and/or ways for incidents to develop compatible operations.

- Recommend the priorities for allocation of critical resources to incidents.
- Maintain status on critical resource totals. (not detailed status).
- Ensure that advance planning beyond the next operational period is being accomplished.
- Prepare and distribute Area Commander's decisions or orders.
- Prepare recommendations for the reassignment of critical resources as they become available.
- Ensure demobilization plans are coordinated between incident management teams and agency dispatchers.
- Schedule strategy meeting with Incident Commanders to conform with their planning processes.
- Prepare Area Command briefings as requested or needed.
- Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

#### C. Area Command Logistics Chief

The Area Command Logistics Chief is responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials at the Area Command level, and for ensuring effective use of critical resources and supplies among the incident management teams.

Checklist of Actions:

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

# **MODULE 15**

## **AREA COMMAND**

### **Matrix Definitions of:**

**Incident Command System (ICS)**

**Unified Command (UC)**

**Area Command (AC)**

**Multi-agency Coordination System (MAC)**

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

**Differences between MAC Groups and Area Command**

**Exercise Scenario**



## Definitions

<b>INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM</b>	<b>UNIFIED COMMAND</b>	<b>AREA COMMAND (UNIFIED AREA COMMAND)</b>	<b>MULTI- AGENCY COOR- DINATION SYSTEMS (MACS)</b>	<b>EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)</b>
<p>The management system used to direct all operations at the incident scene. The Incident Commander (IC) is located at an Incident Command Post (ICP) at the incident scene.</p>	<p>An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction. Agencies work together through their designated Incident Commanders at a single ICP to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan.</p>	<p>Establish as necessary to provide command authority and coordination for two or more incidents in close proximity. Area Command works directly with Incident Commanders. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multi-jurisdictional. Area Command may be established at an EOC facility or at some other location other than an incident ICP.</p>	<p>An active or formal system used to coordinate resources and support between agencies or jurisdictions. A MAC Group functions within the MACS. MACS interact with agencies or jurisdictions, not with incidents. MACS are useful for regional situations. A MACS can be established at a jurisdictional EOC or at a separate facility.</p>	<p>Also called Expanded Dispatch, Emergency Command and Control Centers, etc. EOCs are used in varying ways at all levels of government and within private industry to provide coordination, direction, and control during emergencies. EOC facilities can be used to house Area Command and MACS activities as determined by agency or jurisdictional policy.</p>



## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAC GROUPS AND AREA COMMAND

<b>MAC GROUP</b>	<b>AREA COMMAND</b>
Expansion of the off-site coordination and support system.	Expansion of the on-site command function of the Incident Command System.
Members are agency administrators or designees from the agencies involved or heavily committed to the incident.	Members are the most highly skilled incident management personnel.
Organization generally consists of the MAC Group (agency administrations), MAC Group Coordinator, and an intelligence and information support staff.	Organization generally consists of an Area Commander, Area Command Planning Chief, and Area Command Logistics Chief.
Is the agency administrator or designee.	Is delegated authority for specific incident(s) from the agency administrator.
Allocate and reallocate critical resources through the dispatch system by setting incident priorities.	Assign and reassign critical resources allocated to them by MAC or the normal dispatch system organization.
Make coordinated agency administrator level decisions on issues that affect multiple agencies.	Ensure that incident objectives and strategies are complimentary between Incident Management Teams under their supervision.



## V. Small Group Exercise

### Background Scenario:

The Murkey River flows south through the Granite Mountain foothills and then through Prosperous Valley. A major winter windstorm followed by flooding caused by the emergency release of water at a weakened upstream dam has caused several major incidents along the east bank of the river in Jackson County. More rain and wind is expected over the next several days.

1. The County Jail and juvenile detention facility has had extensive damage. All electrical power and water is out. Population is 450 adult males, 175 females, and 250 male juveniles. Relocation may be required. Only cold meals and limited water are available. A County Sheriff's Captain is the Incident Commander.
2. A ten block area of Baytown has had extensive flooding. Search and rescue and evacuations are underway. There is no electrical power, and the water and sewer systems have been damaged. An incident complex has been established to cover several incidents in this area. The Baytown Police Department has designated an Incident Commander from the department.
3. A southbound train was derailed at Saunders junction due to a bridge being undermined. Several cars are overturned. A tankcar with an unknown chemical is on its side in the river and leaking. This incident is operating under a Unified Command consisting now of the County Fire and Sheriff.
4. In Fryville, a gas leak and explosion has ignited a major grocery chain warehouse. Several people have been injured, and there is a danger of fire spread to adjacent buildings. Water pressure is low. The Fryville Volunteer Fire Department Chief is the Incident Commander.
5. The County EOC in Jackson has been flooded and there is no backup facility. Because all of these incidents affect the same general area in the County, the County Executive has established an Area Command at the Riverton Jr. High School in Baytown. Because all of these incidents are located within one county, a single Area Commander has been designated.

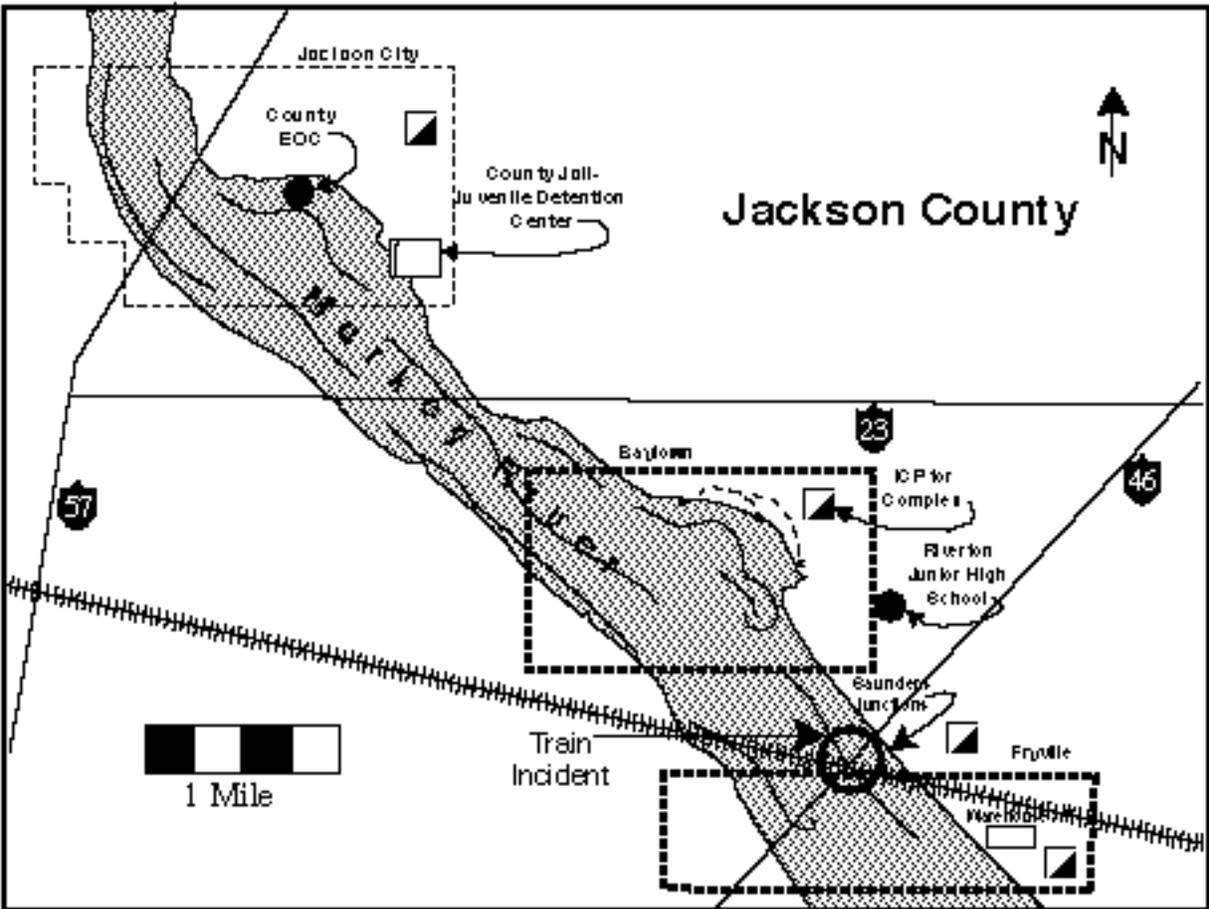
Requests for critical resources from the incidents thus far have included:

- Search and Rescue
- Helicopters
- Emergency Medical
- Traffic Control
- Shelters and mass feeding
- Debris clearance

There is currently a major problem in sharing limited resources between these incidents. Many volunteers have come forward, and the Incident Commanders are looking for ways to organize and use them effectively. Several news media representatives are on the scene at the various incidents.

As a group, your objective for this exercise is to:

- Develop an Area Command organization chart.
- Determine Area Command staffing requirements.
- Describe Area Command facility and support needs.
- Develop a statement of policy to be given to Incident Commanders.
- Establish resource priorities.
- Establish Area Command supplemental resource needs.
- Develop a list of questions they would like to ask the Agency Executive at the next briefing.



**RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES**

<b>KIND OF RESOURCE</b>				
ALS UNITS				
BLS UNITS				
BULLDOZERS				
BUSES - 30 PASS 50 PASS				
COAST GUARD VES.				
COMMUNICATION UNITS				
CRANES				
DUMP TRUCKS				
EMS UNITS				
FIRE ENGINE CO'S				
FIRE TRUCK CO'S				
FIREBOATS				
FOUR WHEEL DRIVE PASS. VEH.				
HAZMAT UNITS				
HELICOPTERS				
K-9 UNITS				
MARINE RESCUE UNITS				
MOTORCYCLE UNITS				
PASSENGER VEHICLES				
PATROL UNITS				
PICKUP TRUCKS				
PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				

# Module 15 Area Command

## Subjects covered in this module include:

- Description of Area Command.
- Differences between Area Command, Multi-agency Coordination, and EOC's.
- Establishing Area Command.
- General responsibilities.
- Position responsibilities and checklists.
- Area Command exercise.

# **Module 15 Objectives:**

1. Define Area Command.
2. Identify differences between area command, unified command, multi-agency coordination systems and emergency operations centers.
3. List the principal advantages of using area command or unified area command.

## **Module 15 Objectives (cont.):**

4. Describe how, when, and where Area Command would be established.
5. Describe the Area Command organization.
6. Identify six primary functional responsibilities of Area Command.
7. Working with a simulated scenario, develop an Area Command organization.

## **For the Small Group Exercise Area Command Teams will:**

- Develop an Area Command organization.
- Determine Area Command staffing requirements.
- Describe Area Command facility and support needs.
- Develop statement of agency policy to be given to Incident Commanders.
- Establish resource priorities.
- Establish Area Command supplemental resource needs.
- Develop questions to ask the Agency Executive.

# Definition of Area Command

- Oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization; or
- To oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams assigned to it.

<b>Incident Command System</b>	<b>Unified Command</b>	<b>Area Command (Unified Area Command)</b>	<b>Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS)</b>	<b>Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)</b>
<p>The management system used to direct all operations at the incident scene. The Incident Commander (IC) is located on scene at an Incident Command Post (ICP) at the incident scene.</p>	<p>An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction. Agencies work together through their designated Incident Commanders at a single ICP to establish a common set of objectives and strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan.</p>	<p>Established as necessary to provide <b>command authority</b> and coordination for two or more incidents in close proximity. Area Command works directly with Incident Commanders. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional. Area Command may be established at an EOC facility or at some other location other than an incident ICP.</p>	<p>An activity or a formal system used to <b>coordinate resources and support between agencies or jurisdictions</b>. A MAC Group functions within the MACS. MACS interact with agencies or jurisdictions not with incidents. MACS are useful for regional situations. A MACS can be established at a jurisdictional EOC or at a separate facility.</p>	<p>Also called Expanded Dispatch, Emergency Command and Control Centers, etc. EOCs are used in varying ways at all levels of government and within private industry to provide coordination, direction and control during emergencies. EOC facilities can be used to house Area Command and MACS activities as determined by agency or jurisdiction policy.</p>

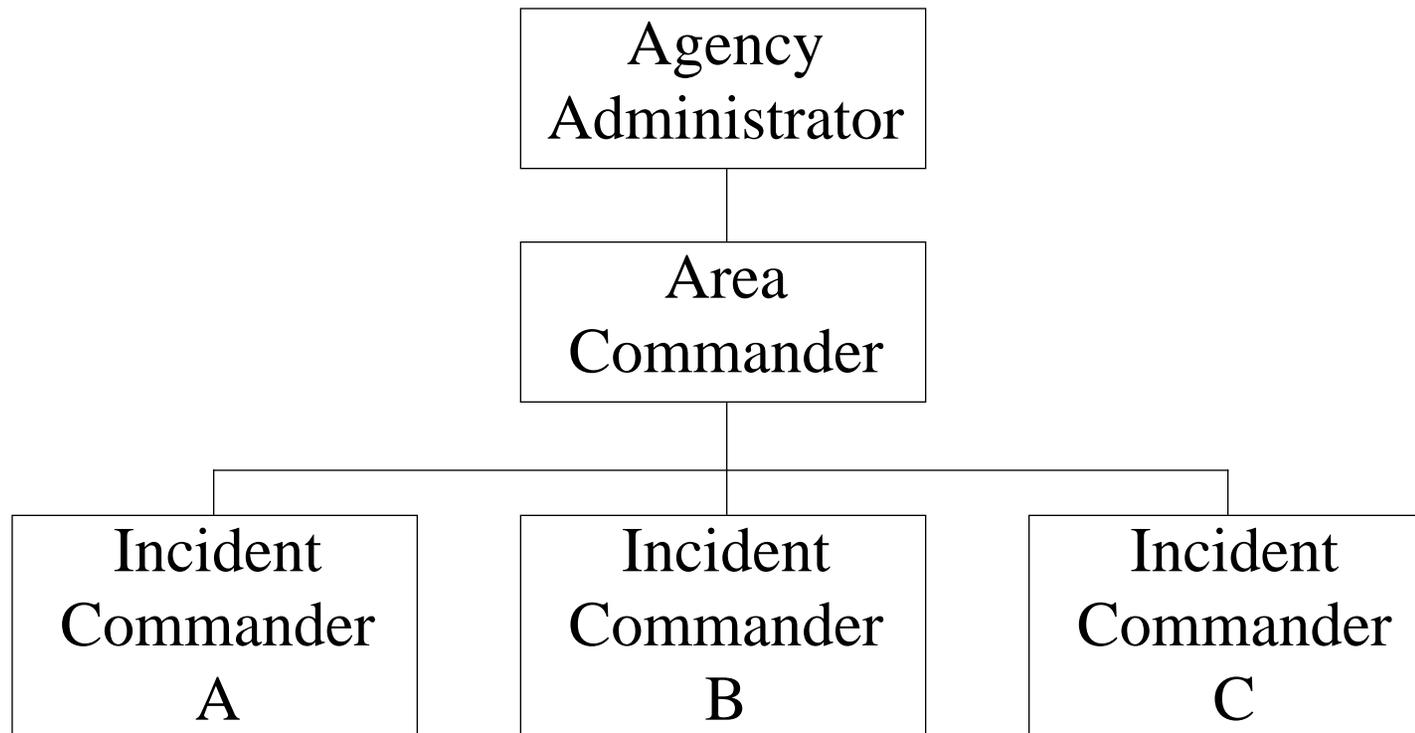
# Difference Between MAC Groups and Area Command

MAC Group	Area Command
Expansion of the off-site coordination and support system.	Expansion of the on-site command function of the Incident Command System.
Members are agency administrators or designees from the agencies involved or heavily committed to the incident.	Members are the most highly skilled incident management personnel.
Organization generally consists of the MAC Group (agency administrations), MAC Group Coordinator, and an intelligence and information support staff.	Organization generally consists of an Area Commander, Area Command Planning Chief, and Area Command Logistics Chief.
Is the agency administrator or designee.	Is delegated authority for specific incident(s) from the agency administrator.
Allocate and reallocate critical resources through the dispatch system by setting incident priorities.	Assign and reassign critical resources allocated to them by MAC or the normal dispatch system organization.
Make coordinated agency administrator level decisions on issues that affect multiple agencies.	Ensure that incident objectives and strategies are complementary between Incident Management Teams under their supervision.

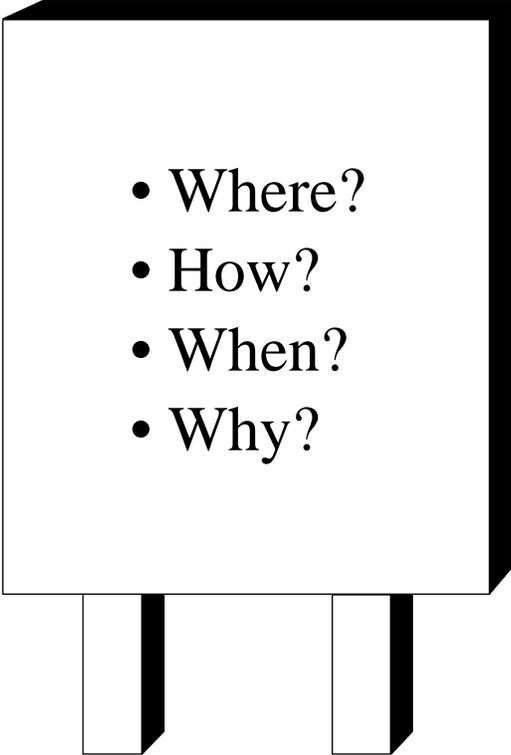
# Area Command Responsibilities

- Set overall agency incident-related priorities.
- Allocate critical resources based on priorities.
- Ensure that incidents are properly managed.
- Ensure that incident(s) objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy.

# Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships



# Area Command

- 
- Where?
  - How?
  - When?
  - Why?

# Reasons to Use Area Command

- Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each IC will be accomplished at the Area Command level allowing incident management teams to focus attention on assigned incidents.
- Area command sets priorities and allocates critical resources.
- Area Command helps the Agency Executive by ensuring that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being made known to the respective Incident Commanders.
- Area Command reduces the workload of the Agency Executive, especially if there are multiple incidents going on at the same time.

# When Should Area Command be Established?

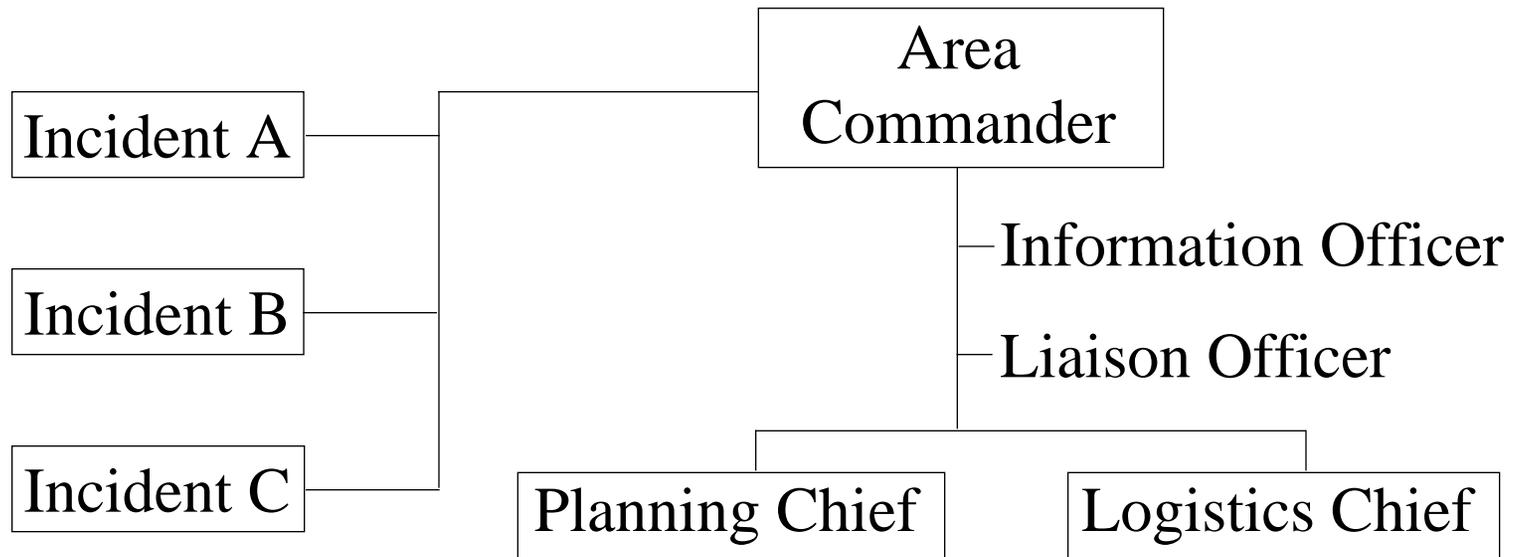
Early and When:

- Several active incidents are in close proximity.
- Critical human or property values are at risk due to incidents.
- Incidents will continue into the next operational period.
- Incidents are using similar and limited critical resources.
- Difficulties are encountered with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination.

# How Area Command is Established:

- Is established by Agency Executive.
- Is given written delegated authority.
- Has best-qualified, experienced personnel.
- Is patterned after ICS Command/General Staff.
- Operates under same principles as ICS.
- Organization should be kept small.

# Area Command Organization



# Example of Technical Specialists at an Area Command:

- Aviation Specialist
- Hazardous Materials Specialist
- Environmental Specialist
- Communications Specialist

# Criteria for Establishing an Area Command Facility

- Close to incidents (but not an ICP).
- Sufficient size (for staff, displays, and conferences).
- Capable of continuous operation.
- Adequate communications facilities (telephones, FAX, computer connections).

## Criteria for Establishing an Area Command Facility (cont.)

- Availability of backup power.
- Capable of supporting radio communications to incidents and agency offices.
- Adequate and secure parking.
- Near sources of food and lodging.

# Communications Considerations

- Adequate telephone trunks.
- More telephone service can be added.
- Roof top antennas can be installed.
- Line of sight to incidents or repeaters.

# Primary Functions of an Area Command

- Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.
- Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints.
- Establish critical resource use priorities between various incidents.

## **Primary Functions of an Area Command (cont.)**

- Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate.
- Maintain contact with officials in charge, other agencies and groups.
- Coordinate the demobilization or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist)

- General situation
- Incidents assigned
- Jurisdictional delegation of authority
- Assumption of command timing and notifications procedure
- Names and qualifications of assigned Incident Commanders

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist) (cont.)

- Incidents operating under Unified Command
- Limitations on the Area Commander's authority over Incident Commanders (should be in the delegation of authority)
- Incident Action Plans available
- Policies, political factors, or other constraints
- Agency advisor assigned
- Area Command facility designated

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist) (cont.)

- Status of communications systems to incidents and agency/jurisdictional headquarters
- Critical resource designations
- Policy and expectations for interaction with the media
- Area Command reporting responsibility to agency
- Schedules for required briefings, and contacts

# Area Commander Responsibility

- Set overall objectives
- Establish priorities
- Allocate/reallocate critical resources

# Area Command Considerations

- Area Command is usually established to support incidents which are already underway.
- Objectives, strategies, and Incident Action Plans should already be in place.
- Area Commander must rapidly assess each incident and ensure the incident action planning is addressing the priorities and direction set by the Agency Executive.

## **Area Command Considerations (cont.)**

- Area Commander should establish, in writing, priorities related to incidents. This information should be part of the delegation of authority from the Agency Executive.
- Area Commander should develop procedures to be followed.

## **Area Command Procedures Should Include:**

- Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities
- Priorities for assignments of critical resources
- Schedules of meetings and briefings
- Reports and Incident Action Plans
- Points of contact with Agency Executives
- Media relations and contact procedures
- Unusual situation or emergency procedures reporting
- Demobilization procedures

# Agenda for Area Command Meeting with Incident Commanders

- Obtain concise individual incident briefings.
- Explain the role and responsibilities of an Area Commander.
- Review policy and direction received from Agency Executive.
- Resolve any conflicts.
- Review appropriate procedures as outlined above.
- Open for questions.
- Collect available Incident Action Plans and other essential documentation.

# **Establish Priorities Among Various Incidents Based on Incident Needs and Agency Policy and Direction**

**Three priorities that Area Command may need to establish:**

- Priorities among incidents (often related to the life and property values at risk)
- Priorities related to allocating critically needed resources
- Priorities related to demobilization

# **The Management Team Must be Appropriate for the Incidents**

- Recommend/make appropriate important personnel changes and moves only as necessary.
- Ensure that appropriate incident organization activations have been made.
- Determine if temporary flight restrictions are adequate or need revision.

# Coordinating Services Done by Area Command

- Between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and Incident Commanders
- Between Area Command, incidents, and assisting and cooperating agencies
- Between the media and the incidents

# Coordinate the Demobilization of Assigned Incidents

- Establish procedures with incidents and agency dispatch centers on demobilization.
- Determine demobilization priorities and procedure for handling critical resources.
- Provide incidents with a list of critical resources and instructions for clearing releases with Area Command.
- Incidents must provide Area Command with copies of demobilization schedules.