INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM

MODULE 15

AREA COMMAND

October 1994

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

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:

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The Contract Consultant was:

> The Terence Haney Company
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> 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 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 Page 1 of 2
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 2 of 2 15-03-I400-VG
BRIEF STUDENTS ON THE REQUIRED OUTPUTS OF THE EXERCISE. EXERCISE AREA COMMAND TEAMS WILL:	Reference Text p. 15-30

- Develop an Area Command organization.

- 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.

I. Description of Area Command	15-04-I400-VG
A. Definition	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

Area Command is an <u>organization</u> 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:

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
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.	
MACS AND EOCS DIFFER IN THAT THEY PROVIDE OFF-SCENE COORDINATION AND SUPPORT TO AGENCIES.	15-05-I400-VG Reference Text p. 15-25
	15-06-I400-VG
A more detailed coverage of Multi-agency Coordination and EOCs will be presented in Module 16 on Multi-agency Coordination.	Reference Text p. 15-27
C. Responsibility	15-07-I400-VG
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	15-08-I400-VG
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   15-09-I400-VG

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   15-10-I400-VG

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

- 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:

HAVE STUDENTS PROVIDE CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING AREA COMMAND. LIST ON BOARD.

- Several major or complex incidents of the same kind are in close proximity.

15-11-I400-VG

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

- 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.

15-12-I400-VG

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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: 15-13-I400-VG

• 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,

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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

15-14-I400-VG

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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:

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- 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.

15-15-I400-VG
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- Capable of supporting radio communications to incidents and agency offices.

- Adequate and secure parking.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

       •   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.

   15-16-I400-VG

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:

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.

       •   Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.

   15-17-I400-VG
Page 1 of 2

       •   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.

   15-17-I400-VG
Page 2 of 2

       •   Ensure appropriate incident management team personnel assignments and organizations for the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

- 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:

BEFORE REVIEWING THIS LIST, HAVE STUDENTS IDENTIFY WHAT THEY THINK ARE THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED. HAVE THESE RECORDED, AND THEN REVIEW.

<div style="text-align:right">15-18-I400-VG
Page 1 of 3</div>

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

<div style="text-align:right">15-18-I400-VG
Page 2 of 3</div>

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	
The Area Commander has the authority and the responsibility to do the following for incidents within the Area Command:	15-19-I400-VG
• 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.	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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.

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Page 1 of 2

•   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

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
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.	15-20-I400-VG Page 2 of 2
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:	
ASK STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY WHAT PROCEDURES THEY AS AREA COMMANDERS CAN IDENTIFY. HAVE THESE RECORDED ON THE BOARD AND THEN REVIEW.	
• Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities	15-21-I400-VG
• 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	

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

- 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.   15-22-I400-VG

- 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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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:

15-23-I400-VG

- 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

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

assignments due to the lack of critical resources during a given operational period.

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

15-24-I400-VG

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. <u>Maintain liaison with officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.</u>

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
There are three major coordinating services that the Area Command should perform.	15-25-I400-VG

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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

15-26-I400-VG

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

EVALUATE THE NEED FOR COVERING THESE IN DETAIL. IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO COVER ONLY THE HIGHLIGHTS.

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

A.   Area Commander (Unified Area Command)

Reference Text
p. 15-19

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES

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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
• 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	Reference Text p. 15-20
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.

<u>Checklist of Actions:</u>

- 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.

OUTLINE	AIDS & CUES
• Maintain log of major actions/decisions.	
C. Area Command Logistics Chief	Reference Text p. 15-22
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.	
V. Small Group Exercise	Reference Text p. 15-29
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.	

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.
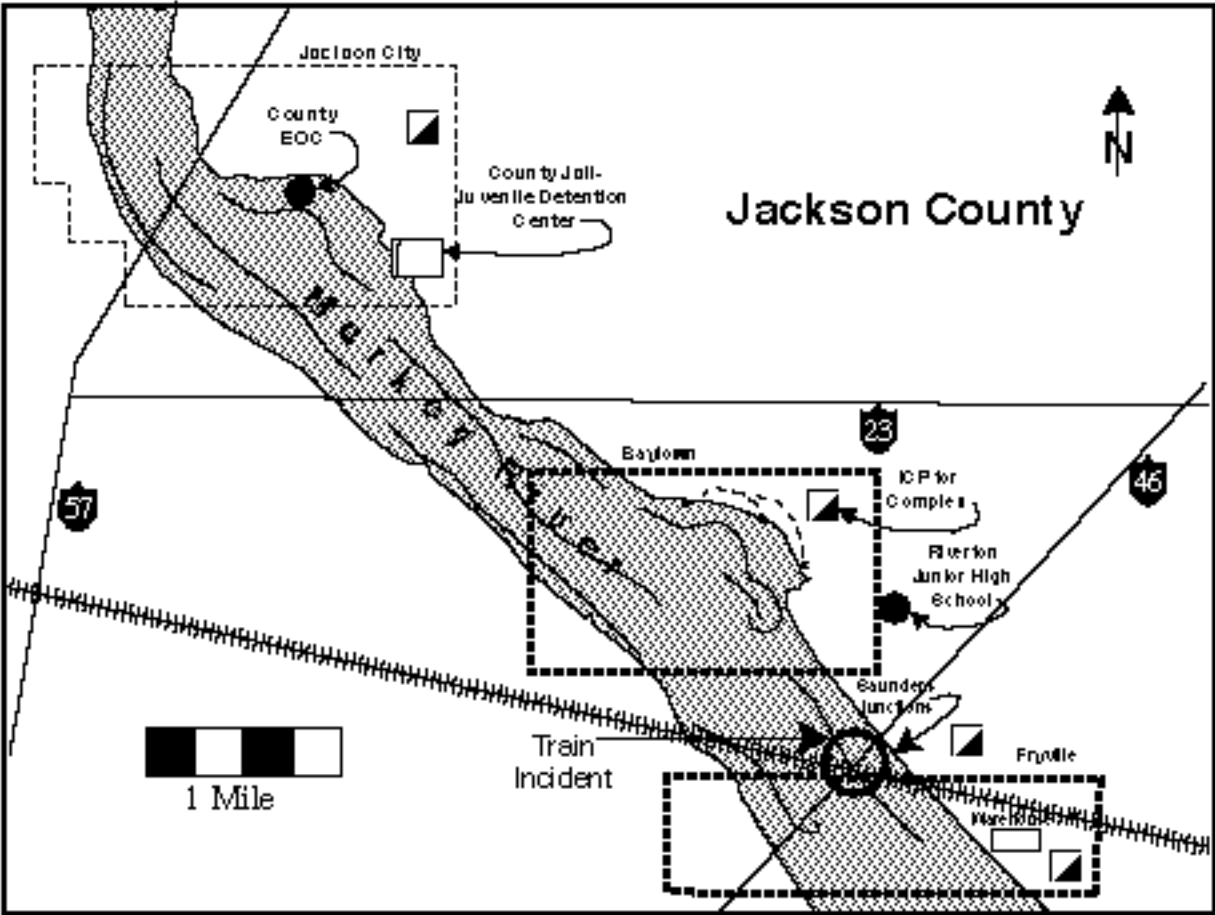
RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

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.

KIND OF RESOURCE				
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				

4-94

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

NATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULUM

MODULE 15

AREA COMMAND

October 1994

REFERENCE TEXT

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

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 <u>organization</u> 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 ofaircraft, 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.   <u>Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate to the kind and complexity of the incidents involved.</u>

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 responsiblefor 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

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM	UNIFIED COMMAND	AREA COMMAND (UNIFIED AREA COMMAND)	MULTI-AGENCY COOR-DINATION SYSTEMS (MACS)	EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)
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.	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.	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.	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.	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.

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 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.

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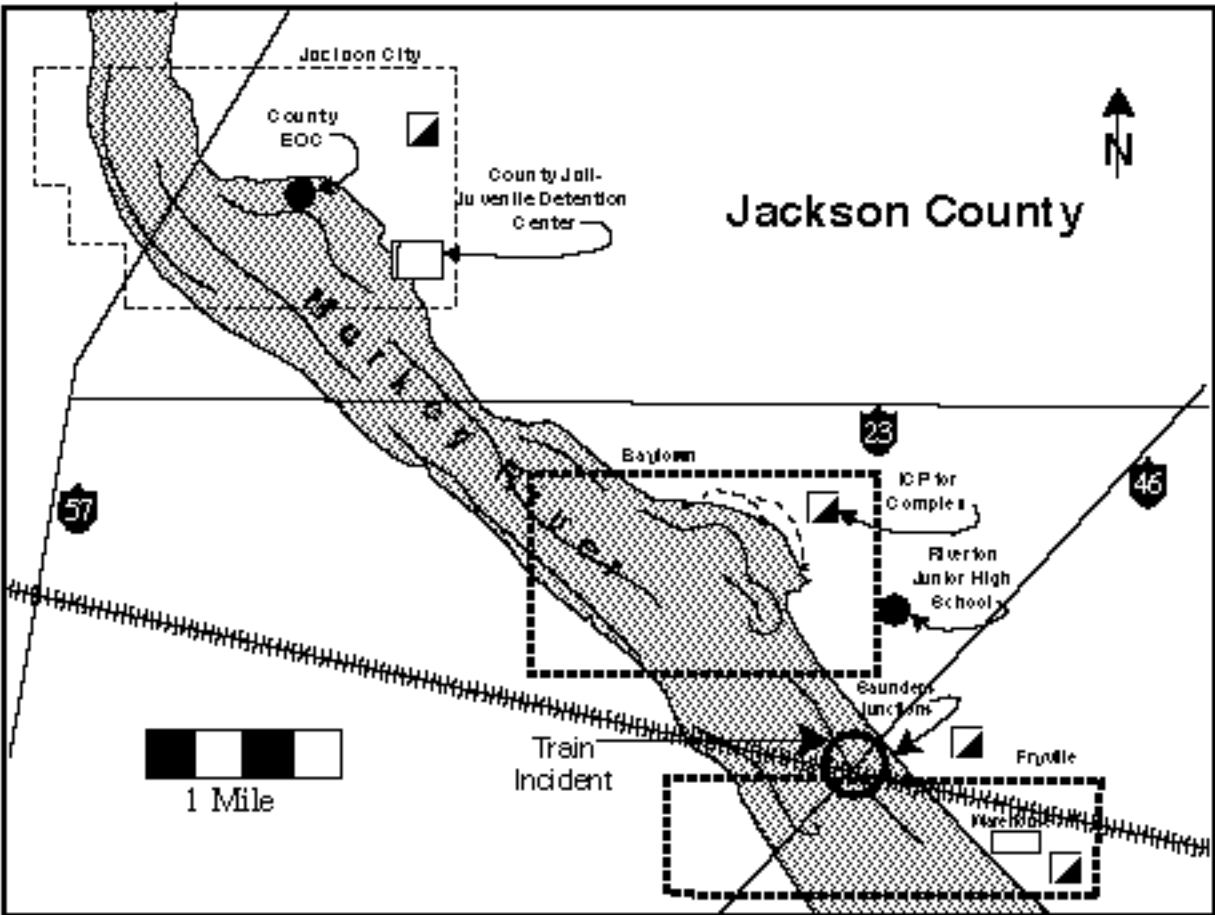
RESOURCE TABLE FOR USE IN EXERCISES

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COAST GUARD VES.				
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PRIVATE AMBULANCES				
SAR UNITS				
STATION WAGONS				
WATER TENDERS				

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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.

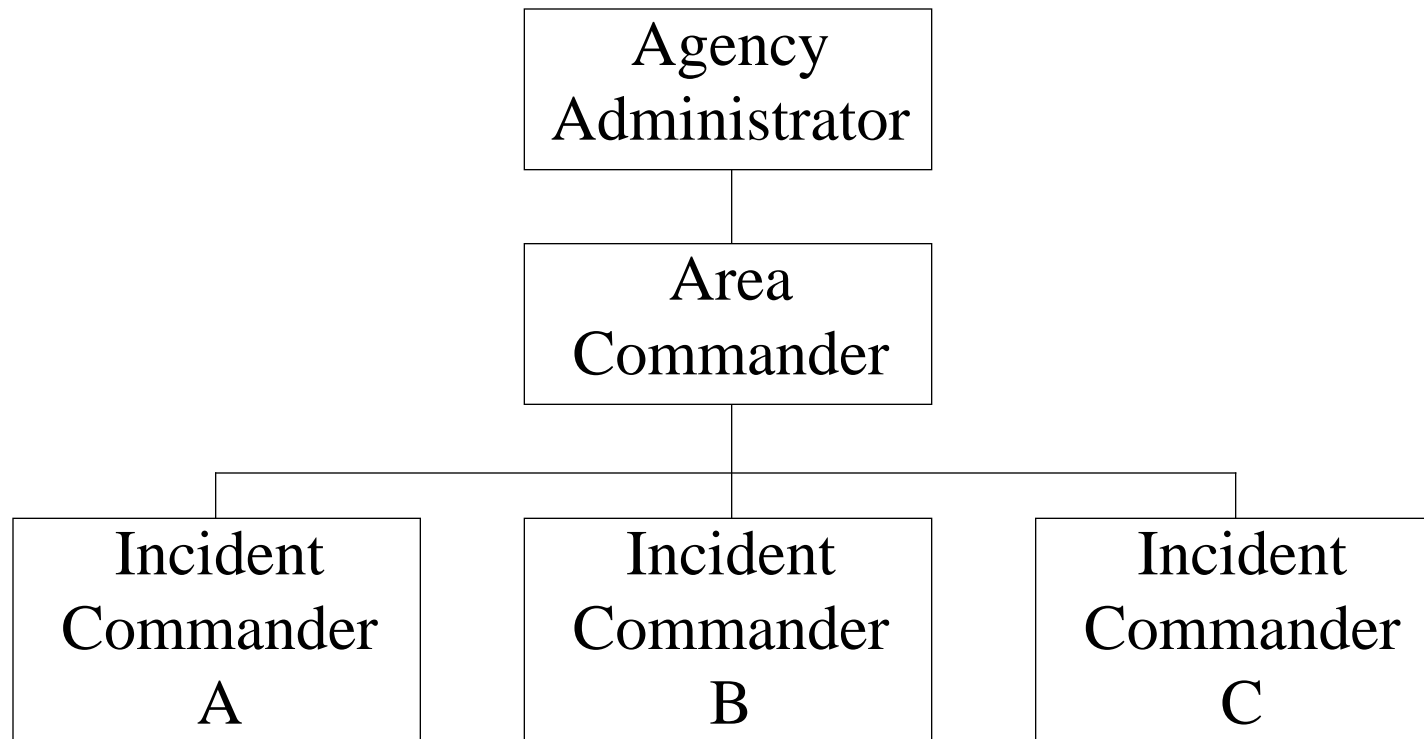| Incident Command System	Unified Command	Area Command (Unified Area Command)	Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS)	Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)
The management system used to direct all operations at the incident scene. The Incident Commander (IC) is located on scene at an Incident Command Post (ICP) at the incident scene.	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.	Established 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 multijurisdictional. Area Command may be established at an EOC facility or at some other location other than an incident ICP.	An activity or a 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.	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.

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Difference Between MAC Groups and Area Command

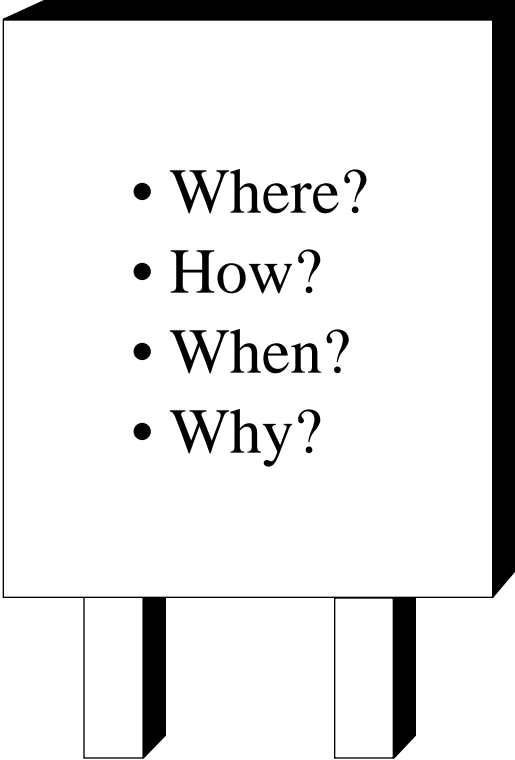| MAC Group	Area Command
Expansion of the off-site coordination and support system.	Expansion of the on-site command function of the Incident Command System.
Members are agency administrators or designees from the agencies involved or heavily committed to the incident.	Members are the most highly skilled 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

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │     Agency      │
                    │  Administrator  │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
                    ┌────────┴────────┐
                    │      Area       │
                    │    Commander    │
                    └────────┬────────┘
                             │
         ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
   ┌───────────┐       ┌───────────┐       ┌───────────┐
   │ Incident  │       │ Incident  │       │ Incident  │
   │ Commander │       │ Commander │       │ Commander │
   │     A     │       │     B     │       │     C     │
   └───────────┘       └───────────┘       └───────────┘
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15-08-I400-VG

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.

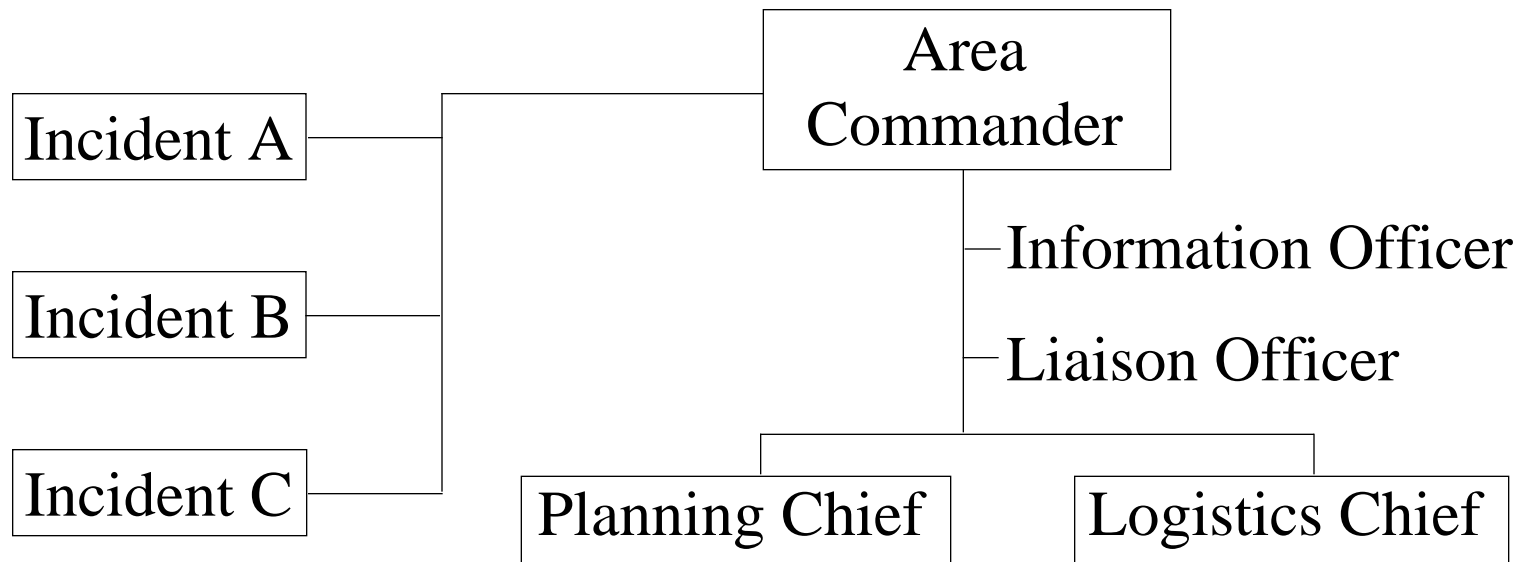# When Should Area Command be Established?

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

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                              ┌──────────────┐
                              │     Area     │
Incident A ───┐        ┌──────│  Commander   │
              │        │      └──────────────┘
              │        │              │
Incident B ───┼────────┘         Information Officer
              │
              │                   Liaison Officer
Incident C ───┘              ┌────────┴────────┐
                    ┌────────────────┐  ┌────────────────┐
                    │ Planning Chief │  │ Logistics Chief│
                    └────────────────┘  └────────────────┘
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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.

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