Incident Command System
Information Officer (IO)

Overview

User

The user of this job aid will be anyone who is assigned as Information Officer within the Incident Command System. Personnel selected for this position should possess extensive management experience and have demonstrated skills in interacting with the public and media. Prior public affairs, crisis response, or ICS experience is desirable. Personnel should be assigned to this position based on skills and ability versus rank in the organization.

When to Use

This Job Aid should be used when an incident has occurred that requires the Incident Command System to respond and the initial Information Officer has no Joint Information Center experience or training.

Major Accomplishments

Below is a list of the major accomplishments:

- Incident data gathered
- Informed public and community
- Completed analysis of public perceptions
- Section/unit demobilized

References

Below is a list of references that may be required while using this job aid:

- Oil Spill Field Operations Guide (ICS OS-420-1)
- NRT Joint Information Center Manual
- NIIMS Position Task Book for IO (NFES 2306)

Overview (cont'd)

Materials   Ensure that these materials are available to the Information Officer
during an incident, if not already provided in a unit or section specific
support kit.

☐ NRT Joint Information Center Manual
☐ Field Operations Guide
☐ ICS Forms Catalog
☐ Local telephone directory
☐ Pens/pencils/note paper/stapler/Post-it Notes, etc.
☐ Blank roster for assisting/cooperating agency and agency
   representative information
☐ Blank roster for stakeholder group and point of contact
   information
☐ Portable computer, loaded with database of area stakeholder /
   political entities
☐ Internet capabilities
☐ Computer printer
☐ Two fax machines
☐ Power strips with surge protector
☐ 8 phones/phonelines
☐ Associated Press Stylebook
☐ Dictionary
☐ Dry erase boards or 3 flip charts
☐ Poster printer or access to one

General Information Use clear text and ICS terminology (no codes) in all radio
transmissions.

All radio communications to Incident Communications Center will be
addressed: "(Incident Name) Communications"

Initial Actions

General Tasks   Below are responsibilities for the person who is first assigned as the Information Officer.

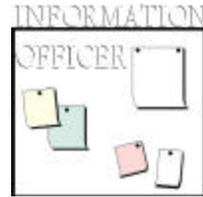| STEP	ACTION	
1.	Receive assignment	
2.	Upon arrival at the incident, check-in at designated check-in locations. Check-in locations may be found at: • Incident Command Post • Base or Camps • Staging Areas • Helibases • Division supervisors (for direct line assignments)	
3.	Receive briefing from Incident Commander • Size and complexity of incident • Expectations of the IC • Incident objectives • Agencies/organizations/stakeholders involved • Political subdivisions • Incident activities/situation • Special concerns	
4.	Begin/maintain Unit Activity Log (ICS 214)	
5.	Acquire work materials listed on page 2	
6.	Complete forms and reports required of the assigned position and send material through supervisor to Documentation Unit	
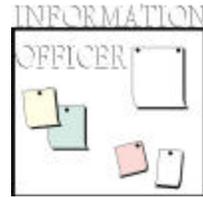
Initial Information Officer

Establish Initial Organization

The initial IO should use the job aid below to prepare for media and other inquiries early in the incident.

STEP	ACTION	
1.	Establish a dedicated phone line for inquiries from the media	
2.	Gather basic facts about the crisis – who, what, where, and when	
3.	Use this information to answer inquiries	
4.	Activate the following positions as needed: Inquiries Assistant Incident Data Assistant News Release Assistant	
5.	Select a location for the Joint Information Center. The location should meet the following criteria: • Enough space for 12 people to work • A minimum of eight AC outlets or power strips used within fire codes • Access to a copier • Locate close to the Incident Command Post	
6.	Call for more assistance, preferably people trained in Joint Information Center and Incident Command System operations. Make requests for additional resources through the Logistics Section	

Assistant to the IO

Inquiries Assistant

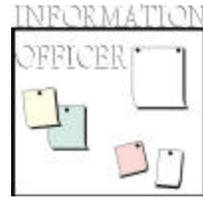The first person assigned to assist the Initial IO will respond to telephone requests for information.

STEP	ACTION	
1.	Use the dedicated phone to answer calls from the media	
2.	Record names and phone numbers of who called	
3.	Use approved news release and information from Incident Data Assistant to answer media calls	
4.	If a question is asked that you cannot answer, write down the question, who asked it and their number so it can be answered later	

Incident Data Assistant

The second person assigned to assist the Initial IO will gather incident data.

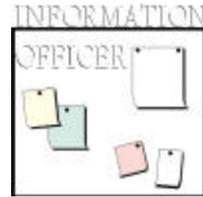| STEP	ACTION	
1.	Gather information about the incident	
2.	Provide this information to the assistants handling inquiries and written news releases	

Assistant to the IO (Cont'd)

News Release Assistant

The third person assigned to assist the Initial IO will prepare written news releases.

| STEP	ACTION	
1.	Assemble the facts into two or three sentences that answer: • who • what • when • where	
2.	List the remaining facts and information in bullet form *Example: What agencies are responding, type and amount of equipment* **NOTE:** The release should be only one page in length. If there is a need for additional information about specific topics then a separate fact sheet should be done.	
3.	Spell check and edit the release and give it to the IO for approval	
4.	Give approved release to Inquiries Assistant and Incident Commander	
5.	Fax to media and other requestors	

Joint Information Center (JIC) Established

General Tasks The Information Officer appointed by the Unified Command to establish and manage a Joint Information Center should use this job aid.

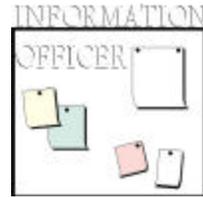| STEP	ACTION	
1.	Select the most experienced person to be the Information Officer, when experienced help arrives	
2.	Receive debrief from Initial Information Officer	
3.	Relieve Initial Information Officer	
4.	Appoint most experienced assistant as JIC Coordinator	
5.	Appoint an experienced assistant as Internal Unit Leader	
5.	Appoint an experienced assistant as External Unit Leader	
6.	Use the Joint Information Center Manual to ensure all Information Officer responsibilities are being performed	

Gather incident data

Inform the public

Analyze public perception
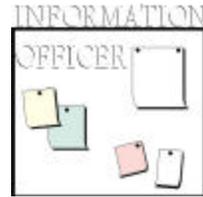
Speaker Preparation   This job aid should be used by the IO, or one of the IO's assistants, to prepare personnel for speaking to the general public and media during phone interviews, on-camera interviews, news conferences, or town meetings.

| STEP	ACTION	
1.	Prepare a statement of commitment, empathy or concern to use as an introduction. Put yourself into the shoes of your audience and address the issues about which they are most concerned. *Example: "As you know we are faced with a challenging safety, environmental, economic event. All the involved parties, under the coordination of the U.S. Coast Guard, are committed to working together to expeditiously resolve this incident. Public safety for both the local citizens as well as the cleanup workers ..., etc.* **NOTE:** From this point on, sentences should be short - 7 to 12 words in length.	
2.	Prepare two to three key messages you want to address and incorporate them into a bridge between Step 1 and the body of your statement. *Example: "We are removing oil from the environment, protecting sensitive areas and rehabilitating oiled wildlife.*	

Informed Public and Community (cont'd)

Speaker Preparation (cont'd)

The job aid used to prepare personnel for speaking appearances is continued below.

STEP	ACTION	
3.	Repeat your first key message and state two to four facts that support it *Example: "We are removing oil from the environment. Our skimmers on the water have removed over 500 gallons today. Workers with sorbent pads are combing the beaches. In total, we've collected more than 1 million gallons.*	
4.	Repeat Step 3 for other key messages you may have prepared	
5.	Write a bridge between the body of your statement and your conclusion – repeat your one to three key messages again; should be similar or exactly the same as the bridge in Step 2	
6.	State future actions as a conclusion	
	Note: The public remember what you looked like and how well you spoke. What you said has the least impact. Physical presence: 60%, Voice, how you speak: 30%, Words, what you said: 10%. Your presence has a great effect on how the public receives your presentation.	
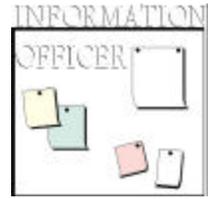
Worksheet for Information Officer

Speaker Preparation Job Aid

All written responses for steps 1 - 6 from page one should be put on this sheet.

1. Statement _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

2. Key Message(s) _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

3. – 4. Key Message(s) with Supporting Facts _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

5. Repeat Key Message(s) _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

6. Future Actions _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
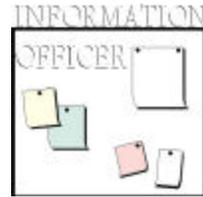   _____

Section/Unit Demobilized

Tasks   Below are demobilization responsibilities applicable to all personnel
                             assigned to this section/unit.

STEP	ACTION	
1.	Receive Demobilization Plan from Demobilization Unit Leader/Planning Section Chief	
2.	Brief subordinates regarding demobilization Debrief appropriate personnel prior to departing incident • Incident Commander • Planning Section Chief • Logistics Section Chief • Agency representatives	
3.	Supervise demobilization of unit, including storage of supplies	
4.	Provide Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished	
5.	Forward all Section/Unit documentation to Documentation Unit	
6.	Complete Check-out Sheet	

Information Exchange Matrix

Information Exchange Matrix

Inputs/Outputs   Below is an input/output matrix to assist the Information Officer with obtaining information from other ICS positions and providing information to ICS positions.

MEET With:	WHEN:	IO OBTAINS:	IO PROVIDES:
Incident Commander	Immediately after check-in Command Staff meeting As needed for news release authority	Initial incident data Appointment of best person to be IO Command messages(s) News release authority	Level of public interest Public information strategy Speaker preparation News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips Interview, news brief and town meeting schedules
Planning Section Chief	Planning Meeting	Incident situation status data continuously Daily meeting schedule Copy of the IAP	Interview, news brief and town meeting schedules
Demobilization Unit Leader	Standing down Joint Information Center		Unit Log (ICS 214)
Operations Section Chief	Operations Briefing As needed	Incident situation data Air/vessel transportation for JIC personnel, media, community and distinguished visitors to incident site	News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips Names of people needing air/vessel transportation

Information Exchange Matrix (cont'd)

MEET With:	WHEN:	IO OBTAINS:	IO PROVIDES:
Safety Officer	Initial incident brief Command Staff meeting Operations Briefing JIC personnel, media, community and distinguished visitors need access to incident site	Briefing for JIC personnel, media, community and distinguished visitors Personal protective equipment when going on-site	News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips Roster of on-site visitors escorted by JIC personnel Escorts for media, community and distinguished visitors to incident site
Liaison Officer	Command Staff meeting Operations Briefing Planning Meeting As needed	Names and numbers of additional agencies, organizations and stakeholders to be added to JIC dissemination list	News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips Assist with distinguished visitor escorts Names of additional agencies, organizations and stake holders for incorporation into incident
Situation Unit Leader	Planning Meeting	Future projections for incident000000000.	

Information Exchange Matrix (cont'd)

MEET With:	WHEN:	IO OBTAINS:	IO PROVIDES:
Logistics Section Chief	Operations Briefing As needed	JIC materials (refer to IO job aid) Specialized clothing Enough space for at least 12 people to work Contract assistance for: • Newspaper, television and radio, clipping service • Procurement, film processing , video dubbing service, and audio visual support	News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips
Finance/Admin Section Chief	Operations brief As needed	Travel order numbers and accounting data	News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips
Response Personnel	Initial brief Operations brief As needed	Spokespeople at news conference, town meetings and individual interviews with media	Speaker preparation News releases, fact sheets, video, photos and news clips