
Unit 5: ICS Organization – Part 1

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Objectives

At the end of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
 - Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
 - Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.
-

Scope

- Unit Introduction
 - Unit Objectives
 - ICS Structure
 - Management Functions
 - Incident Commander
 - ICS Sections
 - Knowledge Review
 - Use of Position Titles
 - Incident Commander
 - Audio Clip: Incident Commander Role
 - Audio Clip: Incident Commander Responsibilities
 - Changing Incident Commanders
 - Knowledge Review
 - Expanding the Organization
 - Command Staff
 - Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - Safety Officer
 - Liaison Officer
 - Knowledge Review
 - Activity: Command Staff Roles
 - Summary
-

Methodology

The instructors will outline the objectives for this unit, and will then overview the ICS structure. Instructors will explain the five major management functions, and that the only one always staffed is the Incident Commander. The instructors will review the use of sections in ICS, and then ask participants two questions to ensure comprehension.

Next, the instructors will explain the role of the Incident Commander. The participants will listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his role. Next, the instructors will summarize the Incident Commander's responsibilities. The participants will then listen to another audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about responsibilities. After the audio clip, the instructors will introduce the concept of selecting and changing Incident Commanders.

After a Knowledge Review, the instructors will transition to a review of expanding the organization, and the Command Staff. The presentation outlines the responsibilities of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer, and uses an audio clip of each

discussing their roles. To check for comprehension about the Command Staff, the participants will read position descriptions and identify which member of the Command Staff is being discussed.

The instructors will then lead an activity in which the participants apply the roles of the Command Staff to a scenario. To summarize the unit, the instructors will review the unit objectives and then transition to Unit 6.

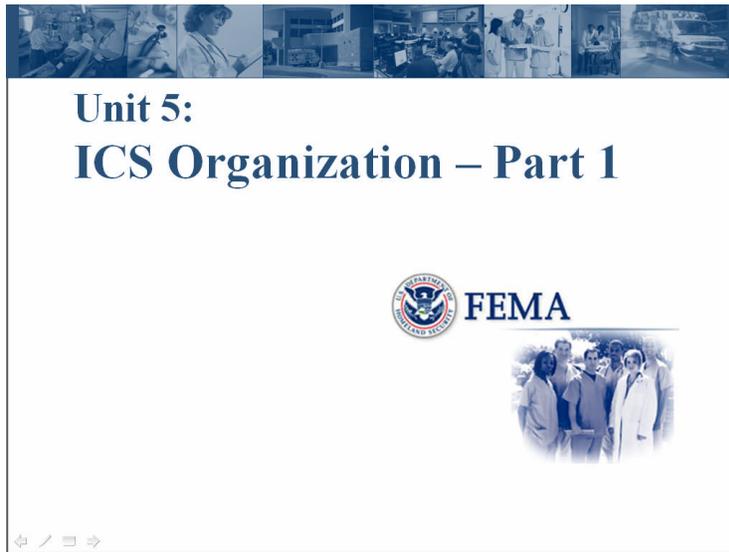
Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

| Topic | Time |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Unit Objectives | 1 minutes |
| ICS Structure | 4 minutes |
| Use of Position Titles | 5 minutes |
| Incident Commander | 10 minutes |
| Knowledge Review | 5 minutes |
| Expanding the Organization | 5 minutes |
| Command Staff | 10 minutes |
| Activity: Command Staff Roles | 15 minutes |
| Summary | 5 minutes |
| Total Time | 1 hour |



Visual 5.1



Visual Description: Unit Title Slide

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that this unit provides an overview of the role of the five major ICS management functions, the Incident Commander, and the Command Staff.



Visual 5.2

Unit Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.



Visual Description: Unit Objectives

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that by the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.

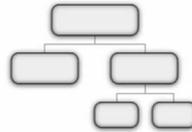


Visual 5.3

ICS Structure

In the ICS organization:

- There is no correlation with the administrative structure of any single agency or organization.
- Someone who serves as a Department Head every day may not hold that title when deployed under an ICS structure.



Visual Description: ICS Structure

Instructor Notes

Explain that the ICS structure is unique but easy to understand. There is no correlation between the ICS structure and the administrative structure of any single agency or organization. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and organizational structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past.

For example, someone who serves as a Department Head every day may not hold that level or area of responsibility when deployed under an ICS structure.



Visual 5.4

Performance of Management Functions

Every incident or event requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for.

Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions will still apply.



Visual Description: Performance of Management Functions

Instructor Notes

Explain that every incident or event requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for.

Emphasize that regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions will still apply.



Visual 5.5

Five Major Management Functions

- **Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, and has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- **Operations:** Conducts tactical operations and directs all tactical resources.
- **Planning:** Prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status and documentation.
- **Logistics:** Provides support, resources, and all other services needed to meet the operational objectives.
- **Finance/Administration:** Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.



Visual Description: Five Major Management Functions

Instructor Notes

Explain that there are five major management functions that are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops. These functions apply whether you are handling a routine emergency, organizing for a major non-emergency event, or managing a response to a major disaster. The five major management functions are:

- **Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities, and has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- **Operations:** Conducts tactical operations (such as patient care or clean-up) to carry out the plan. Develops the defined objectives and organization, and directs all tactical resources.
- **Planning:** Prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status, and maintains documentation for incident records.
- **Logistics:** Provides support, resources, and all other services needed to meet the operational objectives.
- **Finance/Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.



Visual 5.6

Organizational Structure – Incident Commander

- On small incidents and events, the Incident Commander may accomplish all five management functions.
- The Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed on an incident.



- The hospital or healthcare system's Director or CEO is referred to as the Agency Executive, and this person delegates authority over the incident to the Incident Commander.



Visual Description: Organizational Structure – Incident Commander

Instructor Notes

Explain that on small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all five management functions. In fact, the Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed on an incident regardless of its nature. However, large incidents or events may require that these functions be set up as separate Sections within the organization.

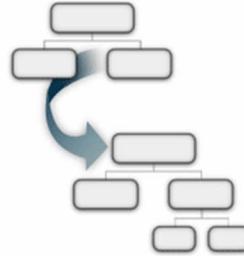
Tell participants that within the ICS organizational structure, the hospital or healthcare system's Director or CEO is referred to as the Agency Executive. The Agency Executive delegates authority over the incident to the Incident Commander, while he or she manages the organization's day-to-day administration. It is important that the Incident Commander manage the incident independently, but still periodically communicate incident status to the Agency Executive.



Visual 5.7

Organizational Structure – ICS Sections

- ICS expands or contract to meet the needs of the incident, so each of the primary ICS Sections can be subdivided as needed.
- The person at the top of the organization is responsible until the authority is delegated to another person. The Incident Commander performs all functions until they are delegated.



Visual Description: Organizational Structure – ICS Sections

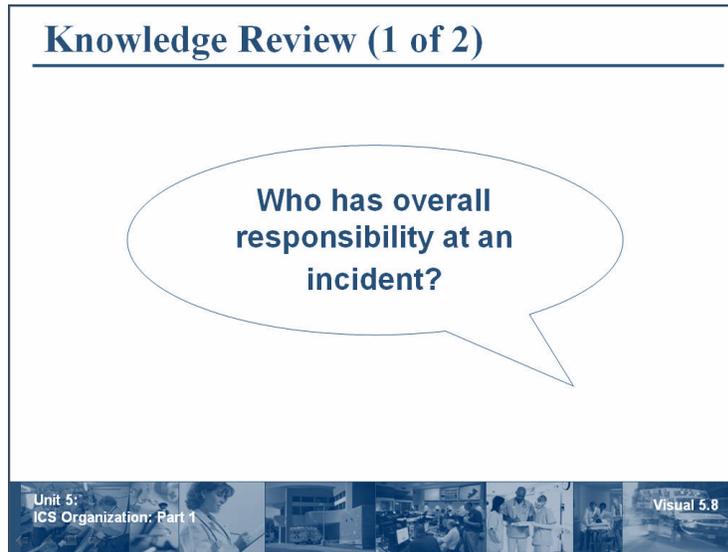
Instructor Notes

Explain that each of the primary ICS Sections may be subdivided as needed. The ICS organization has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident.

Explain that a basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible until the authority is delegated to another person. Thus, on smaller incidents when these additional persons are not required, the Incident Commander will personally accomplish or manage all aspects of the incident organization.



Visual 5.8



Visual Description: Answer the question below: Who has overall responsibility at an incident?

Instructor Notes

Ask the participants the following question:

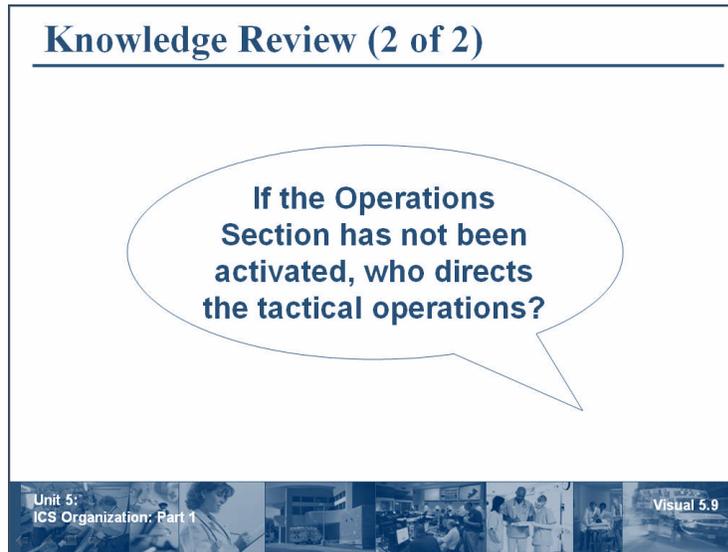
Who has overall responsibility at an incident?

Allow the participants time to respond.

Review the correct answer: the Incident Commander has overall responsibility at an incident.



Visual 5.9



Visual Description: Answer the question below: If the Operations Section has not been activated, who directs the tactical operations?

Instructor Notes

Ask the participants the following question:

If the Operations Section has not been activated, who directs the tactical operations?

Allow the participants time to respond.

Review the correct answer: the Incident Commander has responsibility for all aspects of an incident until the authority is delegated.



Visual 5.10

Use of Position Titles

Using specific ICS position titles:

- Provides a common standard for all users.
- Helps to ensure that qualified individuals fill positions.
- Standardizes communication and requests for qualified personnel.



Visual Description: Use of Position Titles

Instructor Notes

Explain that to maintain span of control, the ICS organization can be divided into many levels of supervision. At each level, individuals with primary responsibility positions have distinct titles. Using specific ICS position titles serves three important purposes:

- Titles provide a common standard for all users. For example, if one agency uses the title Branch Chief, another Branch Manager, etc., this lack of consistency can cause confusion at the incident.
- The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by seniority.
- Standardized position titles are useful when requesting qualified personnel. For example, in deploying personnel, it is important to know if the positions needed are Unit Leaders, clerks, etc.

Tell participants that the next screen presents the ICS position titles.



Visual 5.11

ICS Supervisory Position Titles

Titles for all ICS supervisory levels are shown in the table below.

| Organizational Level | Title | Support Position |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Incident Command | Incident Commander | Deputy |
| Command Staff | Officer | Assistant |
| General Staff (Section) | Chief | Deputy |
| Branch | Director | Deputy |
| Division/Group | Supervisor | N/A |
| Unit | Leader | Manager |
| Strike Team/Task Force | Leader | Single Resource Boss |

Unit 5:
ICS Organization: Part 1

Visual 5.11

Visual Description: ICS Supervisory Position Titles

Instructor Notes

Explain that the titles for all supervisory levels of the organization are shown in the table below.

| Organizational Level | Title | Support Position |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Incident Command | Incident Commander | Deputy |
| Command Staff | Officer | Assistant |
| General Staff (Section) | Chief | Deputy |
| Branch | Director | Deputy |
| Division/Group | Supervisor | N/A |
| Unit | Leader | Manager |
| Strike Team/Task Force | Leader | Single Resource Boss |



Visual 5.12

Incident Commander Role

Listen to the Incident Commander talk about his role.



Incident Commander

 Click icon to play.

Audio Key Points:
The Incident Commander:

- Provides overall leadership for incident response.
- Manages incident objectives.
- Delegates authority to others.
- Takes general direction from the accountable agency executive.

Unit 5: ICS Organization: Part 1 Visual 5.12

Visual Description: Incident Commander Role

Instructor Notes

Explain that the Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident by objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics. The Incident Commander must be fully briefed and should have a written delegation of authority. Initially, assigning tactical resources and overseeing operations will be under the direct supervision of the Incident Commander.

Explain that personnel assigned by the Incident Commander have the authority of their assigned positions, regardless of the rank they hold within their respective organizations.

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his role.

To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 30 seconds.

Transcript: Incident Commander's Overall Role

My job is to provide the overall leadership for incident response. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. Like any other organization, I have bosses too. I take general direction and receive my delegation of authority from the accountable agency executive. It's important to note that the agency executive may or may not include my real-life boss.



Visual 5.13

Incident Commander Responsibilities

Listen to the Incident Commander talk about his responsibilities.



Incident Commander

Click icon to play.

Audio Key Points:

The Incident Commander:

- Is responsible for all activities and functions until delegated and assigned to staff.
- Assesses need for staff.
- Establishes incident objectives.
- Directs staff to develop the Incident Action Plan.

Unit 5: ICS Organization: Part 1

Visual 5.13

Visual Description: Incident Commander Responsibilities

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his responsibilities.

To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 44 seconds.

Transcript: Incident Commander's Responsibilities

As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I staff them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long-term, I will need more staff. In addition, I may decide that I need a Deputy.

Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the Agency Executive. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. During a complex incident, I'll direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. The benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need.



Visual 5.14

Incident Commander Responsibilities

The Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other organizations participating in the incident.



Visual Description: Incident Commander Responsibilities (Continued)

Instructor Notes

Explain that in addition to having overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other organizations participating in the incident.

Emphasize that the Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies, if applicable, from the same organization or from other organizations or jurisdictions. Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.



Visual 5.15

Changing Incident Commanders

Command may change to meet the needs of the incident when incidents:

- Expand or contract.
- Change in jurisdiction or discipline.
- Become more or less complex.



Remember: Formal transfer of command always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander and notification to all personnel that a change in command is taking place.

Unit 5:
ICS Organization: Part 1

Visual 5.15

Visual Description: Changing Incident Commanders

Instructor Notes

Review the following key points with participants:

- As incidents expand or contract, change in jurisdiction or discipline, or become more or less complex, command may change to meet the needs of the incident.
- Rank, grade, and seniority are not the factors used to select the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response.
- As you learned in Lesson 2, formal transfer of command at an incident always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander and notification to all personnel that a change in command is taking place.
- It is normal for a transfer of command, along with a change in ICS staff, to occur when there is a shift change, or when an operational period ends.



Visual 5.16

Knowledge Review

Instructions: Read the scenario and then answer the question below.

Scenario: As the incident became more complex, command was transferred to a more experienced Incident Commander, which required notification to all personnel that a transfer in command was taking place.

What other action was required when the transfer of command took place?



Visual Description: Knowledge Review

Instructor Notes

Review the following scenario with the participants:

Scenario: As the incident became more complex, command was transferred to a more experienced Incident Commander, which required notification to all personnel that a transfer in command was taking place.

Ask participants the following question:

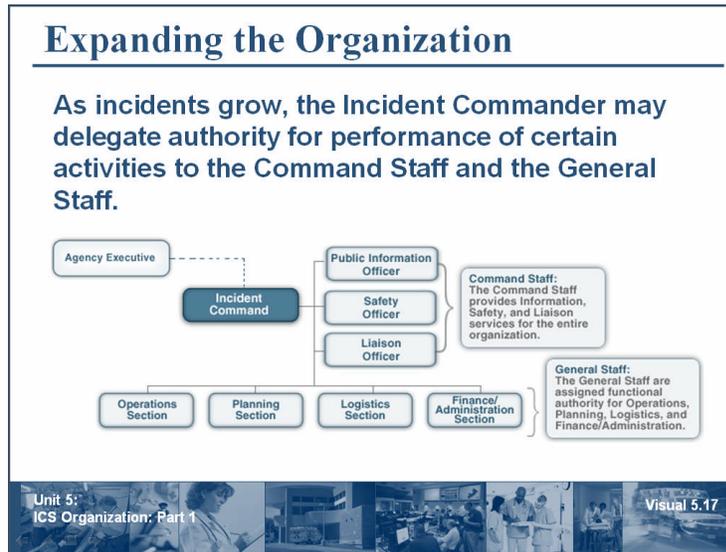
What other action was required when the transfer of command took place?

Allow time for a response.

Review the correct response: a transfer of command briefing.



Visual 5.17



Visual Description: Expanding the Organization

Instructor Notes

Explain that as incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff. The Incident Commander will add positions only as needed.

Explain that the **Command Staff** provides Information, Safety, and Liaison services for the entire organization. The **General Staff** are assigned functional authority for Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.



Visual 5.18

Command Staff

It may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate a Command Staff, which may include:

- *Public Information Officer* – the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media.
- *Safety Officer* – monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.
- *Liaison Officer* – the primary contact for supporting organizations that are assisting at an incident, but are not participating within the ICS structure.



Visual Description: Command Staff

Instructor Notes

Explain that depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to provide information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, these personnel make up the Command Staff and consist of the:

- **Public Information Officer**, who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event.
- **Safety Officer**, who monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.
- **Liaison Officer**, who serves as the primary contact for supporting organizations that are assisting at an incident, but are **not** participating within the ICS structure.

Emphasize that the Command Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.



Visual 5.19



Visual Description: Public Information Officer (PIO)

Instructor Notes

Explain that the Public Information Officer:

- Advises Incident Commander on information dissemination and media relations. The Incident Commander approves information that the PIO releases.
- Obtains information from and provides information to the Planning Section.
- Obtains information from and provides information to community and media.

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which a Public Information Officer talks about her responsibilities. To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 50 seconds.

Transcript: Public Information Officer

I report directly to the Incident Commander and advise him or her on issues related to information dissemination and media relations. I am the primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident and our response to it. I serve both an external audience through the media, and an internal audience including both incident staff and agency personnel. It's very important for me to coordinate with other public information staff to ensure that we do not issue confusing or conflicting information. Since the Planning Section is gathering intelligence and other information, I get a lot of my information from them. Because I get a lot of information from the community, the media, and others, I also provide information to the Planning Section Chief and the Incident Commander.

Accurate information is essential. In the end, the Incident Commander will approve all information that I release. During a complex incident, I will probably need several Assistant Public Information Officers to help me.



Visual 5.20



Visual Description: Safety Officer

Instructor Notes

The Safety Officer:

- Advises Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety.
- Works with Operations to ensure safety of field personnel.
- Ensures safety of all incident personnel.

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which a Safety Officer talks about his responsibilities. To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 60 seconds.

Transcript: Safety Officer

My job is to make sure everyone does the job safely and gets home in one piece. I advise the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety, but I would like to emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility. I work very closely with Operations to make sure that our people in the field are as safe as possible under the circumstances, including wearing appropriate protective equipment and implementing the safest tactical options. I conduct risk analyses and implement safety measures. I normally do this through the planning process, but I do have the authority to stop any unsafe activity that I observe. While a lot of my attention is focused on Operations, I am also concerned about safety for the rest of the organization. I minimize other employee risks by promoting safe driving habits, eliminating tripping hazards, ensuring safe food handling, things like that. I spend a lot of time out of the command post looking at what's going on. During a complex incident, I will need quite a few assistants to be my eyes and ears.



Visual 5.21

Liaison Officer



Liaison Officer

Assists Incident Commander by serving as point of contact for agency or organization representatives who are helping to support the operation.



Incident Commander



Click icon to play.

Provides briefings to and answers questions from supporting organizations and agencies.



Agency Representative

Unit 5:
ICS Organization: Part 1
Visual 5.21

Visual Description: Liaison Officer

Instructor Notes

The Liaison Officer:

- Advises Incident Commander by serving as point of contact for agency representatives who are helping to support the operation.
- Provides briefings to and answers questions from supporting agencies.

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which a Liaison Officer talks about her responsibilities. To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 1:01.

Transcript: Liaison Officer

I'm the go between. I assist the Incident Commander by serving as the point of contact for any supporting organization or agency representatives that are assisting at the incident. My job is to remain visible on the incident to all incoming cooperating and assisting agencies, and other healthcare organizations. I provide briefings to organization and agency representatives, and work with them to address their questions and concerns about the operation. I respond to requests from incident personnel for contacts among the assisting and cooperating agencies and organizations. I also monitor incident operations in order to identify any current or potential problems between supporting organizations. I participate in planning meetings. During a complex incident, I may have a lot of organization and agency representatives, but can usually handle the job myself.



Visual 5.22

Knowledge Review (1 of 3)

Instructions: Read the job description below and determine which member of the Command Staff is being described.



Job description:

- Advises Incident Commander on issues related to information dissemination and media relations.
- Serves as primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident.
- Serves external and internal audiences.
- Obtains information from Planning Section.



Visual Description: Knowledge Review (1 of 3)

Instructor Notes

Review the job description with the participants.

Job description:

- Advises Incident Commander on issues related to information dissemination and media relations.
- Serves as primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident.
- Serves external and internal audiences.
- Obtains information from Planning Section.

Ask participants the following question:

Which member of the Command Staff performs these functions?

Correct answer: Public Information Officer.



Visual 5.23

Knowledge Review (2 of 3)

Instructions: Read the job description below and determine which member of the Command Staff is being described.



Job description:

- Makes sure everyone does their job safely.
- Advises Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety.
- Conducts risk analyses and implements safety measures.
- Promotes safe work habits.



Visual Description: Knowledge Review (2 of 3)

Instructor Notes

Review the job description with the participants.

Job description:

- Makes sure everyone does their job safely.
- Advises Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety.
- Conducts risk analyses and implements safety measures.
- Promotes safe work habits.

Ask participants the following question:

Which member of the Command Staff performs these functions?

Correct answer: Safety Officer.



Visual 5.24

Knowledge Review (3 of 3)

Instructions: Read the job description below and determine which member of the Command Staff is being described.



Job description:

- Serves as point of contact for any supporting organization or agency representative.
- Identifies problems between supporting organizations.
- Participates in planning meetings.



Visual Description: Knowledge Review (3 of 3)

Instructor Notes

Review the job description with the participants.

Job description:

- Serves as point of contact for any supporting organization or agency representative.
- Identifies problems between supporting organizations.
- Participates in planning meetings.

Ask participants the following question:

Which member of the Command Staff performs these functions?

Correct answer: Liaison Officer.



Visual 5.25

Activity: Command Staff Roles (1 of 2)

Instructions:

1. Working as a team, review the scenario presented on the next slide.
2. Identify which Command Staff positions would be assigned.
3. Next, if you were the Incident Commander, what specific activities would you delegate to each Command Staff member?
4. Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 10 minutes.



Visual Description: Activity: Command Staff Roles (1 of 2)

Instructor Notes

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to illustrate how ICS can be used to address incident management issues.

Instructions: Follow the steps below to complete this activity:

1. Working as a team, review the scenario presented on the next page.
2. Identify which Command Staff positions would be assigned.
3. As Incident Commander, identify the specific activities that would be delegated to each Command Staff member.
4. Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 10 minutes.



Visual 5.26

Activity: Command Staff Roles (2 of 2)

Scenario: An unexpected flash flood has struck a small community. As a result:

- Homes, schools, and the business district are being evacuated.
- Critical infrastructure has been damaged including contamination of the water supply, downed power lines, and damaged roads.
- Mutual aid is arriving from several surrounding hospitals.
- Media representatives are arriving at the scene.



Visual Description: Activity: Command Staff Roles (2 of 2)

Instructor Notes

Review the following scenario that was first presented in Unit 2:

An unexpected flash flood has struck a small community. As a result:

- Homes, schools, and the business district are being evacuated.
- Critical infrastructure has been damaged including contamination of the water supply, downed power lines, and damaged roads.
- Mutual aid is arriving from several surrounding hospitals.
- Media representatives are arriving at the scene.

Debrief: Monitor the time. When 10 minutes have passed, ask the spokesperson from each group to present their command staff assigned and the activities that are delegated. If not mentioned by the group, add the following potential activities:

- **Public Information Officer:** Work with the media to ensure that the public knows where and how to seek medical assistance. Arrange a press briefing in advance of the next news cycle.
- **Liaison Officer:** Coordinate with communities and organizations that are providing mutual aid.
- **Safety Officer:** Ensure the safety of incident personnel from contaminated waste, electrical hazards, and fatigue.



Visual 5.27

Objectives Review

You should now be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.



Visual Description: Objectives Review

Instructor Notes

Tell participants that they should now be able to:

- Describe the five major management functions in ICS.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.