

# Unit 3: Basic Features of ICS



FEMA



# Unit Objectives (1 of 2)

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**Describe the basic features of the Incident Command System (ICS), including:**

- **Common terminology.**
- **Modular organization.**
- **Management by objectives.**
- **Reliance on an Incident Action Plan (IAP).**
- **Chain of command and unity of command.**
- **Unified Command.**
- **Manageable span of control.**

# Unit Objectives (2 of 2)

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**Describe the basic features of the Incident Command System (ICS), including:**

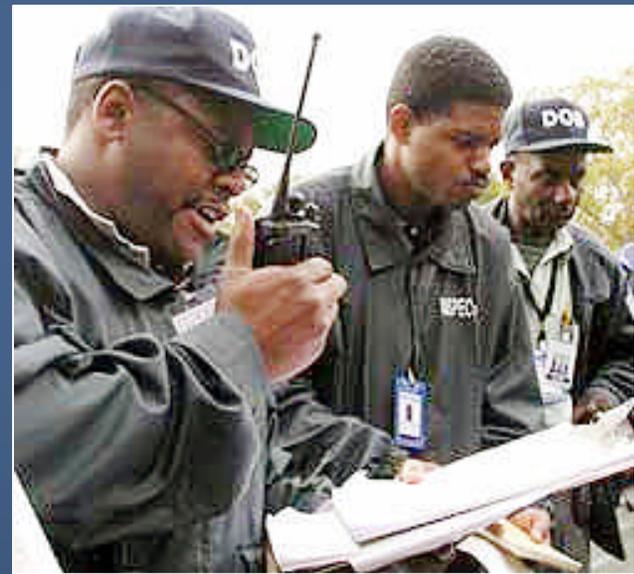
- **Predesignated incident locations and facilities.**
- **Resource management.**
- **Information and intelligence management.**
- **Integrated communications.**
- **Transfer of command.**
- **Accountability.**
- **Mobilization.**

# Common Terminology

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Using common terminology helps to define:

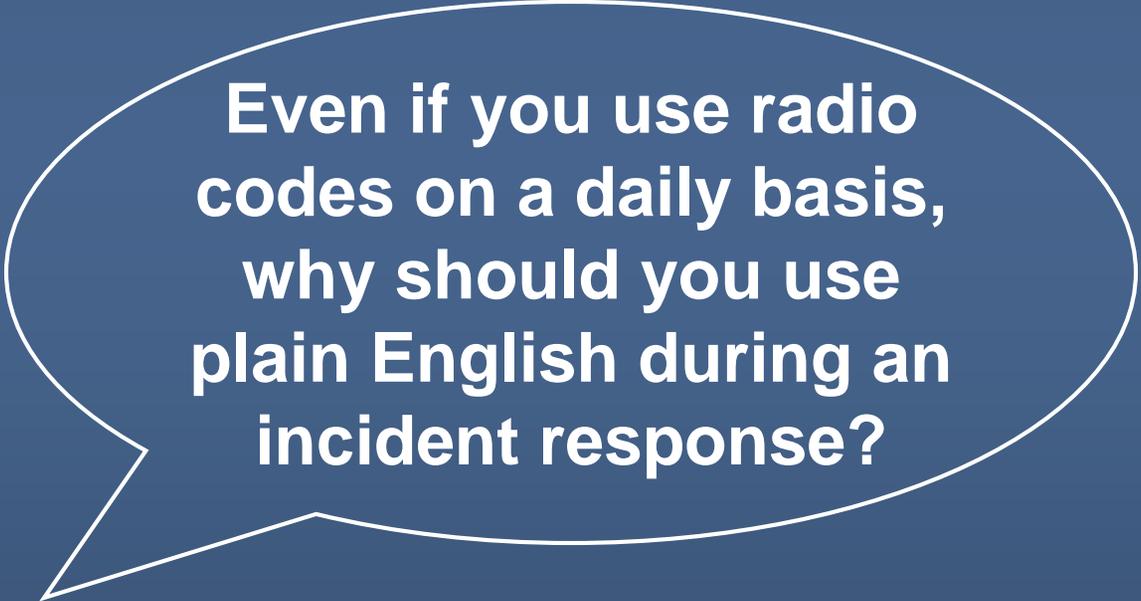
- Organizational functions.
- Incident facilities.
- Resource descriptions.
- Position titles.



# Use of Plain English

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- **Communications should be in plain English or clear text.**
- **Do not use radio codes, agency-specific codes, or jargon.**



**Even if you use radio codes on a daily basis, why should you use plain English during an incident response?**

# Why Plain English?

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**EMT = Emergency Medical Treatment**

**EMT = Emergency Medical Technician**

**EMT = Emergency Management Team**

**EMT = Eastern Mediterranean Time (GMT+0200)**

**EMT = Effective Methods Team**

**EMT = Effects Management Tool**

**EMT = El Monte, CA (airport code)**

**EMT = Electron Microscope Tomography**

**EMT = Email Money Transfer**

# Common Terminology: Example

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Which is the example of common terminology?

**A.**

This is Unit 1, we  
have a 10-37, Code 2.

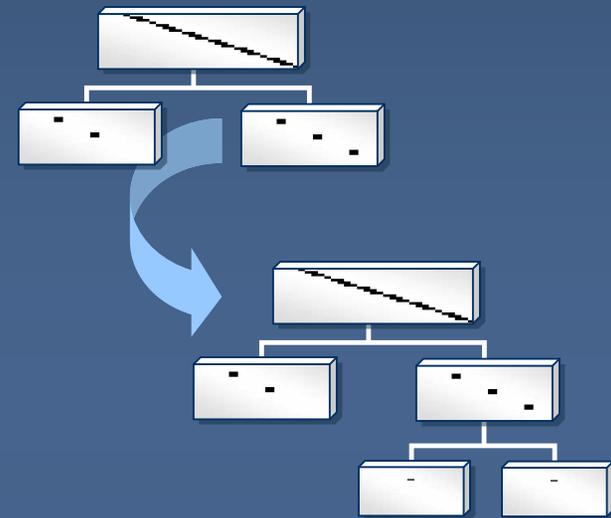
**B.**

Unit 1, the flood waters  
are rising and we need  
additional resources for  
sandbagging.

# Modular Organization (1 of 2)

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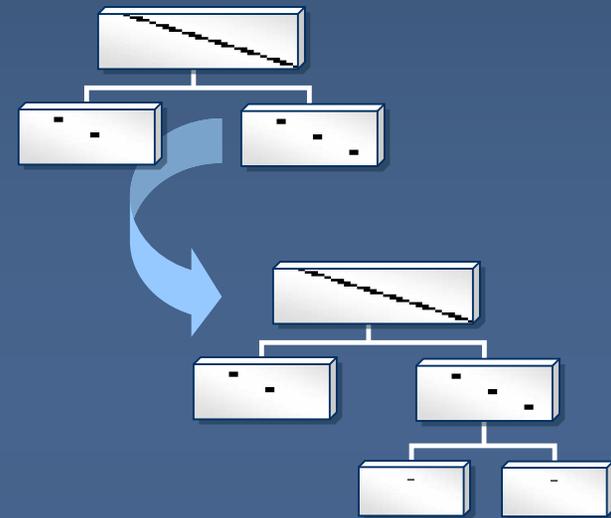
- Develops in a top-down, modular fashion.
- Is based on the size and complexity of the incident.
- Is based on the hazard environment created by the incident.



# Modular Organization (2 of 2)

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- Incident objectives determine the organizational size.
- Only functions/positions that are necessary will be filled.
- Each element must have a person in charge.



# Management by Objectives

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- ICS is managed by objectives.
- Objectives are communicated throughout the entire ICS organization through the incident planning process.



# Management by Objectives: Steps

The steps for establishing incident objectives include:

- Step 1: Understand agency policy and direction.
- Step 2: Assess incident situation.
- Step 3: Establish incident objectives.
- Step 4: Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
- Step 5: Perform tactical direction.
- Step 6: Provide necessary followup.

# Overall Priorities

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Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:

**#1: Life Saving**

**#2: Incident Stabilization**

**#3: Property Preservation**



# Activity: Objectives (1 of 2)

## Instructions:

- Working as a team, review the scenario presented on the next visual.
- Based on the information provided, identify the top three incident management objectives. Write these objectives on chart paper.
- Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 5 minutes.

# Activity: Objectives (2 of 2)

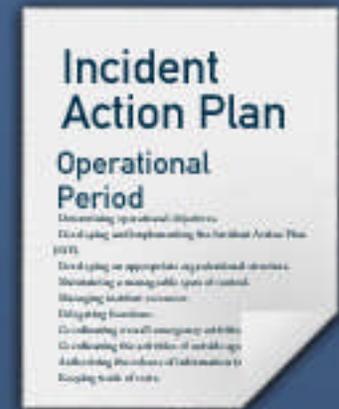
**Scenario: An unexpected flash flood has struck a small community. As a result:**

- Homes, schools, and the business district have been evacuated.
- Critical infrastructure has been damaged including contamination of the water supply, downed power lines, and damaged roads.
- Perimeter control and security in the business district are needed.
- Mutual aid is arriving from several surrounding communities.

# Reliance on an Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

- Specifies the incident objectives.
- States the activities to be completed.
- Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period.
- May be oral or written—except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP.



# Elements of an Incident Action Plan

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Every IAP must have four elements:

- What do we want to do?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if someone is injured?



# Activity: Incident Action Plan

## Instructions:

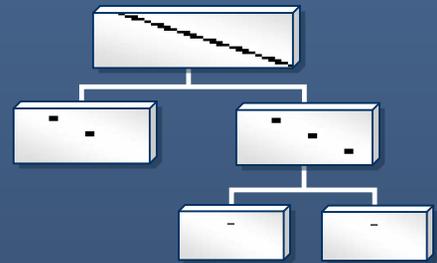
- Working as a team, identify four items you would include in the IAP, based on the incident objectives identified earlier.
- Write these items on chart paper.
- Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 5 minutes.

# ICS Organization

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## In the ICS organization:

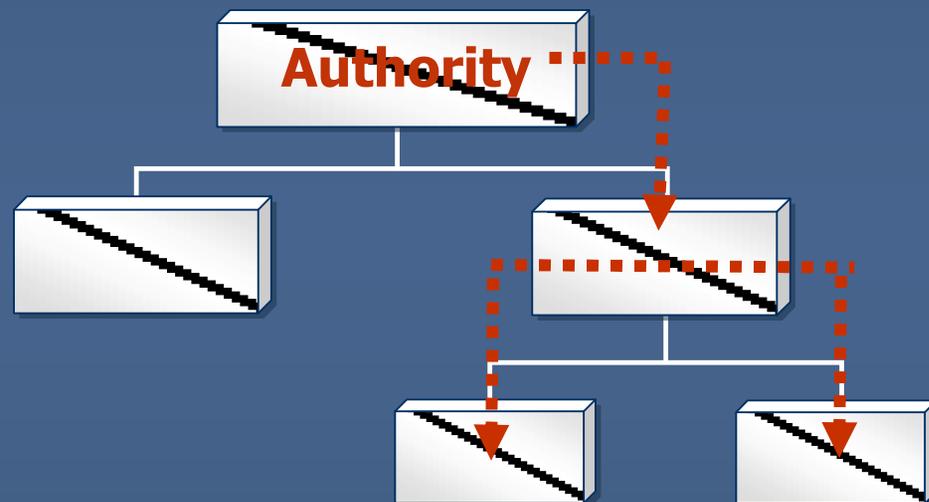
- There is no correlation with the administrative structure of any other agency or jurisdiction. This organization's uniqueness helps to avoid confusion over different position titles and organizational structures.
- Someone who serves as a chief every day may not hold that title when deployed under an ICS structure.



# Chain of Command

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Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization.



# Unity of Command

Under unity of command, personnel:

- Report to only one supervisor.
- Receive work assignments only from their supervisors.



Don't confuse unity of command  
with Unified Command!

# Unified Command

- Enables all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.
- Allows Incident Commanders to make joint decisions by establishing a single command structure.
- Maintains unity of command. Each employee only reports to one supervisor.



Agency 1  
Incident  
Commander

Agency 2  
Incident  
Commander

Agency 3  
Incident  
Commander

# Example: Unified Command

A football team is returning home from a State tournament. Their bus is involved in an accident on the bridge that marks the county line.

- Most of the bus is in Franklin County.
- A small part of the bus is in Revere County (their home county).

**Why might a Unified Command be used to manage this incident?**

# Knowledge Review (1 of 4)

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**Instructions: Decide whether the following statement is True or False.**

**Under ICS, accountability is maintained as long as an employee reports his/her actions to a supervisor.**

# Knowledge Review (2 of 4)

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Instructions: Fill in the blank.

\_\_\_\_\_ allows all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

# Knowledge Review (3 of 4)

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Instructions: Answer the question below.



**Who has complete  
responsibility for  
incident management?**

# Knowledge Review (4 of 4)

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Instructions: Fill in the blank.

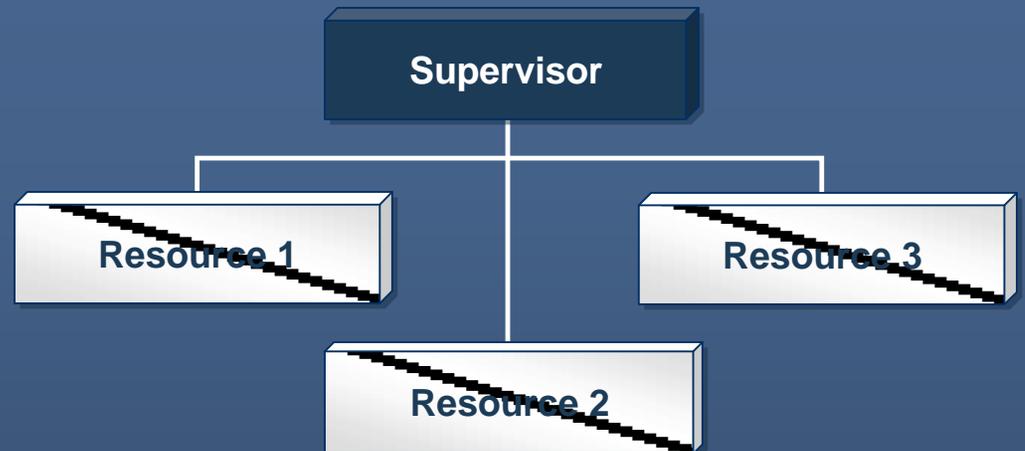
\_\_\_\_\_ is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels.

# Manageable Span of Control

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## Span of control:

- Pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident.
- Is key to effective and efficient incident management.



# Span of Control Considerations

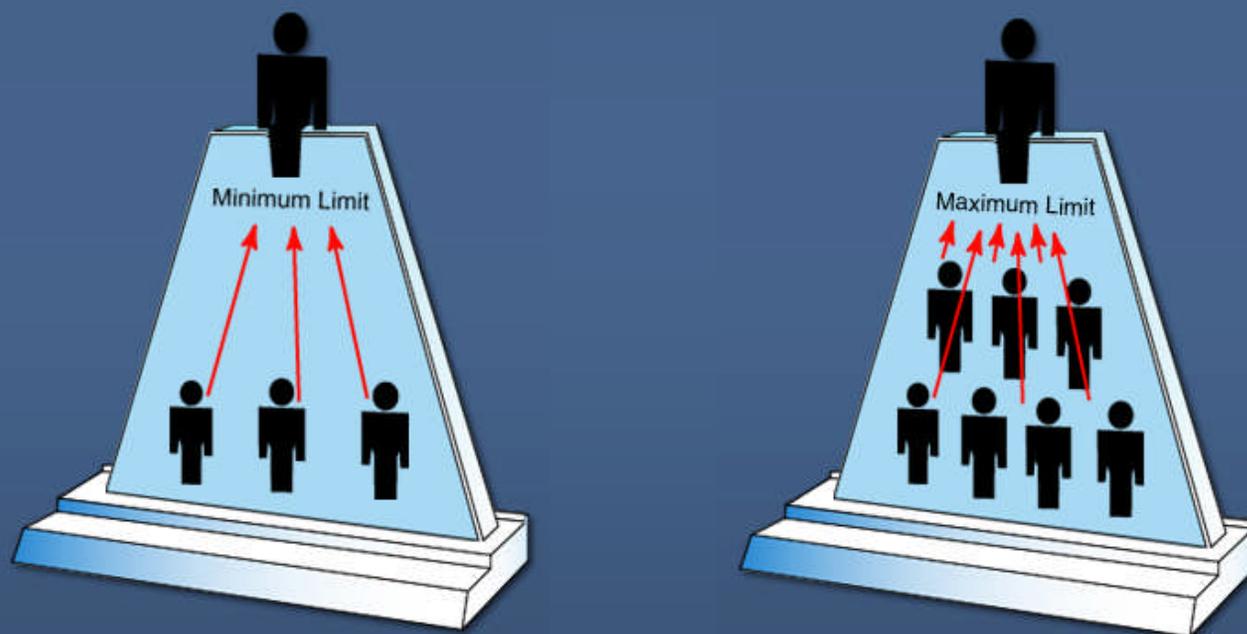
**Span of control considerations are influenced by the:**

- **Type of incident.**
- **Nature of the task.**
- **Hazards and safety factors.**
- **Distances between personnel and resources.**

# ICS Management: Span of Control

ICS span of control for any supervisor:

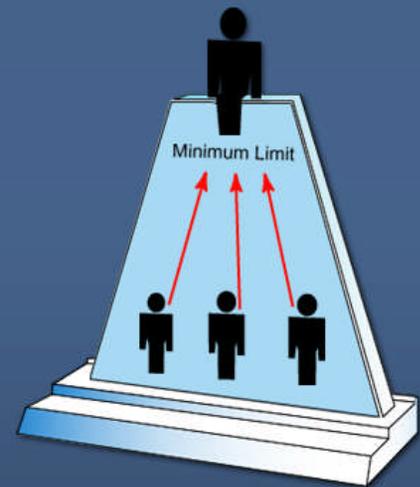
- Is between 3 and 7 subordinates.
- Optimally does not exceed 5 subordinates.



# Discussion Question

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What types of situations or factors would warrant a span of control of 1:3 or 1:4?



# Knowledge Review

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**Instructions:** Determine if the span of control is consistent with ICS guidelines.

**Situation:** Flash flooding has occurred throughout the municipality. Response actions have begun, with 8 resources reporting to the Operations Section Chief.



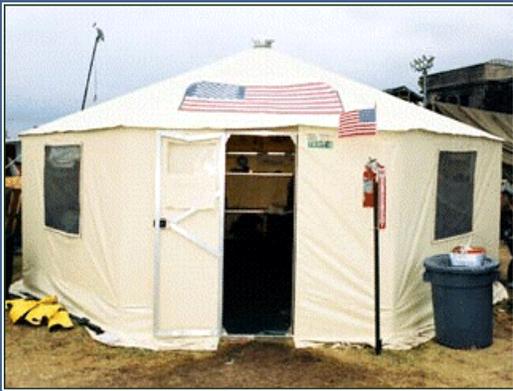
# Remember . . . Modular Organization!

Use the ICS feature of modular organization to maintain the optimal span of control!



# Predesignated Incident Facilities

Established by the Incident Commander based on the requirements and complexity of the incident.



Incident  
Command  
Post



Base



Staging  
Area



Camp

# Resource Management

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Resource management includes processes for:

- Categorizing resources.
- Ordering resources.
- Dispatching resources.
- Tracking resources.
- Recovering resources.



It also includes processes for reimbursement for resources, as appropriate.

# Resources: Tactical & Support

ICS resources include:

- **Tactical Resources:** Personnel and major items of equipment used in the operation
- **Support Resources:** All other resources required to support the incident (e.g., food, communications equipment, or supplies)



Operations Section Chief



# Tactical Resources Classifications

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**Currently working on an assignment under the direction of a supervisor**



**Ready for immediate assignment and has been issued all required equipment**



**Not available or ready to be assigned (e.g., maintenance issues, rest periods)**

# Knowledge Review

Instructions: Review the photos below. What do they have in common?

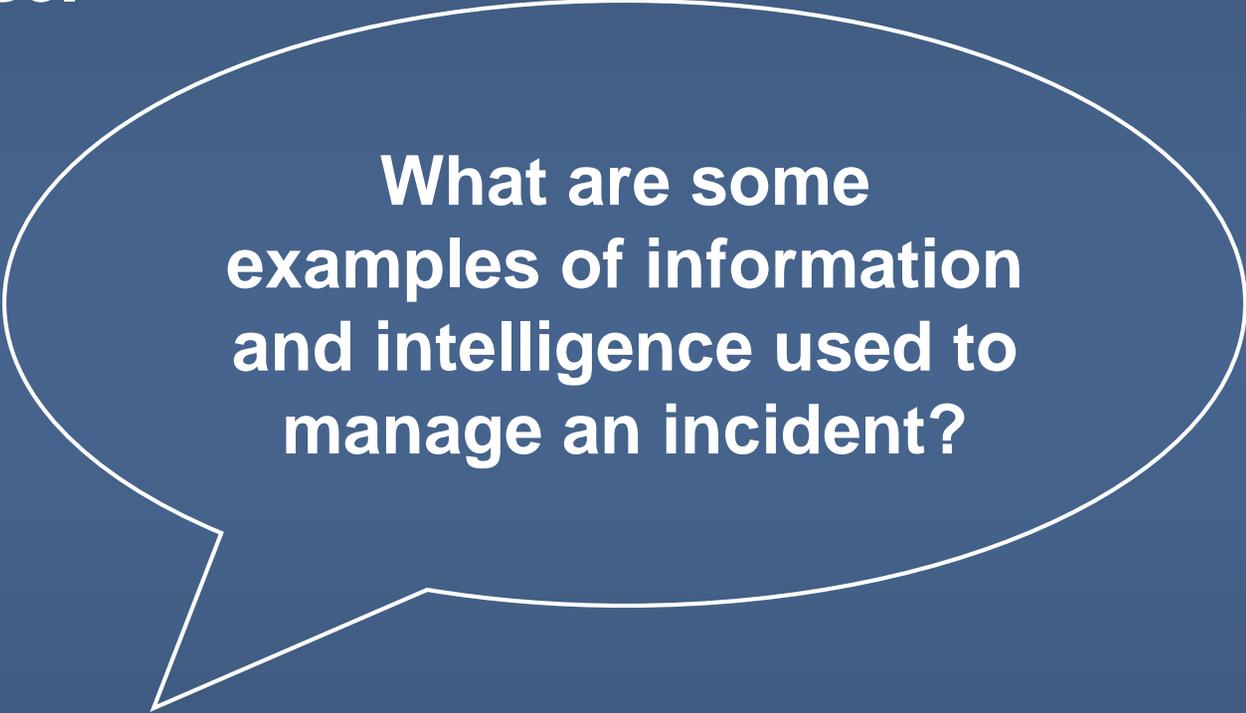


Engineering Specialist

# **Information & Intelligence Management**

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**Information and intelligence are critical to incident response.**



**What are some examples of information and intelligence used to manage an incident?**

# Integrated Communications

**Incident communications are facilitated through:**

- **The development and use of a common communications plan.**
- **The interoperability of communication equipment, procedures, and systems.**

**Before an incident, it is critical to develop an integrated voice and data communications system (equipment, systems, and protocols).**



# Interoperability Saves Lives

Jan. 13, 1982: Air Florida Flight 90 crashed into the 14th St. Bridge in Washington, DC, during a snowstorm. More than 70 people lost their lives. Police, fire, and EMS crews responded quickly to the scene but discovered that they couldn't coordinate their efforts because they couldn't talk to each other by radio.

Sept. 11, 2001: When American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, 900 users from 50 different agencies were able to communicate with one another. Response agencies had learned an invaluable lesson from the Air Florida tragedy.

**Interoperability makes sense. It's a cost-saver, a resource saver, and a lifesaver.**

# Integrated Communications Elements

- **Modes:** The "hardware" systems that transfer information.
- **Planning:** Planning for the use of all available communications resources.
- **Networks:** The procedures and processes for transferring information internally and externally.



# Transfer of Command (1 of 2)

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- Moves the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another.
- Must include a transfer of command briefing (which may be oral, written, or both).



# Transfer of Command (2 of 2)

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**Transfer of command occurs when:**

- **A more qualified person assumes command.**
- **The incident situation changes over time, resulting in a legal requirement to change command.**
- **There is normal turnover of personnel on extended incidents.**
- **The incident response is concluded and responsibility is transferred to the home agency.**



# Knowledge Review

Instructions: Answer the question below.

A more qualified responder arrives on the scene and will assume command.  
What should happen?



# Accountability (1 of 2)

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The following principles must be adhered to:

- **Check-In.** All responders must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.
- **Incident Action Plan.** Response operations must be coordinated as outlined in the IAP.
- **Unity of Command.** Each individual will be assigned to only one supervisor.



# Accountability (2 of 2)

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- **Span of Control.** Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
- **Resource Tracking.** Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur.



# Mobilization

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## At any incident:

- The situation must be assessed and the response planned.
- Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration.
- Personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.



# Discussion Question

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**What's the issue with having personnel arrive at an incident without being requested or dispatched?**

# Knowledge Review (1 of 4)

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**Instructions: Decide if the statement is TRUE or FALSE.**

**Accountability means that individuals must abide by their agency policies and guidelines and any applicable local, tribal, State, or Federal rules and regulations.**

# Knowledge Review (2 of 4)

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**Instructions: Decide if the statement is TRUE or FALSE.**

**In a major incident, willing and able personnel and equipment should respond even without being requested.**

# Knowledge Review (3 of 4)

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**Instructions: Decide if the statement is TRUE or FALSE.**

**Response operations are directed and coordinated using an Incident Action Plan.**

# Knowledge Review (4 of 4)

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**Instructions:** Decide if the statement is TRUE or FALSE.

The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

# Summary (1 of 4)

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**Instructions:** Answer the questions below.

- **Why is it important to use common terminology?**
- **Who is responsible for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization?**
- **What 4 items must be included in an IAP?**
- **What is unity of command?**
- **Under a Unified Command, who is in charge?**
- **What is the recommended ratio of supervisors to reporting elements?**

# Summary (2 of 4)

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Instructions: Answer the questions below.

- Why are incident facilities predesignated?
- How are tactical resources classified?
- What 3 elements are included in effective ICS communications?
- What must happen in a transfer of command?
- Why is accountability critical?
- During an incident, when should personnel and equipment respond?

# Summary (3 of 4)

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## ICS:

- Utilizes management features including the use of common terminology and a modular organizational structure.
- Emphasizes effective planning through the use of management by objectives and Incident Action Plans.
- Supports responders by providing data they need through effective information and intelligence management.

# Summary (4 of 4)

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## ICS:

- Utilizes the principles of chain of command, unity of command, Unified Command, and transfer of command.
- Helps ensure that resources are ready through accountability and mobilization.
- Ensures full utilization of incident resources by maintaining a manageable span of control, establishing predesignated incident facilities, implementing resource management practices, and ensuring integrated communications.