Resources for Senior Officials

G 0402 NIMS OVERVIEW FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS (EXECUTIVES, ELECTED, AND APPOINTED)

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INTRODUCTION

Any incident can have a mix of political, economic, social, environmental, and cost implications with potentially serious long-term effects. Also, more and more incidents are multiagency and/or multijurisdictional. As the Senior Official, you need to be aware of how ICS and interagency (regional) multiagency coordination systems can work to ensure cooperative response efforts.

This document attempts to acquaint Senior Officials with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), Unified Command, and your specific role within those constructs.

At the end of this document, you will find an ICS Readiness Checklist, ICS Incident Checklist, information about the After-Action Review as well as a sample Delegation of Authority letter.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I maintain control when an incident occurs?**

  As the Senior Official, you establish the overall policy, and provide guidelines on priorities, objectives, and constraints to a qualified Incident Commander. In many agencies, this is done as a matter of policy through a written delegation of authority. (Refer to sample at the end of this document.)

  A delegation of authority is a statement that the authorized jurisdiction/organization official provides to make such delegations to the Incident Commander. It assigns the Incident Commander specific responsibilities and authorities. The delegation of authority typically describes priorities, expectations, constraints, and other considerations or guidelines. Many agencies require the delegating authority to provide a written delegation of authority to the Incident Commander before the Incident Commander may assume command.

- **Where do I fit in the incident management process?**

  ICS has a well-defined hierarchy of command. After you have clearly articulated the policy you wish followed and delegated certain authorities, the Incident Commander who reports to you will have the necessary authority and guidance to manage the incident. The Incident Commander is the primary person in charge at the incident. In addition to managing the incident scene, he or she is responsible for keeping you informed and up to date on all important matters pertaining to the incident. Your continuing role is to ensure that you are informed and that your Incident Commander is functioning in a responsible manner.

- **Where can I get more information about NIMS and ICS?**

  Located on FEMA's Emergency Management Incident website, the ICS Resource Center houses a wealth of information that serves as guidance and reference before, during, and after an incident. https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/index.htm

Emergency Management Reference Guide

Key Issues

- Summarize situation
- Report on extent of emergency response
- Synopsis of key events, people, circumstances
- Identify Incident Commander
- Determine publicly releasable facts
- Identify public impact area [transportation, utilities, services]
- Summarize what the government is doing in response after initial emergency
- Identify impact [if any] on schools, workforce, commuters
- Assess immediate and near term public information needs
- Look for impacts on special populations
- Advise media of future briefings
- Provide toll free information number for affected persons / families
- Provide guidance to steer public away from crisis ground zero
- Be prepared to brief press when emergency seems resolved and wrapped up

Phone Numbers

County Emergency Manager:
555-123-4567

Fire Chief:
555-123-4567

Police Chief:
555-123-4567

EMS:
555-123-4567

TBD :
555-123-4567

TBD :
555-123-4567

FEMA Region Ops Center:
555-123-4567

County HELP line:
800-123-4567

Emergency Ops Center
555-123-4567
State EOC:
555-123-5467

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Emergency Management Reference Guide

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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Priorities:

- Protect Life
- Control Situation
- Preserve Property
- Begin Recovery

The Stafford Act

Most federal disaster assistance is provided through the Stafford Act (P. L. 93-288) and Title 42 of the US Code (42 U.S.C. 5121).

Key points:

- All incident response begins and ends locally

- Before federal assistance is provided, the local jurisdictions, then State or Tribal authorities, must first respond

- If requirements for aid exceed capabilities of the jurisdiction, then the State must request assistance before federal aid is provided

- Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA's) should begin as soon as possible

- Requests for assistance are normally sent from the State or Tribal EOC to the FEMA Region Office or Regional Response Coordination Center

- Presidential Disaster Declarations are obtained through this process, as is Department of Defense support

- Requests include a description of the problem, statement of need, and agreement to Stafford Act requirements

- Fiscal thresholds must be met

Situational Awareness

Initial Assessment:

- What happened and where?
- Injury / fatality estimates?
- Damage to critical infrastructure?
- Protective actions needed?
- Weather threats?
- When will next briefing be held?

Response:

- Who is leading the response?
- What public, private, or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) resources are available?
- What resources are needed?
- What is the emergency declaration status? (local, state, federal?)

Media / Public Information:

- Provide concise information-do not speculate
- Assemble key experts to speak
- Ensuring consistency – Are we speaking with one voice?
- Share public safety concerns and protective actions
- Share key phone numbers
- When is it safe to re-enter?

Incident Command

Establish an Incident Management Team

Team is based on expertise and experience, not job titles

The team's duties and responsibilities can include:

- Accountability of personnel and determine their needs, capabilities, and availability to respond if needed

- Investigate the crisis

- Identify and implement Incident Management Plans, if they exist and are applicable

- Check for existing policies, protocols or procedures

- Communicate with management

- Ensure proper notifications are made and respond to inquiries (internally and externally)

- Propose a response plan(s)

- Identify the do's and don'ts

- Identify potential stakeholders (internal and external)

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NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the culmination of more than 40 years of efforts to improve interoperability in incident management. This work began in the 1970s with local, state, and Federal agencies collaborating to create a system called Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE). FIRESCOPE included ICS and the Multiagency Coordination System (MACS). In 1982, the agencies that developed FIRESCOPE and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) created the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS), in part to make ICS guidance applicable to all types of incidents and all hazards. Under Homeland Security Presidential Directive #5 (February 2003), the Federal government created the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This system directed the creation of a comprehensive, national approach to incident management. Recognizing the value of these systems, communities across the Nation have NIMS. The most current revision of NIMS was released in October 2017.

NIMS Management Characteristics

The following characteristics are the foundation of incident command and coordination under NIMS and contribute to the strength and efficiency of the overall system:

- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Management by Objectives
- Incident Action Planning
- Manageable Span of Control
- Incident Facilities and Locations
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Integrated Communications
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Unified Command
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Accountability
- Dispatch/Deployment
- Information and Intelligence Management

Common Terminology

NIMS establishes common terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of functions and hazard scenarios. This common terminology covers the following:

- Organizational Functions: Major functions and functional units with incident responsibilities are named and defined. Terminology for incident organizational elements is standard and consistent.

- Resource Descriptions: Major resources—including personnel, equipment, teams, and facilities—are given common names and are typed to help avoid confusion and to enhance interoperability.

- Incident Facilities: Incident management facilities are designated using common terminology.

Modular Organization

ICS and EOC organizational structures develop in a modular fashion based on an incident's size, complexity, and hazard environment. Responsibility for establishing and expanding ICS organizations and EOC teams ultimately rests with the Incident Commander (or Unified Command) and EOC director. Responsibility for functions that subordinates perform defaults to the next higher supervisory position until the supervisor delegates those responsibilities. As incident complexity increases, organizations expand as the Incident Commander, Unified Command, EOC director, and subordinate supervisors delegate additional functional responsibilities.

Management by Objectives

The Incident Commander or Unified Command establishes objectives that drive incident operations. Management by objectives includes the following:

- Establishing specific, measurable objectives;

- Identifying strategies, tactics, tasks, and activities to achieve the objectives;

- Developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols for various incident management functional elements to accomplish the identified tasks; and

- Documenting results against the objectives to measure performance, facilitate corrective actions, and inform development of incident objectives for the subsequent operational period.

Incident Action Planning

Coordinated incident action planning guides incident management activities. IAPs represent concise, coherent means of capturing and communicating incident objectives, tactics, and assignments for operational and support activities.

Every incident should have an action plan; however, not all incidents need written plans. The necessity for written plans depends on incident complexity, command decisions, and legal requirements. Formal IAPs are not always developed for the initial operational period of no-notice incidents. However, if an incident is likely to extend beyond one operational period, becomes more complex, or involves multiple jurisdictions and/or agencies, preparing a written IAP becomes increasingly important to maintain unity of effort and effective, efficient, and safe operations.

Staff in EOCs also typically conduct iterative planning and produce plans to guide their activities during specified periods, though these are typically more strategic than IAPs.

Manageable Span of Control

Maintaining an appropriate span of control helps ensure an effective and efficient incident management operation. It enables management to direct and supervise subordinates and to communicate with and manage all resources under their control. The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, experience of the supervisor and subordinates, and communication access between the subordinates and the supervisor are all factors that influence manageable span of control.

The optimal span of control for incident management is one supervisor to five subordinates; however, effective incident management frequently necessitates ratios significantly different from this. The 1:5 ratio is a guideline, and incident personnel use their best judgment to determine the actual distribution of subordinates to supervisors for a given incident or EOC activation.

Incident Facilities and Locations

Depending on the incident size and complexity, the Incident Commander, Unified Command, and/or EOC director establish support facilities for a variety of purposes and direct their identification and location based on the incident. Typical facilities include the Incident Command Post (ICP), incident base, staging areas, camps, mass casualty triage areas, points-of-distribution, and emergency shelters.

Comprehensive Resource Management

Resources include personnel, equipment, teams, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation. Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date inventory of resources is an essential component of incident management. Section II, the Resource Management component of this document, describes this in more detail.

Integrated Communications

Leadership at the incident level and in EOCs facilitates communication through the development and use of a common communications plan, interoperable communications processes, and systems that include voice and data links. Integrated communications provide and maintain contact among and between incident resources, enable connectivity between various levels of government, achieve situational awareness, and facilitate information sharing. Planning, both in advance of and during an incident, addresses equipment, systems, and protocols necessary to achieve integrated voice and data communications. Section IV, the Communications and Information Management component of this document, describes this in more detail.

Establishment and Transfer of Command

The Incident Commander or Unified Command should clearly establish the command function at the beginning of an incident. The jurisdiction or organization with primary responsibility for the incident designates the individual at the scene responsible for establishing command and protocol for transferring command. When command transfers, the transfer process includes a briefing that captures essential information for continuing safe and effective operations, and notifying all personnel involved in the incident.

Unified Command

When no one jurisdiction, agency or organization has primary authority and/or the resources to manage an incident on its own, Unified Command may be established. In Unified Command, there is no one "commander." Instead, the Unified Command manages the incident by jointly approved objectives. A Unified Command allows these participating organizations to set aside issues such as overlapping and competing authorities, jurisdictional boundaries, and resource ownership to focus on setting clear priorities and objectives for the incident. The resulting unity of effort allows the Unified Command to allocate resources regardless of ownership or location. Unified Command does not affect individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

Chain of Command and Unity of Command

Chain of command refers to the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Unity of command means that each individual only reports to one person. This clarifies reporting relationships and reduces confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives, enabling leadership at all levels to effectively direct the personnel under their supervision.

Accountability

Effective accountability for resources during an incident is essential. Incident personnel should adhere to principles of accountability, including check-in/check-out, incident action planning, unity of command, personal responsibility, span of control, and resource tracking.

Dispatch/Deployment

Resources should deploy only when appropriate authorities request and dispatch them through established resource management systems. Resources that authorities do not request should refrain from spontaneous deployment to avoid overburdening the recipient and compounding accountability challenges.

Information and Intelligence Management

The incident management organization establishes a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence. Information and intelligence management includes identifying essential elements of information (EEI) to ensure personnel gather the most accurate and appropriate data, translate it into useful information, and communicate it with appropriate personnel.

Note that in NIMS, "intelligence" refers exclusively to threat-related information developed by law enforcement, medical surveillance, and other investigative organizations.

ICS HISTORY AND FEATURES

Incident Command System

ICS is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of on-scene incident management that provides a common hierarchy within which personnel from multiple organizations can be effective. ICS specifies an organizational structure for incident management that integrates and coordinates a combination of procedures, personnel, equipment, facilities, and communications. Using ICS for every incident helps hone and maintain skills needed to coordinate efforts effectively. ICS is used by all levels of government as well as by many NGOs and private sector organizations. ICS applies across disciplines and enables incident managers from different organizations to work together seamlessly. This system includes five major functional areas, staffed as needed, for a given incident: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. A sixth ICS Function, Intelligence/ Investigations, is only utilized when the incident requires these specialized capabilities.

Incident Complexity, Complex Incidents and Incident Complex

Incident Complexity as the combination of involved factors that affect the probability of control of an incident. Many factors determine the complexity of an incident, including, but not limited to, area involved, threat to life and property, political sensitivity, organizational complexity, jurisdictional boundaries, values at risk, weather, strategy and tactics, and agency policy. Incident complexity is considered when making incident management level, staffing, and safety decisions.

Incident complexity is assessed on a five-point scale ranging from Type 5 (the least complex incident) to Type 1 (the most complex incident).

Various analysis tools have been developed to assist consideration of important factors involved in incident complexity. Listed below are some of the factors that may be considered in analyzing incident complexity:

- Impacts to life, property, and the economy

- Community and responder safety

- Potential hazardous materials

- Weather and other environmental influences

- Likelihood of cascading events

- Potential crime scene (including terrorism)

- Political sensitivity, external influences, and media relations

- Area involved, jurisdictional boundaries

- Availability of resources

Complex Incidents are larger incidents with higher incident complexity (normally Type 1 or Type 2 incidents) that extend into multiple operational periods and rapidly expand to multijurisdictional and/or multidisciplinary efforts necessitating outside resources and support.

According to NIMS 2017 Incident Complex refers to two or more individual incidents located in the same general area and assigned to a single Incident Commander or Unified Command.

Position Titles

Organizational Element	Leadership Position Title	Support Positions
Incident Command	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
Section	Chief	Deputy, Assistant
Branch	Director	Deputy
Divisions/Groups	Supervisor	N/A
Unit	Unit Leader	Manager, Coordinator
Strike Team/Resource Team/Task Force	Leader	Single Resource Boss
Single Resource	Boss, Leader	N/A
Technical Specialist	Specialist	N/A

ICS Organizational Structure and Elements
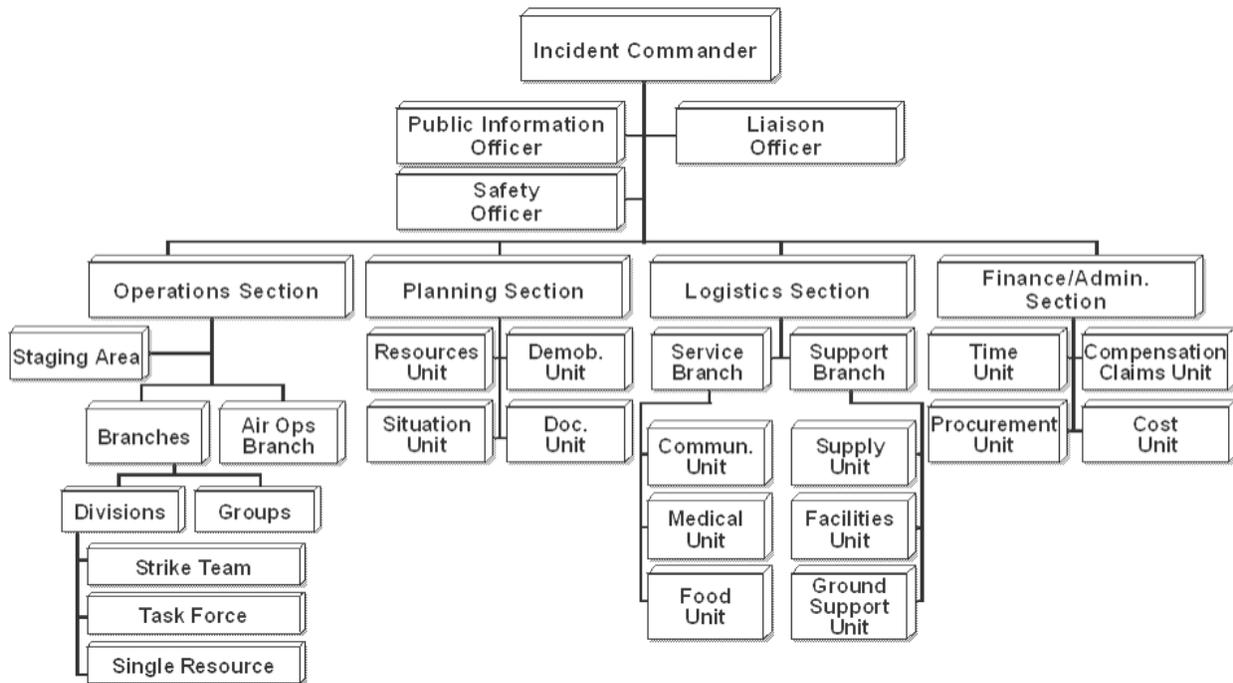
- **Command Staff:** The staff who report directly to the Incident Commander, including the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, and other positions as required.

- **Section:** The organizational level having responsibility for a major functional area of incident management (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration, and Intelligence/Investigations (if established)). The Section is organizationally situated between the Branch and the Incident Command.

- **Branch:** The organizational level having functional and/or geographical responsibility for major aspects of incident operations. A Branch is organizationally situated between the Section Chief and the Division or Group in the Operations Section, and between the Section and Units in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman numerals or by functional area.

- **Division:** The organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. The Division level is organizationally between the Strike Team and the Branch.

- **Group:** An organizational subdivision established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. Groups are located between Branches (when activated) and resources (personnel, equipment, teams, supplies, and facilities) in the Operations Section.

- **Unit:** The organizational element with functional responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistics, or finance/administration activity.

- **Task Force:** Any combination of resources assembled to support a specific mission or operational need. A Task Force will contain resources of *different kinds and types*. All resource elements within a Task Force must have common communications and a designated leader.

- **Strike Team/Resource Team:** A set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel, common communications, and a designated leader. In the law enforcement community, Strike Teams are sometimes referred to as Resource Teams.

- **Single Resource:** An individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew/team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an incident.

Overall Organizational Functions

ICS was designed by identifying the primary activities or functions necessary to effectively respond to incidents. Analyses of incident reports and review of military organizations were all used in ICS development. These analyses identified the primary needs of incidents.

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

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

- Delegate authority and provide a separate organizational level within the ICS structure with sole responsibility for the tactical direction and control of resources.

- Provide logistical support to the incident organization.

- Provide planning services for both current and future activities.

- Provide cost assessment, time recording, and procurement control necessary to support the incident and the managing of claims.

- Promptly and effectively interact with the media, and provide informational services for the incident, involved agencies, and the public.

- Provide a safe operating environment within all parts of the incident organization.

- Ensure that assisting and cooperating agencies' needs are met, and to see that they are used in an effective manner.

ICS – Who Does What?
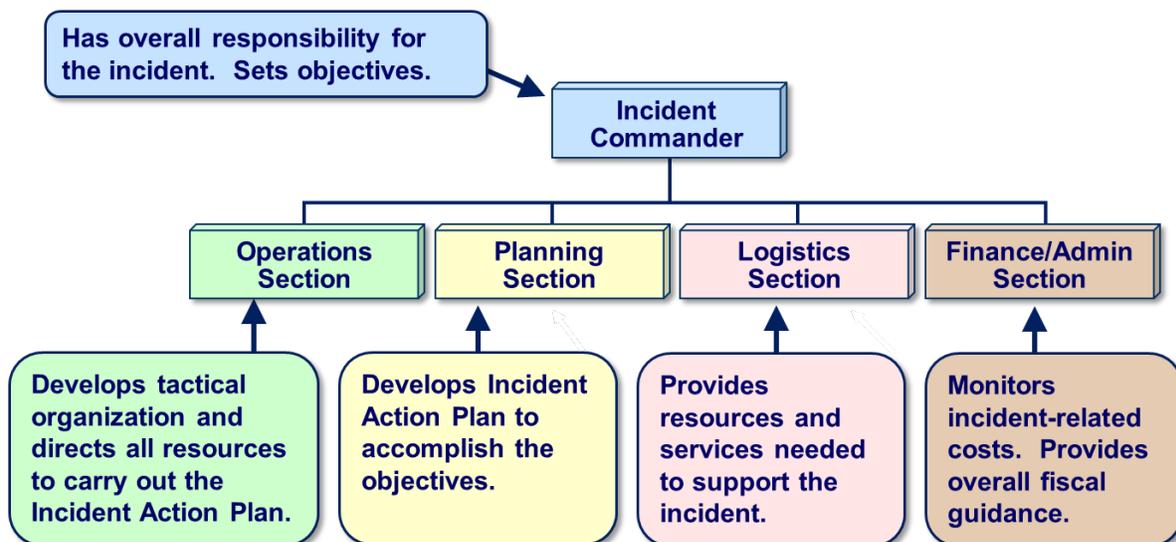
Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is technically not a part of either the General or Command Staff. The Incident Commander is responsible for:

- Having clear authority and knowing agency policy.
- Ensuring incident safety.
- Establishing an Incident Command Post.
- Setting priorities, and determining incident objectives and strategies to be followed.
- Establishing the ICS organization needed to manage the incident.
- Approving the Incident Action Plan.
- Coordinating Command and General Staff activities.
- Approving resource requests and use of volunteers and auxiliary personnel.
- Ensuring after-action reports are completed.
- Authorizing information release to the media.
- Ordering demobilization as needed.

Incident Management Team

An Incident Management Team (IMT) is a rostered group of ICS-qualified personnel consisting of an Incident Commander, Command and General Staff, and personnel assigned to other key ICS positions. The level of training and experience of the IMT members, coupled with the identified formal response requirements and responsibilities of the IMT, are factors in determining "type," or level, of IMT.

Command Staff

The Command Staff is assigned to carry out staff functions needed to support the Incident Commander. These functions include interagency liaison, incident safety, and public information.

Command Staff positions are established to assign responsibility for key activities not specifically identified in the General Staff functional elements. These positions may include the Public Information Officer (PIO), Safety Officer (SO), and Liaison Officer (LNO), in addition to various others, as required and assigned by the Incident Commander.

General Staff

The General Staff represents and is responsible for the functional aspects of the Incident Command structure. The General Staff typically consists of the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections. In some incidents the General Staff may also include the Intelligence/Investigations Function, either operating under a staff section, or as a stand alone section.

General guidelines related to General Staff positions include the following:

- Only one person will be designated to lead each General Staff position.

- General Staff positions may be filled by qualified persons from any agency or jurisdiction.

- Members of the General Staff report directly to the Incident Commander. If a General Staff position is not activated, the Incident Commander will have responsibility for that functional activity.

- Deputy positions may be established for each of the General Staff positions. Deputies are individuals fully qualified to fill the primary position. Deputies can be designated from other jurisdictions or agencies, as appropriate. This is a good way to bring about greater interagency coordination.

- General Staff members may exchange information with any person within the organization. Direction takes place through the chain of command. This is an important concept in ICS.

- General Staff positions should not be combined. For example, to establish a "Planning and Logistics Section," it is better to initially create the two separate functions, and if necessary for a short time place one person in charge of both. That way, the transfer of responsibility can be made easier.

Public Information Officer Responsibilities

- Determine, according to direction from the IC, any limits on information release.

- Develop accurate, accessible, and timely information for use in press/media briefings.

- Obtain IC's approval of news releases.

- Conduct periodic media briefings.

- Arrange for tours and other interviews or briefings that may be required.

- Monitor and forward media information that may be useful to incident planning.

- Maintain current information, summaries, and/or displays on the incident.

- Make information about the incident available to incident personnel.

- Participate in planning meetings.

Safety Officer Responsibilities

- Identify and mitigate hazardous situations.

- Ensure safety messages and briefings are made.

- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.

- Review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications.

- Assign assistants qualified to evaluate special hazards.

- Initiate preliminary investigation of accidents within the incident area.

- Review and approve the Medical Plan.

- Participate in planning meetings.

Liaison Officer Responsibilities

- Act as a point of contact for agency representatives.

- Maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and agency representatives.

- Assist in setting up and coordinating interagency contacts.

- Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential interorganizational problems.

- Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capabilities of agency resources.

- Provide agency-specific demobilization information and requirements.

Assistants

- In the context of large or complex incidents, Command Staff members may need one or more assistants to help manage their workloads. Each Command Staff member is responsible for organizing his or her assistants for maximum efficiency.

Additional Command Staff

- Additional Command Staff positions may also be necessary depending on the nature and location(s) of the incident, and/or specific requirements established by the Incident Commander.

- For example, a Legal Counsel may be assigned directly to the Command Staff to advise the Incident Commander on legal matters, such as emergency proclamations, legality of evacuation orders, and legal rights and restrictions pertaining to media access.

- Similarly, a Medical Advisor may be designated and assigned directly to the Command Staff to provide advice and recommendations to the Incident Commander in the context of incidents involving medical and mental health

services, mass casualty, acute care, vector control, epidemiology, and/or mass prophylaxis considerations, particularly in the response to a bioterrorism event.

Operations Section Chief Responsibilities

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

Major responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief are to:

- Assure safety of tactical operations.

- Manage tactical operations.

- Develop the operations portion of the IAP.

- Supervise execution of operations portions of the IAP.

- Request additional resources to support tactical operations.

- Approve release of resources from active operational assignments.

- Make or approve expedient changes to the IAP.

- Maintain close contact with IC, subordinate Operations personnel, and other agencies involved in the incident.

Planning Section Chief Responsibilities

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

Major responsibilities of the Planning Section Chief are to:

- Collect and manage all incident-relevant operational data.

- Supervise preparation of the IAP.

- Provide input to the IC and Operations in preparing the IAP.

- Incorporate Traffic, Medical, and Communications Plans and other supporting materials into the IAP.

- Conduct and facilitate planning meetings.

- Reassign personnel within the ICS organization.

- Compile and display incident status information.

- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for units (e.g., Resources and Situation Units).

- Determine need for specialized resources.

- Assemble and disassemble Task Forces and Strike Teams (or law enforcement Resource Teams) not assigned to Operations.

- Establish specialized data collection systems as necessary (e.g., weather).

- Assemble information on alternative strategies.

- Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.

- Report significant changes in incident status.

- Oversee preparation of the Demobilization Plan.

Logistics Section Chief Responsibilities

The Logistics Section Chief provides all incident support needs with the exception of logistics support to air operations. The Logistics Section is responsible for providing:

- Facilities.

- Transportation.

- Communications.

- Supplies.

- Equipment maintenance and fueling.

- Food services (for responders).

- Medical services (for responders).

- All off-incident resources.

Major responsibilities of the Logistics Section Chief are to:

- Provide all facilities, transportation, communications, supplies, equipment maintenance and fueling, food and medical services for incident personnel, and all off-incident resources.

- Manage all incident logistics.

- Provide logistical input to the IAP.

- Brief Logistics Staff as needed.

- Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.

- Request additional resources as needed.

- Ensure and oversee the development of the Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plans as required.

- Oversee demobilization of the Logistics Section and associated resources.

Finance/Administration Section Chief Resposibilities

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

- Manage all financial aspects of an incident.

- Provide financial and cost analysis information as requested.

- Ensure compensation and claims functions are being addressed relative to the incident.

- Gather pertinent information from briefings with responsible agencies.

- Develop an operating plan for the Finance/Administration Section and fill Section supply and support needs.

- Determine the need to set up and operate an incident commissary.

- Meet with assisting and cooperating agency representatives as needed.

- Maintain daily contact with agency(s) headquarters on finance matters.

- Ensure that personnel time records are completed accurately and transmitted to home agencies.

- Ensure that all obligation documents initiated at the incident are properly prepared and completed.

- Brief agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing attention or followup.

- Provide input to the IAP.

Intelligence/Investigations Function

The collection, analysis, and sharing of incident-related information are important activities for all incidents. Typically, staff in the Planning Section are responsible for gathering and analyzing operational information and sharing situational awareness, and staff in the Operations Section are responsible for executing tactical activities. However, some incidents involve intensive intelligence gathering and investigative activity, and for such incidents, the Incident Commander or Unified Command may opt to reconfigure intelligence and investigations responsibilities to meet the needs of the incident. This may occur when the incident involves a criminal or terrorist act and/or other non-law-enforcement intelligence/investigations efforts such as epidemiological investigations.

The purpose of the Intelligence/Investigations function is to ensure that intelligence and investigative operations and activities are properly managed and coordinated to:

- Prevent and/or deter potential unlawful activity, incidents, and/or attacks;

- Collect, process, analyze, secure, and disseminate information, intelligence, and situational awareness;

- Identify, document, process, collect, create a chain of custody for, safeguard, examine and analyze, and store evidence or specimens;

- Conduct thorough and comprehensive investigations that lead to the perpetrators' identification and apprehension;

- Conduct missing persons and mass fatality/death investigations;

- Inform and support life safety operations, including the safety and security of all response personnel, by helping to prevent future attacks or escalated impacts;

- Determine the source or cause of an ongoing incident (e.g., disease outbreak, fire, complex coordinated attack, or cyber incident) to control its impact and/or help prevent the occurrence of similar incidents.

The Incident Commander or Unified Command makes the final determination regarding the scope and placement of the Intelligence/Investigations function within the command structure. The intelligence/investigations function can be incorporated as an element of the Planning Section, in the Operations Section, within the Command Staff, as a separate General Staff section, or in some combination of these locations.

Additional information on the I/I function can be found in NIMS and in the *Intelligence and Investigations Function Guidance and Field Operations Guide* available on the FEMA website https://www.fema.gov/nims-doctrine-supporting-guides-tools

Deputies

The Incident Commander may have one or more Deputies. An individual assuming a Deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy Incident Commander must be able to assume the Incident Commander's role.

Following are three reasons to designate Deputies:

- To perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.

- To perform the Incident Command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next Operational Period).

- To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

The Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Finance/Administration Section Chief, and Branch Directors may also have one or more Deputies.

Assistants

The Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer may have Assistants, as necessary. The Assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions, or simply assist in managing the workload associated with the position.

- Assistant Public Information Officers may be assigned to the field or Joint Information Center or assigned to handle internal information.

- Assistant Safety Officers may have specific responsibilities, such as aviation, hazardous materials, etc.

- Assistant Liaison Officers may coordinate with specific agency representatives or groups of representatives.

The Assistant title indicates a level of technical capability, qualification, and responsibility subordinate to the primary positions.

Technical Specialists

Certain incidents or events may require the use of Technical Specialists who have specialized knowledge and expertise. Technical Specialists may function within the Planning Section, or be assigned wherever their services are required.

While each incident dictates the need for Technical Specialists, some examples of the more commonly used specialists are:

- Meteorologists.

- Environmental Impact Specialists.

- Flood Control Specialists.

- Water Use Specialists.

- Fuels and Flammable Materials Specialists.

- Hazardous Substance Specialists.

- Fire Behavior Specialists.

- Structural Engineers.

- Training Specialists.

Additional information on additional examples of technical specialists can be found in NIMS under Command Advisors and in Tab 3.

Agency Representatives

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency. The Agency Representative must be given authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

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

Major responsibilities of the Agency Representative are to:

- Ensure that all of their agency resources have completed check-in at the incident.

- Obtain briefing from the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander.

- Inform their agency personnel on the incident that the Agency Representative position has been filled.

- Attend planning meetings as required.

- Provide input to the planning process on the use of agency resources, unless resource Technical Specialists are assigned from the agency.

- Cooperate fully with the Incident Commander and the Command and General Staffs on the agency's involvement at the incident.

- Oversee the well-being and safety of agency personnel assigned to the incident.

- Advise the Liaison Officer of any special agency needs, requirements, or agency restrictions.

- Report to agency dispatch or headquarters on a prearranged schedule.

- Ensure that all agency personnel and equipment are properly accounted for and released prior to departure.

- Ensure that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are complete prior to departure.

- Have a debriefing session with the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander prior to departure.

Incident Action Planning Process

The incident action planning process and IAPs are central to managing incidents. The incident action planning process helps synchronize operations and ensure that they support incident objectives. Incident action planning is more than producing an IAP and completing forms—it provides a consistent rhythm and structure to incident management.

Personnel managing the incident develop an IAP for each operational period. A concise IAP template is essential to guide the initial incident management decision process and the continuing collective planning activities. The IAP is the vehicle by which leaders on

an incident communicate their expectations and provide clear guidance to those managing the incident. The IAP:

- Informs incident personnel of the incident objectives for the operational period, the specific resources that will be applied, actions taken during the operational period to achieve the objectives, and other operational information (e.g., weather, constraints, limitations, etc.);

- Informs partners, EOC staff, and MAC Group members regarding the objectives and operational activities planned for the coming operational period;

- Identifies work assignments and provides a roadmap of operations during the operational period to help individuals understand how their efforts affect the success of the operation;

- Shows how specific supervisory personnel and various operational elements fit into the organization; and

- Often provides a schedule of the key meetings and briefings during the operational period.

 The IAP provides clear direction and includes a comprehensive listing of the tactics, resources, and support needed to accomplish the objectives. The various steps in the process, executed in sequence, help ensure a comprehensive IAP. These steps support the accomplishment of objectives within a specified time.

The development of IAPs is a cyclical process, and personnel repeat the planning steps every operational period. The Operational Period Planning Cycle (Planning P) is a graphic depiction of this cycle. Personnel develop the IAP using the best information available at the time of the Planning Meeting. Personnel should not delay planning meetings in anticipation of future information.

In the Planning P, the leg of the "P" describes the initial stages of an incident, when personnel work to gain awareness of the situation and establish the organization for incident management.

During the initial stage of incident management, the Incident Commander typically develops a simple plan and communicates the plan through concise oral briefings. In the beginning of an incident, the situation can be chaotic and situational awareness hard to obtain, so the Incident Commander often develops this initial plan very quickly and with incomplete situation information. As the incident management effort evolves, additional lead time, staff, information systems, and technologies enable more detailed planning and cataloging of events and lessons learned. The steps of the planning process are essentially the same for the first responders on scene determining initial tactics and for personnel developing formal written IAPs.

Incident personnel perform the steps in the leg of the "P" only one time. Once they are accomplished, incident management shifts into a cycle of planning and operations, informed by ongoing situational awareness and repeated each operational period

The following are brief descriptions of the meetings and briefings that are repeated each operational cycle until the conclusion of the incident or event.

Objectives Development/Update: The IC/UC establishes the incident objectives for the initial operational period. After the initial operational period, the IC/UC reviews the incident objectives and may validate them, modify them, or develop new objectives.

Strategy Meeting/Command and General Staff Meeting: After developing or revising the incident objectives, the IC/UC typically meets with the Command and General Staff, and sometimes others, to discuss the incident objectives and provide direction.

Preparing for the Tactics Meeting: Once the approach to achieving or working toward achieving the incident objectives is determined, the Operations Section Chief and staff prepare for the Tactics Meeting by developing tactics and determining the resources that will be applied during the operational period.

*Tactics Meeting: In t*he Tactics Meeting, key players review the proposed tactics developed by the Operations Section and conduct planning for resource assignments. The OPS Section Chief leads the Tactics Meeting, and key participants include the LOG Section Chief, Safety Officer, a Planning representative and other invitees.

Preparing for the Planning Meeting: Following the Tactics Meeting, staff collaborate to identify support needs and assign specific resources to accomplish the plan.

Planning Meeting: The Planning Meeting serves as a final review and approval of operational plans and resource assignments developed during and after the Tactics Meeting. At the end of the Planning Meeting, Command and General Staff confirm that they can support the plan.

IAP Preparation and Approval: Based on concurrence from all elements at the end of the Planning Meeting, the Incident Commander or Unified Command approves the plan.

Operational Period Briefing: Each operational period starts with an Operational Period Briefing. Incident supervisory and tactical personnel receive the IAP during the briefing. Members of the Command and General Staff present the incident objectives, review the current situation, and share information related to communications or safety. Following the Briefing, supervisors brief their assigned personnel on their respective assignments.

OPERATIONAL PERIOD PLANNING CYCLE (PLANNING P)
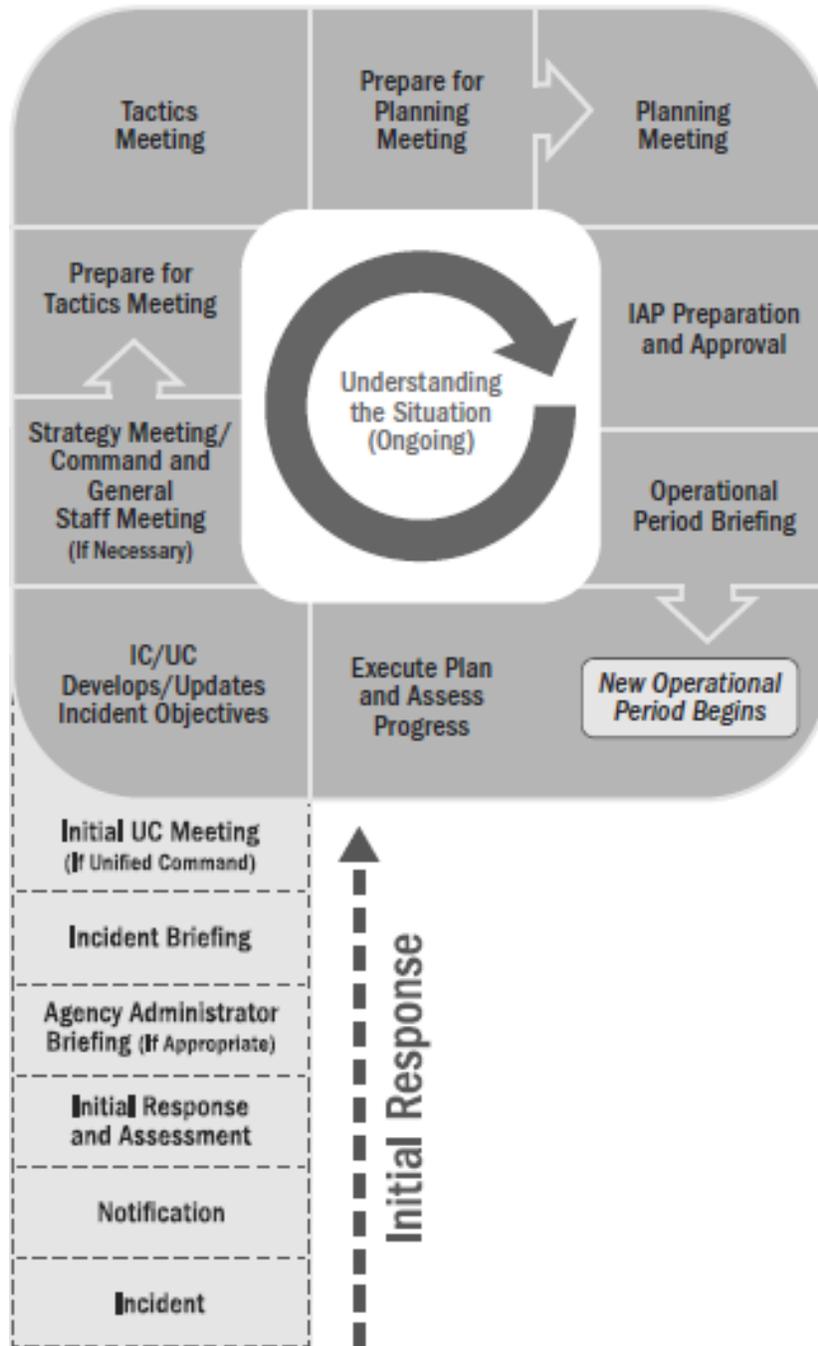
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UNIFIED COMMAND

Unified Command improves unity of effort in multijurisdictional or multiagency incident management. The use of Unified Command enables jurisdictions and those with authority or functional responsibility for the incident (called members of the Unified Command) to jointly manage and direct incident activities through the establishment of a common set of incident objectives, strategies, and a single IAP. However, each participating partner maintains authority, responsibility, and accountability for its personnel and other resources, and each member of Unified Command is responsible for keeping other members of Unified Command informed.

Shared General Staff Sections

A feature of Unified Command is shared Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections. While the Unified Command is composed of two or more members, they lead a staff in which there is a single individual apppointed or each function (Operations, Planning, etc.). The following are benefits of sharing these General Staff components:

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

- Integrating other agency personnel into an organization can be equally beneficial in a single incident command situation.

Examples:

- In Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction, which may in future operational periods have the primary responsibility for these functions. By placing other agencies' personnel in the Planning Section's Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units, there can be significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.

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

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

Additional considerations for having an integrated General Staff include:

- The members of the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs.

- The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the Incident Action Plan.

Coordinated Resource Ordering

Another feature of Unified Command is coordinated resource ordering.

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

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

- The resource requirements established at the planning meeting are given to the Logistics Section, which then creates a resource order that is transmitted to one jurisdiction or agency's dispatch center (or emergency operations center if activated) to be filled.

- Some situations may require resource orders to be made to different jurisdictions or agencies from the incident. Multiple resource orders are generally less desirable than the use of a single resource order, and should be avoided when possible.

- If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be predesignated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the responsible agency officials in the Unified Command meeting. If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency dispatch center (or emergency operations center if activated) receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.

The members of the Unified Command should appoint Section Chiefs with the delegated authority to establish and ensure adherence to these procedures. As much as possible, this should be accomplished pre-incident to allow training of Unit staff within Logistics, Finance, and any supporting Emergency Operations Centers.

Responsibilities of the Incident Commander and Unified command

Whether using a single Incident Commander or a Unified Command, the command function:

- Establishes a single ICP for the incident;

- Establishes consolidated incident objectives, priorities, and strategic guidance, and updatingthem every operational period;

- Selects a single Section Chief for each position on the General Staff needed based on currentincident priorities;

- Establishes a single system for ordering resources;

- Approves a consolidated IAP for each operational period;

- Establishes procedures for joint decision making and documentation; and

- Captures lessons learned and best practices

Authority

The authority and responsibility for an Incident Commander to manage an incident or event comes from of a delegation of authority from the agency executive or administrator of the jurisdiction of occurrence or inherent in existing agency policies and procedures. When an incident/event spans multiple jurisdictions this responsibility belongs to the various jurisdictional and agency executives or administrators who set policy and are accountable to their jurisdictions or agencies. They must appropriately delegate to the members of the Unified Command the authority to manage the incident. Given this authority, the members of the Unified Command will then collectively develop one comprehensive set of incident objectives, and use them to develop strategies.

Advantages of Using Unified Command

The advantages of using Unified Command include:

- A single set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.

- A collective approach is used to develop strategies to achieve incident objectives.

- Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.

- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of joint priorities and restrictions.

- No agency's legal authorities will be compromised or neglected.

- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.

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ICS READINESS CHECKLIST

NIMS Implementation

☐ Adopt the ICS through executive order, proclamation, or legislation as the jurisdiction's official incident response system.

☐ Determine if ICS is integrated into functional and system-wide emergency operations policies, plans, and procedures.

☐ Provide ICS training so all responders, supervisors, and command-level officers receive ICS training.

☐ Schedule periodic exercises that require the application of ICS management features.

Emergency Operations Plans

☐ Conduct a review and update the jurisdiction Emergency Operations Plans based on a current hazard analysis and risks.

☐ Clarify roles and establish delegations of authority (as appropriate).

☐ Check contact information to ensure it is up to date.

☐ Update plans based on lessons learned from exercises and incidents.

Legal and Financial

☐ Check procedures and authorities for emergency purchasing and contracting.

☐ Ensure that mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements have been negotiated.

☐ Clarify coordination procedures among different levels of government (tribes, counties, State, Federal, etc.).

Resource Management Systems

☐ Identify potential resources across agencies/department, other levels of government, and the private sector.

☐ Check your jurisdiction's procedures and systems for:

☐ Describing, inventorying, requesting, and tracking resources.

☐ Activating and dispatching resources.

☐ Managing volunteers.

☐ Demobilization or recalling resources.

☐ Financial tracking, reimbursement, and reporting.

Communications and Information Management

- ☐ Check your jurisdiction's protocols and procedures for:

- ☐ Formulating and disseminating indications and warnings.

- ☐ Formulating, executing, and communicating operational decisions.

- ☐ Preparing for potential requirements and requests supporting incident management activities.

- ☐ Developing and maintaining situation awareness.

- ☐ Check for interoperability. Can responders from different agencies (e.g., fire, police, public works) or mutual aid and assistance partners communicate with one another?

- ☐ Create a plan/budget for maintaining and replacing your emergency communication systems.

Training, Credentialing, and Exercising

- ☐ Make sure you have sufficient qualified personnel to assume ICS Command and General Staff positions.

- ☐ Predesignate qualified incident management teams based on incident complexity.

- ☐ Check when the last tabletop or functional exercise that practiced command and coordination functions was conducted. Did you participate in that exercise?

ICS INCIDENT CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to assist Senior Officials in supporting an emergency response. The checklist is divided into Immediate Actions, Legal, Political, Operational, and Public Information.

Immediate Actions

☐ Begin personal log. The log should include all information and orders given, will document the amount of information you had when making decisions, and will assist in protecting you if liability issues are raised concerning your role in the incident.

☐ Assign and brief/establish contact with the Incident Commander.

☐ Assign staff to assist in the incident as requested by the Incident Commander or the Incident Command Logistics Function.

☐ Determine when the initial planning meeting is scheduled.

☐ Confirm which parts of the Emergency Operations Plan are in effect.

☐ Contact and brief higher level authorities/stakeholders.

Legal

☐ Review and activate legal authorities:

- Emergency declarations

- Evacuation orders

- Lines of succession

- Mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements

- Price controls

- Procurement processes

- Other restrictions/requirements

Political

☐ Provide leadership oversight of incident management policies and objectives.

☐ Assist in coordinating activities with elected officials and other levels of government.

Operational

☐ Assess the impact of the incident on the continuity of your jurisdiction's day-to-day activities.

☐ Reassign personnel to support incident activities and cover essential services.

Public Information

☐ Assign Public Information Officer to assist in incident information management.

☐ Direct requests for incident information to incident Public Information Officer using the Joint Information System.

☐ Coordinate messages through the Joint Information Center/Joint Information System.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW TIPS AND PROCESS STEPS

General Tips

- Schedule an After-Action Review (AAR) as soon after the incident as possible.

- Keep it short and focused.

- Focus on WHAT, not WHO.

- Establish clear ground rules: encourage candor and openness (this is dialog—not lecture or debate); focus on items that can be fixed; keep all discussions confidential.

- Use a skilled facilitator to conduct the AAR.

AAR Process Steps

Use the following questions to facilitate the AAR process:

1. **What did we set out to do?**

- Establish the facts.

- Determine purpose of the mission and definition of success:

  - Identify key tasks involved.

  - Specify conditions under which each task may need to be performed (weather, topography, time restrictions, etc.).

  - Define acceptable standards for success (explain what "Right" looks like).

2. **What actually happened?**

- Continue to establish the facts.

  - Participants should come to agreement on what actually happened.

  - Pool multiple perspectives to build a shared picture of what happened.

3. **Why did it happen?**

- Analyze cause and effect.

  - Focus on WHAT, not WHO.

  - Provide progressive refinement for drawing out explanations of what occurred. This will lead into developing possible solutions.

4. What are we going to do better next time?

- Solutions will arise naturally once problems are identified and understood.
  - Focus on items you can fix, rather than external forces outside of your control.
  - Identify areas where groups are performing well and that should be sustained. This will help repeat success and create a balanced approach to the AAR.

    Areas To Sustain/Maintain Strengths:

    Areas To Improve Weaknesses:

5. Are there lessons learned that should be shared immediately?

- Identify the process for sharing lessons learned.
  - Option 1: Document the Issue, Discussion, Recommendation
  - Option 2: Document the Concept of the Operation, Results, Trends, Recommendation
- Determine and describe the most notable successes from the incident.
  - Determine and describe the most difficult challenges faced and how they were overcome.

6. What followup is needed?

- Be specific about actions, timelines, and responsibilities.
  - What changes, additions, or deletions are recommended to SOPs, plans, or training?
  - What issues were not resolved to your satisfaction and need further review?

SAMPLE DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY LETTER

Delegation of Authority

As of _____ hours, _____, I have delegated the authority and responsibility for the complete management of the _____ incident to the designated Incident Commander, _____ .

As Incident Commander, you are accountable to me for the overall management of this incident including control and return to local forces. I expect you to keep me informed on the incident. I expect you to adhere to relevant and applicable laws, policies, and professional standards. I will provide you with additional policy and priority guidance as needed throughout the incident.

My considerations and guidance for management of the incident are:

1. Provide for responder and public safety.

2. Stabilize the Incident.

3. Preserve property and the environment.

4. Work with the EOC for your resource requests, shared situational awareness, and planning for demobilization and transition to recovery.

5. Coordinate with _____ and the State for use of their resources, as needed, and incorporate them into the overall incident plan.

6. Manage the incident cost-effectively for the values at risk.

7. Provide for minimal disruption of access to critical community services and commerce. Access must be consistent with the safety of the public.

8. Provide training opportunities for less experienced responders. This will strengthen organizational capabilities of local agency personnel.

9. Provide public information while controlling incident access. The media will be escorted whenever possible. Media cards will identify members of the media.

10. Incident objectives, strategies, and tactics will be the responsibility of the Incident Management Team within a 10-mile radius of the incident

_____   _____
Agency Administrator   Date

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GLOSSARY

Access and Functional Needs: Individual circumstances requiring assistance, accommodation, or modification for mobility, communication, transportation, safety, health maintenance, etc., due to any temporary or permanent situation that limits an individual's ability to take action in an emergency.

Agency: A government element with a specific function offering a particular kind of assistance.

Agency Administrator/Executive: The official responsible for administering policy for an agency or jurisdiction.

Agency Representative: A person assigned by a primary, assisting, or cooperating local, state, tribal, territorial, or Federal Government agency, or nongovernmental or private organization, who has authority to make decisions affecting that agency's or organization's participation in incident management activities following appropriate consultation with that agency's leadership.

Area Command: An organization that oversees the management of multiple incidents or oversees the management of a very large or evolving situation with multiple ICS organizations. See Unified Area Command.

Assigned Resource: A resource that has been checked in and assigned work tasks on an incident.

Assignment: A task given to a person or team to perform based on operational objectives defined in the IAP.

Assistant: A title for subordinates of principal Command Staff and EOC director's staff positions. The title indicates a level of technical capability, qualification, and responsibility subordinate to the primary positions. Assistants may also be assigned to unit leaders.

Assisting Agency: An agency or organization providing personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with direct responsibility for incident management.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): An entity that has the authority and responsibility for developing, implementing, maintaining, and overseeing the qualification process within its organization or jurisdiction. This may be a state or Federal agency, training commission, NGO, private sector company, or a tribal or local agency such as a police, fire, or public works department. In some cases, the AHJ may provide support to multiple disciplines that collaborate as a part of a team (e.g., an IMT).

Available Resource: A resource assigned to an incident, checked in, and available for assignment.

Badging: The assignment of physical incident-specific credentials to establish legitimacy and permit access to incident sites. See Credentialing.

Base: See Incident Base.

Branch: The organizational level having functional or geographical responsibility for major aspects of incident operations. A branch falls between the Section Chief and the division or group in the Operations Section, and between the section and units in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by Roman numerals or by functional area.

Camp: A geographical site within the general incident area (separate from the Incident Base) that is equipped and staffed to provide sleeping, food, water, and sanitary services to incident personnel.

Certification: The process of authoritatively attesting that individuals meet qualifications established for key incident management functions and are, therefore, qualified for specific positions.

Chain of Command: The orderly line of authority within the ranks of incident management organizations.

Check-In: The process through which resources first report to an incident. All responders, regardless of agency affiliation, report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the Incident Commander or Unified Command's established procedures.

Chief: The ICS title for individuals responsible for the management of functional sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

Clear Text: Communication that does not use codes. See Plain Language.

Command: The act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority.

Command Staff: A group of incident personnel that the Incident Commander or Unified Command assigns to support the command function at an ICP. Command staff often include a PIO, a Safety Officer, and a Liaison Officer, who have assistants as necessary. Additional positions may be needed, depending on the incident.

Cooperating Agency: An agency supplying assistance other than direct operational or support functions or resources to the incident management effort.

Coordinate: To exchange information systematically among principals who have or may have a need to know certain information to carry out specific incident management responsibilities.

Core Capability: An element defined in the National Preparedness Goal as necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.

Credentialing: Providing documentation that identifies personnel and authenticates and verifies their qualification for a particular position. See Badging.

Critical Infrastructure: Assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacitation or destruction of such assets, systems, or networks would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.

Delegation of Authority: A statement that the agency executive delegating authority and assigning responsibility provides to the Incident Commander. The delegation of authority can include priorities, expectations, constraints, and other considerations or guidelines, as needed.

Demobilization: The orderly, safe, and efficient return of an incident resource to its original location and status.

Department Operations Center (DOC): An operations or coordination center dedicated to a single, specific department or agency. The focus of a DOC is on internal agency incident management and response. DOCs are often linked to and/or physically represented in a combined agency EOC by an authorized agent(s) for the department or agency.

Deputy: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, can be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or to perform a specific task. In some cases, a deputy can act as relief for a superior, and, therefore, should be fully qualified in the position. Deputies generally can be assigned to the Incident Commander, EOC director, General Staff, and branch directors.

Director: The ICS title for individuals responsible for supervision of a branch. Also, an organizational title for an individual responsible for managing and directing the team in an EOC.

Dispatch: The ordered movement of a resource or resources to an assigned operational mission, or an administrative move from one location to another.

Division: The organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. Divisions are established when the number of resources exceeds the manageable span of control of the Section Chief. See Group.

Emergency: Any incident, whether natural, technological, or human-caused, that necessitates responsive action to protect life or property.

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC): A congressionally ratified agreement that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster-affected state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently, resolving two key issues up front: liability and reimbursement.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The physical location where the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction.

Emergency Operations Plan: A plan for responding to a variety of potential hazards.

Emergency Support Function (ESF): The grouping of governmental and certain private sector capabilities into an organizational structure to provide capabilities and services most likely needed to manage domestic incidents.

Essential Elements of Information (EEI): Important and standard information items, which support timely and informed decisions.

Evacuation: The organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of people from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.

Event: See Planned Event.

Federal: Of or pertaining to the Federal Government of the United States of America.

Finance/Administration Section: The ICS Section responsible for an incident's administrative and financial considerations.

General Staff: A group of incident personnel organized according to function and reporting to the Incident Commander or Unified Command. The ICS General Staff consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Group: An organizational subdivision established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic area. See also Division.

Hazard: Something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome.

Incident: An occurrence, natural or manmade, that necessitates a response to protect life or property. In NIMS, the word "incident" includes planned events as well as emergencies and/or disasters of all kinds and sizes.

Incident Action Plan (IAP): An oral or written plan containing the objectives established by the Incident Commander or Unified Command and addressing tactics and support activities for the planned operational period, generally 12 to 24 hours.

Incident Base: A location where personnel coordinate and administer logistics functions for an incident. There is typically only one base per incident. (An incident name or other designator is added to the term Base.) The ICP may be co-located with the Incident Base.

Incident Command: The ICS organizational element responsible for overall management of the incident and consisting of the Incident Commander or Unified Command and any additional Command Staff activated.

Incident Command Post (ICP): The field location where the primary functions of incident command are performed. The ICP may be co-located with the Incident Base or other incident facilities.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of on-scene incident management, providing a common hierarchy within which personnel from multiple organizations can be effective. ICS is the combination of procedures, personnel, facilities, equipment, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of on-scene resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of incidents and is applicable to small, as well as large and complex, incidents, including planned events.

Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for on-scene incident activities, including developing incident objectives and ordering and releasing resources. The Incident Commander has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations.

Incident Complex: Two or more individual incidents located in the same general area and assigned to a single Incident Commander or Unified Command.

Incident Management: The broad spectrum of activities and organizations providing operations, coordination, and support applied at all levels of government, using both governmental and nongovernmental resources to plan for, respond to, and recover from an incident, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT): A team of ICS-qualified personnel, configured according to ICS, that deploy in support of affected jurisdictions and/or on-scene personnel.

Incident Management Team (IMT): A rostered group of ICS-qualified personnel consisting of an Incident Commander, Command and General Staff, and personnel assigned to other key ICS positions.

Incident Objective: A statement of an outcome to be accomplished or achieved. Incident objectives are used to select strategies and tactics. Incident objectives should be realistic, achievable, and measurable, yet flexible enough to allow strategic and tactical alternatives.

Incident Personnel: All individuals who have roles in incident management or support, whether on scene, in an EOC, or participating in a MAC Group.

Information Management: The collection, organization, and control over the structure, processing, and delivery of information from one or more sources and distribution to one or more audiences who have a stake in that information.

Intelligence/Investigations (I/I): Efforts to determine the source or cause of the incident (e.g., disease outbreak, fire, complex coordinated attack, or cyber incident) in order to control its impact and/or help prevent the occurrence of similar incidents. In ICS, the function may be accomplished in the Planning Section, Operations Section, Command Staff, as a separate General Staff section, or in some combination of these locations.

Interoperability: The ability of systems, personnel, and equipment to provide and receive functionality, data, information, and/or services to and from other systems, personnel, and equipment, between both public and private agencies, departments, and other organizations, in a manner enabling them to operate effectively together.

Joint Field Office (JFO): The primary Federal incident management field structure. The JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides a central location for the coordination of local, state, tribal, and Federal governments and private sector and NGOs with primary responsibility for response and recovery.

Joint Information Center (JIC): A facility in which personnel coordinate incident-related public information activities. The JIC serves as the central point of contact for all news media. Public information officials from all participating agencies co-locate at, or virtually coordinate through, the JIC.

Joint Information System (JIS): A structure that integrates overarching incident information and public affairs into a cohesive organization designed to provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely, and complete information during crisis or incident operations.

Jurisdiction: Jurisdiction has two definitions depending on the context:

- A range or sphere of authority. Public agencies have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority. Jurisdictional authority at an incident can be political or geographical (e.g., local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal boundary lines) and/or functional (e.g., law enforcement, public health).
- A political subdivision (e.g., municipality, county, parish, state, Federal) with the responsibility for ensuring public safety, health, and welfare within its legal authorities and geographic boundaries.

Kind: As applied to incident resources, a class or group of items or people of the same nature or character or classified together because they have traits in common.

Leader: The ICS title for an individual who is responsible for supervision of a unit, strike team, resource team, or task force.

Liaison Officer (LOFR): A member of the ICS Command Staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies or organizations.

Local Government: Public entities responsible for the security and welfare of a designated area as established by law. A county, municipality, city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under state law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; a tribe or authorized tribal entity, or in Alaska, a Native Village or Alaska Regional Native Corporation; a rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.).

Logistics: The process and procedure for providing resources and other services to support incident management.

Logistics Section: The ICS Section responsible for providing facilities, services, and material support for the incident.

Management by Objectives: A management approach, fundamental to NIMS, that involves (1) establishing objectives, e.g., specific, measurable and realistic outcomes to be achieved;(2) identifying strategies, tactics, and tasks to achieve the objectives; (3) performing the tactics and tasks and measuring and documenting results in achieving the objectives; and (4) taking corrective action to modify strategies, tactics, and/or performance to achieve the objectives.

Manager: The individual within an ICS organizational unit assigned specific managerial responsibilities (e.g., Staging Area Manager or Camp Manager).

Mission Area: One of five areas (Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery) designated in the National Preparedness Goal to group core capabilities.

Mitigation: The capabilities necessary to reduce the loss of life and property from natural and/or manmade disasters by lessening the impacts of disasters.

Mobilization: The processes and procedures for activating, assembling, and transporting resources that have been requested to respond to or support an incident.

Multiagency Coordination Group (MAC Group): A group, typically consisting of agency administrators or executives from organizations, or their designees, that provides policy guidance to incident personnel, supports resource prioritization and allocation, and enables decision making among elected and appointed officials and senior executives in other organizations, as well as those directly responsible for incident management. Can also be called the Policy Group.

Multiagency Coordination System: An overarching term for the NIMS Command and Coordination systems: ICS, EOCs, MAC Group/policy groups, and JISs.

Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement: A written or oral agreement between and among agencies/organizations and/or jurisdictions that provides a mechanism to quickly obtain assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services. The primary objective is to facilitate the rapid, short-term deployment of support prior to, during, and/or after an incident.

National: Of a nationwide character, including the local, state, tribal, territorial, and Federal aspects of governance and policy.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): A systematic, proactive approach to guide all levels of government, NGOs, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the effects of incidents. NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole community with the shared vocabulary, systems, and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the National Preparedness System. NIMS provides a consistent foundation for dealing with all incidents, ranging from daily occurrences to incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

National Planning Frameworks: Guidance documents for each of the five preparedness mission areas that describe how the whole community works together to achieve the National Preparedness Goal. The Frameworks foster a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, from the firehouse to the White House, and clarifies how the Nation coordinates, shares information, and works together—ultimately resulting in a more secure and resilient Nation.

National Preparedness: The actions taken to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise to build and sustain the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from those threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation.

National Preparedness Goal (NPG): Doctrine describing what it means for the whole community to be prepared for the types of incidents that pose the greatest threat to the security of the Nation, including acts of terrorism and emergencies and disasters, regardless of cause. The goal itself is: "A secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."

National Preparedness System (NPS): An organized process to achieve the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient Nation.

National Response Coordination Center (NRCC): A multiagency coordination center located at FEMA Headquarters. Its staff coordinates the overall Federal support for major disasters and emergencies, including catastrophic incidents and emergency management program implementation.

Nongovernmental Organization (NGO): A group that is based on the interests of its members, individuals, or institutions. An NGO is not created by a government, but it may work cooperatively with government. Examples of NGOs include faith-based groups, relief agencies, organizations that support people with access and functional needs, and animal welfare organizations.

Normal Operations/Steady State: The activation level that describes routine monitoring of jurisdictional situation (no event or incident anticipated).

Officer: The ICS title for a member of the Command Staff authorized to make decisions and take action related to his/her area of responsibility.

Operational Period: The time scheduled for executing a given set of operation actions, as specified in the IAP. Operational periods can be of various lengths but are typically 12 to 24 hours.

Operational Security (OPSEC): The implementation of procedures and activities to protect sensitive or classified operations involving sources and methods of intelligence collection, investigative techniques, tactical actions, countersurveillance measures, counterintelligence methods, undercover officers, cooperating witnesses, and informants.

Operations Section: The ICS Section responsible for implementing tactical incident operations described in the IAP. In ICS, the Operations Section may include subordinate branches, divisions, and/or groups.

Organization: Any association or group of persons with like objectives. Examples include, but are not limited to, governmental departments and agencies, NGOs, and private sector entities.

Plain Language: Communication that the intended audience can understand and that meets the communicator's purpose. For the purpose of NIMS, plain language refers to a communication style that avoids or limits the use of codes, abbreviations, and jargon, as appropriate, during incidents involving more than a single agency.

Planned Event: An incident that is a scheduled non-emergency activity (e.g., sporting event, concert, parade).

Planning Meeting: A meeting held, as needed, before and throughout an incident to select specific strategies and tactics for incident control operations and for service and support planning.

Planning Section: The ICS Section that collects, evaluates, and disseminates operational information related to the incident and for the preparation and documentation of the IAP. This section also maintains information on the current and forecasted situation and on the status of resources assigned to the incident.

Position Qualifications: The minimum criteria necessary for individuals to fill a specific position.

Prevention: The capabilities necessary to avoid, prevent, or stop a threatened or actual act of terrorism. In national preparedness guidance, the term "prevention" refers to preventing imminent threats.

Private Sector: Organizations and individuals that are not part of any governmental structure. The private sector includes for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, formal and informal structures, commerce, and industry.

Protection: The capabilities necessary to secure the homeland against acts of terrorism and manmade or natural disasters.

Protocol: A set of established guidelines for actions (designated by individuals, teams, functions, or capabilities) under various specified conditions.

Public Information: Processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely, accurate, and accessible information on an incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest to the public, responders, and additional stakeholders (both directly affected and indirectly affected).

Public Information Officer (PIO): A member of the ICS Command Staff responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information needs.

Recovery: The capabilities necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively.

Recovery Plan: A plan developed to restore the affected area or community.

Recovery Support Function (RSF): Organizing structures for key functional areas of assistance outlined in the National Disaster Recovery Framework that group capabilities of various government and private sector partner organizations to promote effective recovery from disasters before and after disasters strike.

Reimbursement: Mechanism used to recoup funds expended for incident-specific activities.

Resource Management: Systems for identifying available resources at all jurisdictional levels to enable timely, efficient, and unimpeded access to resources needed to prepare for, respond to, or recover from an incident.

Resource Team: See Strike Team.

Resource Tracking: The process that all incident personnel and staff from associated organizations use to maintain information regarding the location and status of resources ordered for, deployed to, or assigned to an incident.

Resources: Personnel, equipment, teams, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment to incident operations and for which status is maintained. Resources are described by kind and type and may be used in operational support or supervisory capacities at an incident or at an EOC.

Response: The capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred.

Safety Officer (SOFR): In ICS, a member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring incident operations and advising the Incident Commander or Unified Command on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of incident personnel. The Safety Officer modifies or stops the work of personnel to prevent unsafe acts.

Section: The ICS organizational element having responsibility for a major functional area of incident management (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

Single Resource: An individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew/team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an

Situation Report (SitRep): Confirmed or verified information regarding the specific details relating to an incident.

Span of Control: The number of subordinates for which a supervisor is responsible, usually expressed as the ratio of supervisors to individuals.

Staging Area: A temporary location for available resources in which personnel, supplies, and equipment await operational assignment.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): A reference document or an operations manual that provides the purpose, authorities, duration, and details for the preferred method of performing a single function or several interrelated functions in a uniform manner.

State: Used NIMS to include any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any possession of the United States.

Status Report: Reports, such as spot reports, that include vital and/or time-sensitive information. Status reports are typically function-specific, less formal than situation reports, and are not always issued on a specific schedule.

Strategy: The general plan or direction selected to accomplish incident objectives.

Strike Team (ST): A set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel, common communications, and a leader. In the law enforcement community, strike teams are sometimes referred to as resource teams.

Supervisor: The Incident Command System title for an individual responsible for a Division or Group.

System: Any combination of processes, facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications integrated for a specific purpose.

Tactics: The deployment and directing of resources on an incident to accomplish the objectives.

Task Force (TF): Any combination of resources of different kinds and/or types assembled to support a specific mission or operational need.

Technical Specialist: Individual with special skills that can be used anywhere within the Incident Command System organization. No minimum qualifications are prescribed, as technical specialists normally perform the same duties during an incident that they perform in their everyday jobs, and they are typically certified in their fields or professions.

Terrorism: Any activity that involves an act that is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure and is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state or other subdivision of the United States; and appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, or to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Threat: A natural or manmade occurrence, an individual, an entity, or an action having or indicating the potential to harm life, information, operations, the environment, and/or property.

Tools: Instruments and capabilities that allow the professional performance of tasks, such as information systems, agreements, doctrine, capabilities, and legislative authorities.

Type: A NIMS resource classification that refers to capability of a specific kind of resource to which a metric is applied to designate it as a specific numbered class.

Unified Area Command: version of command established when incidents under an Area Command are multijurisdictional. See Area Command.

Unified Command (UC): An ICS application used when more than one agency has incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions.

Unit: The organizational element with functional responsibility for a specific activity within the Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections in ICS.

Unit Leader: The individual in charge of a unit in ICS.

United States National Grid: A point and area location reference system that FEMA and other incident management organizations use as an accurate and expeditious alternative to latitude/longitude.

Unity of Command: A NIMS guiding principle stating that each individual involved in incident management reports to and takes direction from only one person.

Unity of Effort: A NIMS guiding principle that provides coordination through cooperation and common interests and does not interfere with Federal department and agency supervisory, command, or statutory authorities.

Whole Community: A focus on enabling the participation in incident management activities of a wide range of players from the private and nonprofit sectors, including NGOs and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of all levels of government, to foster better coordination and working relationships**.**

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