Unit 3:
ICS Organization & Features

Unit Terminal Objective

Explain the NIMS Management Characteristics, the organizational structure of the Incident Command System, and the role of the Command and General Staff.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Describe the organizational structure of the Incident Command System.
- Summarize the 14 NIMS Management Characteristics.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of Command and General Staff within the ICS organization.
- Explain the attributes and purpose of Unified Command and Area Command

What is ICS?

The Incident Command System:

- **Is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management concept.**
- **Allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.**

ICS Purposes

Using management best practices, ICS helps to ensure:

- **The safety of responders and others.**
- **The achievement of tactical objectives.**
- **The efficient use of resources.**

Examples of Incidents Managed Using ICS

- Fire, both structural and wildland
- Natural disasters, such as tornadoes, floods, ice storms, or earthquakes
- Human and animal disease outbreaks
- Search and rescue missions
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Criminal acts and crime scene investigations
- Terrorist incidents, including the use of weapons of mass destruction
- NSSE, such as Presidential visits or the Super Bowl
- Other planned events, such as parades or demonstrations

ICS Benefits

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind, size, or complexity.
- Allows personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Is cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

ICS Organization

Differs from the day-to-day, administrative organizational structures and positions.

- **Unique ICS position titles and organizational structures are designed to avoid confusion during response.**
- **Rank may change during deployment. A "chief" may not hold that title when deployed under an ICS structure.**

ICS Structure

NIMS Management Characteristics

14 foundational characteristics of incident Command and Coordination under NIMS:

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

Common Terminology

ICS requires the use of common terminology to define:

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

Use plain language and clear text, not codes.

Management by Objectives

- ICS is managed by objectives.
- Objectives are communicated throughout the entire ICS organization.
- Available resources must support incident objectives.

Incident Action Planning

IC creates an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

- **Specifies the incident objectives.**
- **States the activities to be completed.**
- **Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period.**
- **May be oral or written—except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP.**
- **Takes into account legal and policy considerations and direction.**

Modular Organization

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

Modular Organization (Cont.)

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

Span of Control

- Guideline is 1:5 but actual ratio varies
- Incident personnel use their best judgment to determine effective span of control

Comprehensive Resource Management

Resources include personnel, equipment, teams, supplies and facilities.

Resource management includes processes for:

- **Maintaining accurate, updated resource inventories.**
- **Resource activities to prepare for and respond to an incident.**
- **Reimbursement for resources used.**

Integrated Communications

Incident communications are facilitated through:

- **Common communications plan.**
- **Interoperable communications processes and systems.**
- **Planning, to achieve integrated voice and data communications.**

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

Establishment and Transfer of Command

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.

Chain of Command & Unity of Command

- Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization.
- Unity of command means that every individual has a designated supervisor to whom he or she reports at the scene of the incident.

Unified Command

- Established when no one jurisdiction, agency, or organization has primary authority and/or the resources to manage an incident on its own.
- Manages the incident by jointly approved objectives.

Dispatch/Deployment & Accountability

At any incident, resources should:

- **Deploy only when appropriate authorities request.**
- **Dispatch through established resource mgmt. systems.**
- **NOT spontaneous deploy if not requested by authorities.**
- **Be accountable, check in and out, use tracking systems.**

Incident Facilities and Locations

- Depending on the incident size and complexity, Command establishes support facilities for a variety of purposes and directs 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.

Information and Intelligence Management

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

ICS - Who Does What?

Establishing Incident Command

Upon arriving at an incident, the higher ranking person will either assume command, maintain command as is, or transfer command to a third party.

The MOST QUALIFIED person at the scene is designated as the Incident Commander.

Incident Commander's Role

- Overall leadership for incident response
- Receives policy direction from the Senior Official
- Establishes incident objectives
- Directs development of Incident Action Plan
- Ensures incident safety
- Delegates authority to others
- Ensures coordination with EOC and JIC
- Provides information to internal and external stakeholders
- Establishes and maintains liaison with other agencies participating in the incident

Senior Official's Role in Incident Command

- Delegate authority for on-scene operations to IC/ UC
- Provide policy guidance on priorities and objectives
- Activate specific legal authorities
- Oversee resource coordination and support to the Incident Command through the EOC

Delegation of Authority

Delegation of authority may be in writing (established in advance) or verbal, and include:

- **Legal authorities and restrictions.**
- **Financial authorities and restrictions.**
- **Reporting requirements.**
- **Demographic issues.**
- **Political implications.**
- **Agency or jurisdictional priorities.**
- **Plan for public information management.**
- **Process for communications.**
- **Plan for ongoing incident evaluation.**

Delegation of Authority

Summary: Incident Management Roles

Incident Commander	EOC Director and Staff
• Manage the incident at the scene • Keep the EOC/ MAC Group informed on all important matters pertaining to the incident	Support the Incident Commander and the MAC Group: • Provide Resources • Plan for Resource Requirements • Facilitate Situational Awareness
Joint Information System	**Senior Officials/ MAC Group**
• Enable communication between incident personnel • Provide Critical Information to the Public	Provide the Incident Commander and the EOC staff: • Authority • Mission & Strategic direction • Policy

Command Staff

The incident may designate Command Staff members who will:

- **Provide information, liaison, and safety services for the Incident Command.**
- **Report directly to the Incident Commander.**

General Staff

As the incident expands in complexity, the Incident Commander may add General Staff Sections to maintain span of control.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

Incident Complexity and Resource Needs

Incident Complexity | Resource Needs | ICS Structure

Complexity

Complexity Analysis Factors

In your agency or jurisdiction, what factors may affect the complexity of an incident?

Incident Timeframes

How long will a complex incident last?

How long do we need to be self-sufficient?

How will you know that the incident is over?

Example: Expanding Incident (Part 1)

Scenario: On a chilly autumn day, a parent calls 911 to report a missing 7-year-old child in a wooded area adjacent to a coastal area.

Initially, the Incident Commander manages the General Staff resources.

Example: Expanding Incident (Part 2)

Scenario: As additional resource personnel arrive, the Incident Commander assigns an Operations Section Chief to maintain span of control.

As the incident expands, an Operations Section Chief is assigned.

Example: Expanding Incident (Part 3)

Scenario: With hundreds of responders and volunteers arriving, there is a need for on-scene support of the planning and logistics functions.

The Incident Commander adds a Planning Section Chief and Logistics Section Chief.

- **Remember . . . Not all Sections need to be activated.**

Unified Command

Unified Command does not affect individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

In Unified Command, no agency's legal authorities will be compromised or neglected.

Unified Command (Cont.)

UC establishes:

- Common set of objectives.
- Single IAP.
- Single command structure.
- Single, unified staff under the UC.

Maintains unity of command. Each employee only reports to one supervisor.

There is no one "commander."

Definition of Area Command

Area Command is used to oversee the management of:

- **Multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization; or**
- **A very large incident that has multiple incident management teams assigned to it.**

Objectives Review

1. What is the organizational structure of the Incident Command System?
2. Summarize the 14 NIMS Management Characteristics.
3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Command Staff positions and the General Staff Sections within the ICS organization?
4. What are the attributes and purpose of Unified Command and Area Command?