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# ICS Organizational Structure and Elements

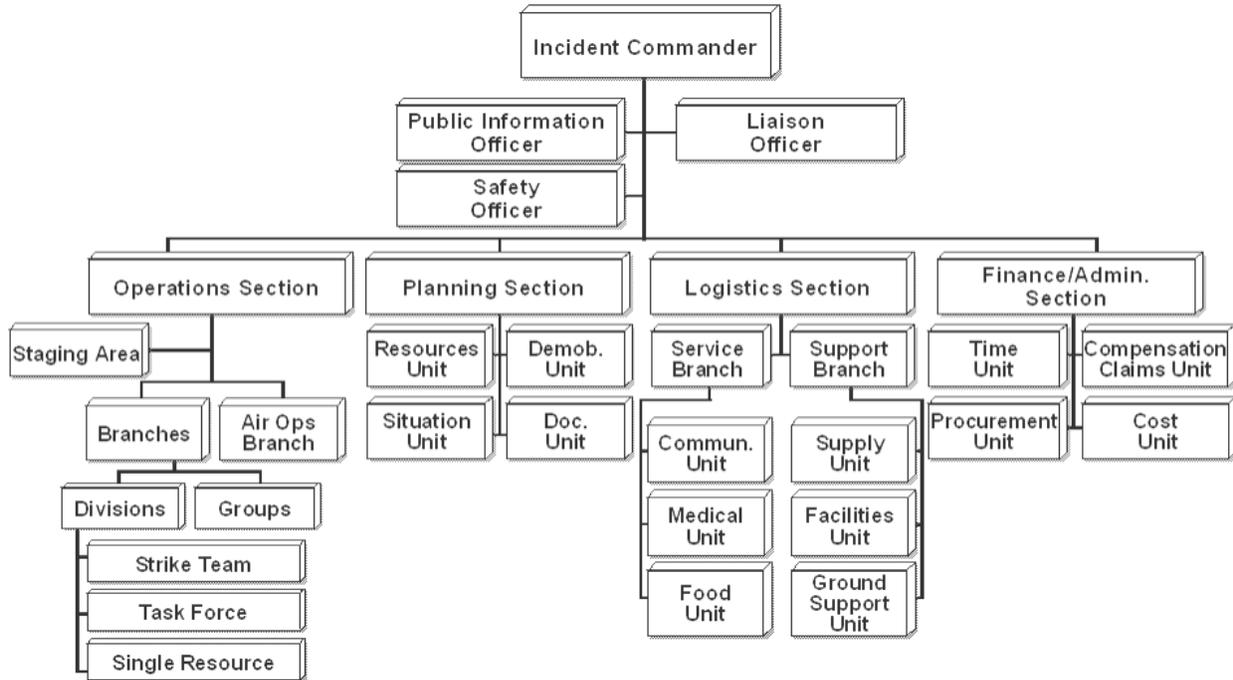
EXTRACTED FROM - E/L/G 0300 INTERMEDIATE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM FOR EXPANDING  
INCIDENTS,  
ICS 300

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**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.

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- **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

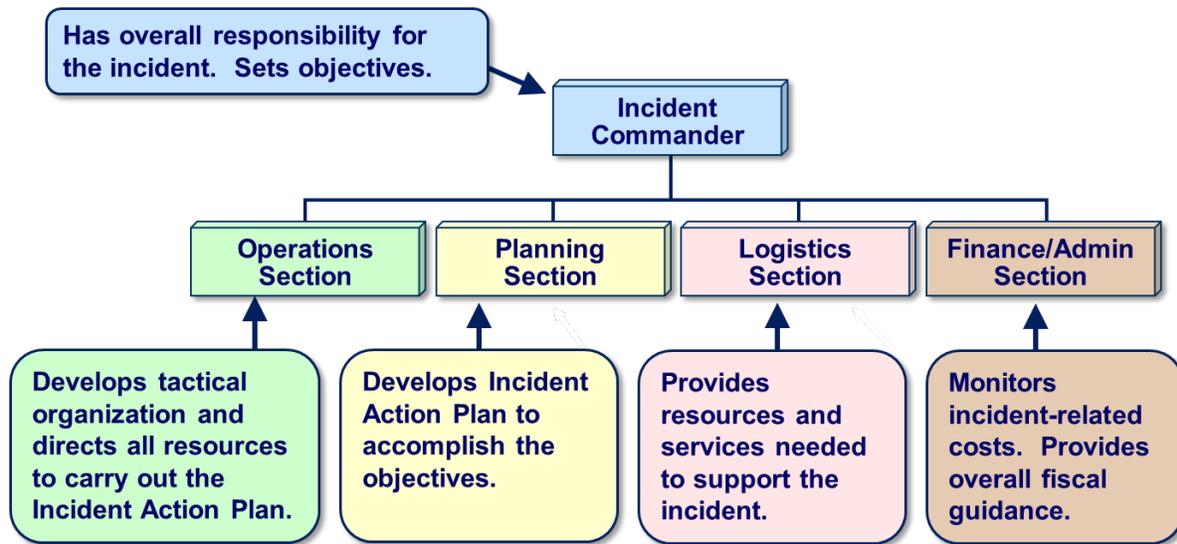
ICS was designed by identifying the primary activities or functions necessary to effectively respond to incidents. Analyses of incident reports and review of military organizations were all used in ICS development. These analyses identified the primary needs of incidents.

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.

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## **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

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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.

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- 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

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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).

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- 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 Responsibilities**

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.

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- 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>.