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## Incident Complexity and Type

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## **Incident Complexity, Complex Incidents and Incident Complex**

The *NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System* defines **Incident Complexity** as the Incident criteria determined by the level of difficulty, severity, or overall resistance faced by incident management or support personnel while trying to manage or support an incident to a successful conclusion or to manage one type of incident or event compared to another type.

Incident Complexity is 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 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.