
Unit 4: Incident Commander and Command Staff Functions

Objectives

At the end of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Identify the five major ICS management functions.
 - Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
 - Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.
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Scope

- Unit Introduction
 - Unit Objectives
 - Management Functions
 - Incident Commander
 - Establishing Command
 - Audio Clips: Voices of Experience
 - Delegating Incident Management Functions
 - Audio Clip: Incident Commander Role
 - Incident Commander Responsibilities
 - Audio Clip: Incident Commander Responsibilities
 - Deputy Incident Commander
 - Command Staff
 - Expanding the Organization
 - Public Information Officer (PIO)
 - Safety Officer
 - Liaison Officer
 - Audio Clips: Meet the Command Staff
 - Command Staff Qualifications
 - Activity: Command Staff Roles
 - Summary
-

Methodology

The instructors will outline the objectives for this unit. The instructors will overview the management functions that are part of every incident, and will then overview the role of the Incident Commander. The participants will listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his role. Next, the instructors will summarize the Incident Commander's responsibilities. The participants will then listen to another audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about responsibilities. After the audio clip, the instructors will introduce the role of the Deputy Incident Commander.

(Continued on next page.)

Methodology (Continued)

Next, the instructors will transition to the Command Staff. The presentation outlines the responsibilities of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. The participants will listen to three audio clips in which members of the Command Staff speak.

The instructors will then lead an activity in which the participants apply the roles of the Command Staff to a scenario. To summarize the unit, the instructors will review the unit objectives and then transition to Unit 5.

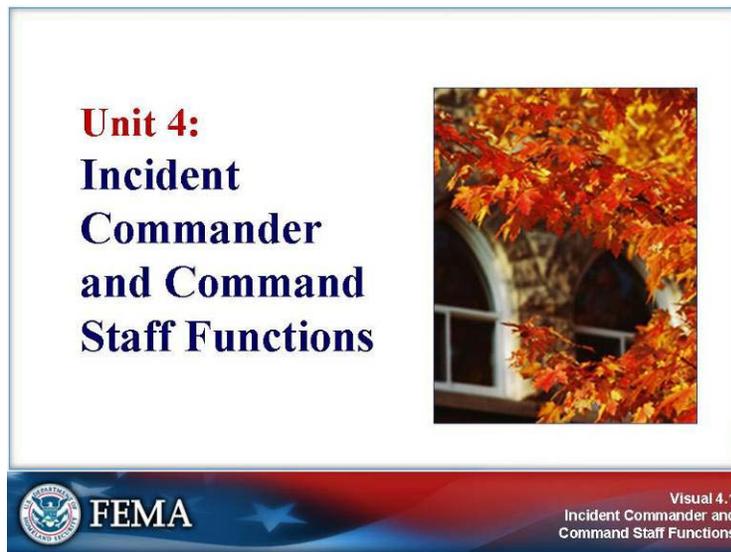
Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

Topic	Time
Unit Introduction and Unit Objectives	5 minutes
Management Functions	5 minutes
Incident Commander	15 minutes
Command Staff	15 minutes
Activity: Command Staff Roles	15 minutes
Summary	5 minutes
Total Time	1 hour



Visual 4.1



Visual Description: Unit Introduction

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that this unit will provide an overview of the role of the Incident Commander and Command Staff, including these topics:

- Five major management functions
- Incident Commander roles and responsibilities
- Command Staff roles and responsibilities



Visual 4.2

Unit Objectives

- Identify the five major ICS management functions.
- Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.



Visual Description: Unit Objectives

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that by the end of this unit they should be able to:

- Identify the five major ICS management functions.
- Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.



Visual 4.3

Function	Description
Incident Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes incident objectives, strategies, and priorities. Assume overall responsibility for the incident.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determines tactics and resources for achieving objectives. Directs the tactical response.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects and analyzes information. Tracks resources Maintains documentation.
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides resources and needed services.
Finance/ Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts for expenditures, claims, and compensation. Procures needed resources.

Visual 4.3
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Management Function Descriptions

Instructor Notes

Present the following points:

Every incident requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for.

Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions still will apply.

There are five major management functions that are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops. These functions include:

Incident Command	Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident.
Operations	Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes the tactics and directs all operational resources.
Planning	Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.
Logistics	Provides resources and needed services to support the achievement of the incident objectives.
Finance & Administration	Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.



Visual 4.4



Visual Description: Incident Commander

Instructor Notes

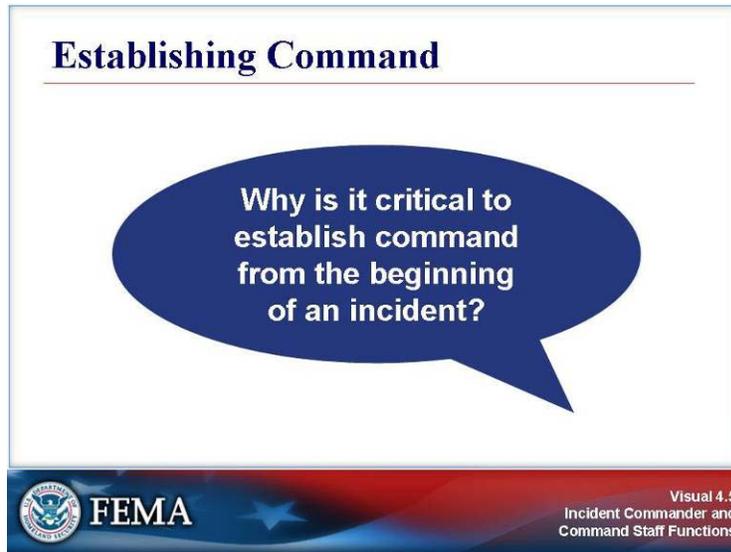
Explain that the Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident by establishing objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics.

Emphasize that the **Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications**. On small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all management functions.

Remind the participants that the Incident Commander is responsible for all ICS management functions until he or she delegates the function.



Visual 4.5



Visual Description: Establishing Command: Why is it critical to establish command from the beginning of an incident?

Instructor Notes

Ask the participants the following question:

Why is it critical to establish command from the beginning of an incident?

If not mentioned by the participants, add the following key points:

- Lack of command becomes a safety hazard for responders, students, and staff.
- Sizeup and decisionmaking are impossible without a command structure.
- It is difficult to expand a disorganized organization if the incident escalates.

Emphasize that all incident responses begin by establishing command.



Visual 4.6

Voices of Experience

Richard W. Lee
Assistant Director
Public Safety
University of
Massachusetts Boston

Frank Zebedis
Chief of Police
Winthrop University

Brendan McCluskey
Executive Director,
Emergency Management
University of Medicine and
Dentistry of New Jersey

Click icons to play audio.

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Visual 4.6
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Voices of Experience

Instructor Notes

Tell the participants they will be hearing “voices of experience” from campus personnel about the role of the Incident Commander in campus incidents.

Click on each icon to hear the “voice of experience.”

Audio Transcripts:

Richard W. Lee
Assistant Director of Public Safety
University of Massachusetts Boston

Who's in charge? Well, that's a complex question. It'll depend on the incident. It'll depend on the location. It'll depend on the jurisdiction. There's a lot of things that come into it but basically the best qualified person who's at the scene when the incident becomes, starts will be in charge and then it will move up the line as more qualified or better qualified or other people show up on the scene. It's very flexible in that respect and ICS and who's in charge doesn't, it's more of a function than it is a person. It's going to be the best person to do the job at the time as opposed to looking around for an arbitrary figure that has a title.

Audio Transcripts: (Continued)

Frank Zebedis
Chief of Police
Winthrop University

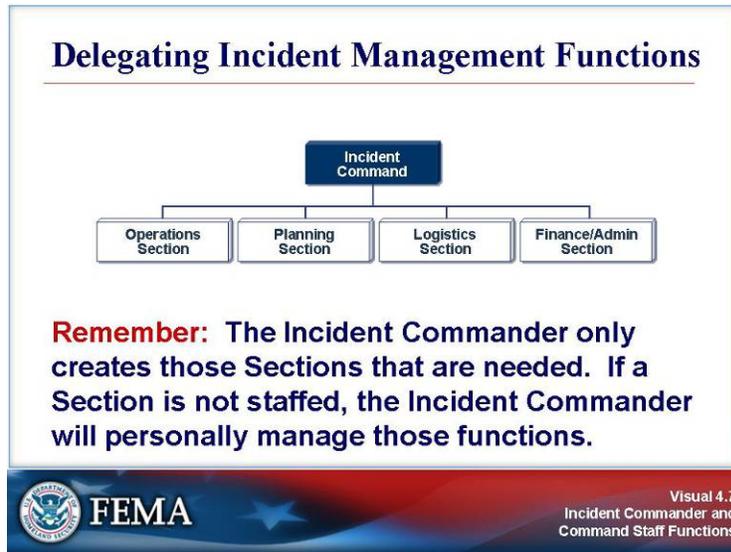
Who's in charge initially, on the onset of an incident, it could be the first, first responder which could be a professor; it could be a faculty member, a staff member, a coach, a citizen, or the first emergency responder who shows up on the scene is in charge, but as the event grows and more qualified people arrive to the scene, whoever is in charge then gets passed off to the more qualified person till eventually you have yourself an Incident Commander who is in position to manage the scene but until that time it takes a while for these responders to get there. It doesn't happen in a matter of seconds or minutes, so that initial person is actually in charge until the scene grows.

Brendan McCluskey
Executive Director, Emergency Management
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

The Incident Commander is in charge and that's a principle of ICS that makes it clear who has the authority or who has the responsibility for overseeing what goes on at an incident scene, and regardless of where you come from, whether you are from the outside or the inside of the institution, whether you are police or fire or public works or public health or student services, the Incident Commander is the one who is going to be running the show. So it doesn't really matter where you're from, what your title is, what level of responsibility you have on a day-to-day basis, once you become part of that incident response, then you look up to that Incident Commander to be the one who is in charge.



Visual 4.7



Visual Description: Delegating Incident Management Functions

Instructor Notes

Remind the participants that the ICS organization is modular and has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. On a larger incident, the Incident Commander may create Sections and delegate the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration functions.



Visual 4.8

Incident Commander Role

Listen to one Incident Commander talk about his role.



Incident Commander

 Click icon to play.

Audio Key Points:
The Incident Commander:

- Provides overall leadership and accountability at the incident scene.
- Delegates authority to others.
- Takes policy direction from the Executive Policy Group.

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Visual 4.8
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Incident Commander Role

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his role.

To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 26 seconds.

Audio Transcript:

My job is to provide the overall leadership and accountability at the incident scene. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. I take policy direction and receive support from the Executive Policy Group. However, at the incident scene, I am in charge.



Visual 4.9

Incident Commander Responsibilities

The Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information to internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.



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Visual 4.9
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Incident Commander Responsibilities

Instructor Notes

Explain that the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information to internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.

Note that these are critical functions and, until delegated, are the responsibility of the Incident Commander.

The Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies. **Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.**



Visual 4.10

Incident Commander Responsibilities

Listen to the Incident Commander talk more about his responsibilities.



Incident Commander

 Click icon to play.

Audio Key Points:

The Incident Commander:

- Is responsible for all activities and functions until delegated and assigned to staff.
- Assesses need for staff.
- Establishes incident objectives.
- Directs staff to develop the Incident Action Plan.



Visual 4.10
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Incident Commander Responsibilities

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that they will now listen to an audio clip in which an Incident Commander talks about his responsibilities.

To play the audio, click on the icon. The total running time for this clip is 41 seconds.

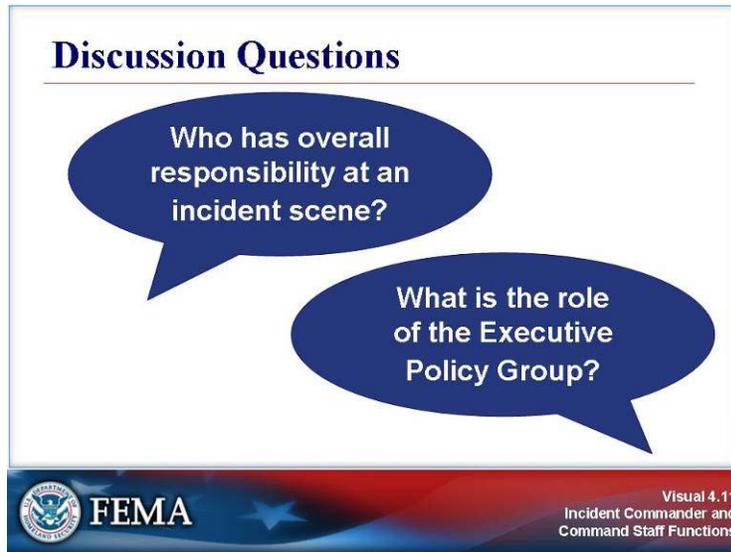
Audio Transcript:

As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I delegate them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long term, I will need more staff. In addition, I may decide that I need a Deputy.

Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the campus administration. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. Most simple incidents don't require written plans. If it were a complex incident, I would direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. The benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need.



Visual 4.11



Visual Description: Discussion Questions: Who has overall responsibility at an incident scene? What is the role of the Executive Policy Group?

Instructor Notes

Ask the following questions:

Who has overall responsibility at an incident scene?

Allow time to respond.

If not mentioned, tell the participants that the correct answer is that the Incident Commander has overall responsibility at an incident scene.

What is the role of the Executive Policy Group?

Allow time to respond.

If not mentioned, explain that the Executive Policy Group provides the following to the Incident Commander:

- Policy
- Mission
- Direction
- Authority



Visual 4.12

Deputy Incident Commander

A Deputy Incident Commander may be designated to:

- Perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.
- Perform the incident command function in a relief capacity.
- Represent an assisting agency that shares jurisdiction.



Visual 4.12
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions



Visual Description: Deputy Incident Commander

Instructor Notes

Tell the group that a Deputy Incident Commander may be designated to:

- Perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.
- Perform the incident command function in a relief capacity.
- Represent an assisting agency that shares jurisdiction.

Note that if a Deputy is assigned, he or she must be fully qualified to assume the Incident Commander's position.



Visual 4.13

Discussion Question

The Deputy Incident Commander is assuming control for the next operational period. What needs to occur before he or she can do so?

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Visual 4.13
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Discussion Question: The Deputy Incident Commander is assuming control for the next operational period. What needs to occur before he or she can do so?

Instructor Notes

Ask the following question:

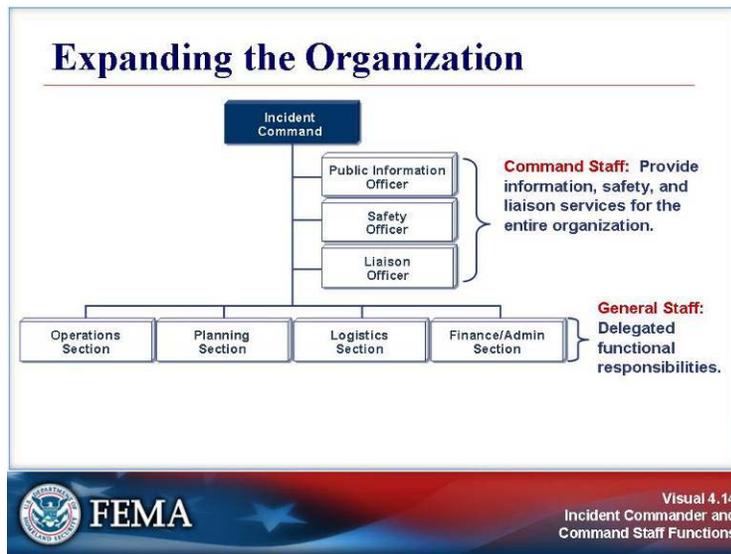
The Deputy Incident Commander is assuming control for the next operational period. What needs to occur before he or she can do so?

Allow time to respond.

If not mentioned, tell the participants that the correct answer is that before the Deputy Incident Commander can assume control for the next operational period, there must be a transfer of command briefing and notification to all personnel that a change in command is taking place.



Visual 4.14



Visual Description: Expanding the Organization

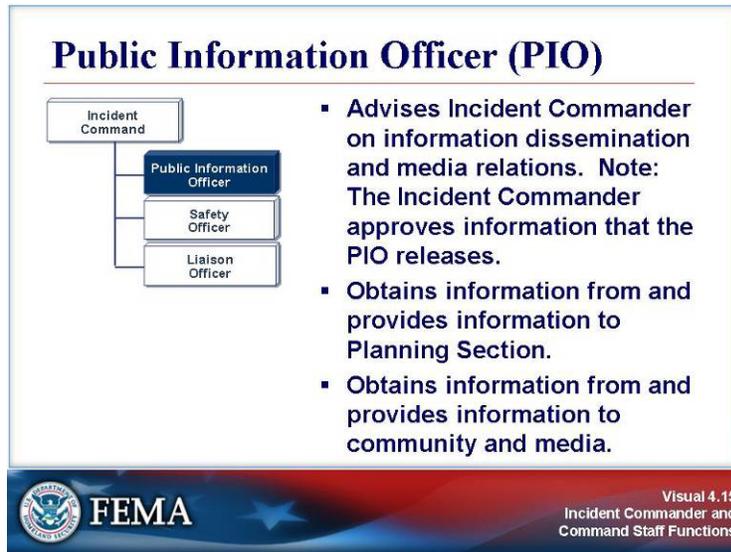
Instructor Notes

As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff.

The Incident Commander will add positions only as needed.



Visual 4.15



Visual Description: Public Information Officer (PIO)

Instructor Notes

Explain to the participants that the Public Information Officer (PIO):

- Advises the Incident Commander on information dissemination and media relations. Note that the Incident Commander approves information that the PIO releases.
- Obtains information from and provides information to the Planning Section.
- Obtains information from and provides information to the community and media.



Visual 4.16



Visual Description: Safety Officer

Instructor Notes

Explain to the participants that the Safety Officer:

- Advises the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety.
- Works with the Operations Section to ensure safety of field personnel.
- Ensures the safety of all incident personnel.



Visual 4.17



Visual Description: Liaison Officer

Instructor Notes

Explain to the participants that the Liaison Officer:

- Assists the Incident Commander by serving as a point of contact for representatives from other response organizations.
- Provides briefings to and answer questions from supporting organizations.



Visual 4.18



Visual Description: Meet the Command Staff

Instructor Notes

Tell the participants they will hear the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer explain their roles as part of the Command Staff.

Click on each position to hear the audio transcript.

Audio Transcript:

Public Information Officer

I report directly to the Incident Commander. I am the primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident and our response to it. I provide information to the media, public, and the campus community. Campus incidents attract a lot of media attention. Without me, media requests would overwhelm the Incident Commander. I also coordinate communications to our internal audiences including both incident staff and campus personnel. It's very important for me to coordinate with other public information staff in the policy group to ensure that we do not issue confusing or conflicting information.

Accurate information is essential. In the end, the Incident Commander will approve all information released at the scene. Other information may be released by the Executive Policy Group. During a complex incident, I may need an assistant to help me.

Audio Transcript: (Continued)

Safety Officer

My job is to ensure the safety of responders. I advise the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety, but I would like to emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility. I work very closely with responders to make sure they are as safe as possible under the circumstances. I conduct risk analyses and implement safety measures. I have the authority to stop any unsafe activity that I observe. During a complex incident, I may need quite a few assistants to be my eyes and ears.

Liaison Officer

I'm the go-between. I assist the Incident Commander by serving as the point of contact for other response organizations providing resources at the scene. I facilitate coordination with the Executive Policy Group, adjacent jurisdictions, and nongovernmental organizations. I respond to requests from incident personnel for contacts among the assisting and cooperating agencies. I also monitor incident operations in order to identify any current or potential problems between the institution and response agencies.



Visual 4.19



Visual Description: Command Staff Qualifications: Who within your organization is qualified to serve as Command Staff?

Instructor Notes

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, the Incident Commander may designate personnel to provide information, safety, and liaison services. In ICS, the following personnel comprise the Command Staff:

- Public Information Officer, who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or parents.
- Safety Officer, who monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all response personnel.
- Liaison Officer, who serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assisting at an incident.

Ask the participants: Who within your organization is qualified to serve as Command Staff?



Visual 4.20

Case Study: Command Staff Roles

Instructions:

1. Working as a team, review the case study presented in your Student Manuals.
2. Identify which Command Staff positions would be assigned.
3. Next, determine what specific activities the Incident Commander would delegate to each Command Staff member.
4. Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 10 minutes.



Visual Description: Case Study: Command Staff Roles

Instructor Notes

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to illustrate how ICS can be used to address incident management issues.

Instructions: Follow the steps below to conduct this activity:

1. Working as a team, review the case study presented on the next page of your Student Manuals.
2. Identify which Command Staff positions would be assigned.
3. Next, if you were the Incident Commander, what specific activities would you delegate to each Command Staff member?
4. Select a spokesperson. Be prepared to present in 10 minutes.



Visual 4.21

Summary

Are you now able to:

- Identify the five major ICS management functions?
- Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff?
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander?
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff?

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Visual 4.21
Incident Commander and
Command Staff Functions

Visual Description: Summary

Instructor Notes

Ask the participants if they are able to:

- Identify the five major ICS management functions.
- Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff.
- Describe the role and function of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the role and function of the Command Staff.

Answer any questions the participants might have about this unit.

Explain that the next unit will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the General Staff.