Incident Command System Overview

US Environmental Protection Agency
Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs)

- **HSPD-5**: Management of Domestic Incidents
- **HSPD-8**: National Preparedness

**Mandates**

- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- National Response Plan (NRP)
**NIMS & NRP**

**NIMS:** Standardizes incident management processes, protocols, and procedures for use by all responders. Uses the Incident Command System (ICS)

**NRF:** Establishes . . .
- Federal coordination structures/mechanisms.
- Consistent approach to managing incidents.
What Is ICS?

The Incident Command System:

- Is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard 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.
History of ICS

Weaknesses in incident management were due to:

- Lack of accountability.
- Poor communication.
- Lack of a planning process.
- Overloaded Incident Commanders.
- No method to integrate interagency requirements.

The identification of these areas of management weakness resulted in the development of ICS.
ICS Benefits

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind or size.
- 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.
PRINCIPLES OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM
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

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

- ICS is managed by objectives.
- Objectives are communicated throughout the entire ICS organization through the incident planning process.
Management by Objectives: Steps

The steps for establishing incident objectives include:

- **Step 1**: Understand agency policy and direction.
- **Step 2**: Assess incident situation.
- **Step 3**: Establish incident objectives.
- **Step 4**: Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
- **Step 5**: Perform tactical direction.
- **Step 6**: Provide necessary followup.
Overall Priorities

Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:

#1: Life Saving

#2: Incident Stabilization

#3: Property Preservation
Reliance on an Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have 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.
Elements of an Incident Action Plan

Every IAP must have four elements:

- What do we want to do?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if someone is injured?
Unity of Command

Under unity of command, personnel:

- Report to only **one** supervisor.
- Receive work assignments only from their supervisors.

Don’t confuse **unity** of command with **Unified** Command!
Unified Command

- Enables all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.
- Allows Incident Commanders to make joint decisions by establishing a single command structure.
- Maintains unity of command. Each employee only reports to one supervisor.
Example: Unified Command

A football team is returning home from a State tournament. Their bus is involved in an accident on the bridge that marks the county line.

- Most of the bus is in Franklin County.
- A small part of the bus is in Revere County (their home county).

Why might a Unified Command be used to manage this incident?
Manageable Span of Control

Span of control:

- Pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident.
- Is key to effective and efficient incident management.
Span of Control Considerations

Span of control considerations are influenced by the:

- Type of incident.
- Nature of the task.
- Hazards and safety factors.
- Distances between personnel and resources.
ICS Management: Span of Control

ICS span of control for any supervisor:

- Is between 3 and 7 subordinates.
- Optimally does not exceed 5 subordinates.
Resource Management

Resource management includes processes for:

- Categorizing resources.
- Ordering resources.
- Dispatching resources.
- Tracking resources.
- Recovering resources.

It also includes processes for reimbursement for resources, as appropriate.
Resources: Tactical & Support

ICS resources include:

- **Tactical Resources**: Personnel and major items of equipment used in the operation
- **Support Resources**: All other resources required to support the incident (e.g., food, communications equipment, or supplies)
Tactical Resources Classifications

- **Assigned**: Currently working on an assignment under the direction of a supervisor

- **Available**: Ready for immediate assignment and has been issued all required equipment

- **Out-of-Service**: Not available or ready to be assigned (e.g., maintenance issues, rest periods)
Integrated Communications

Incident communications are facilitated through:

- The development and use of a common communications plan.
- The interoperability of communication equipment, procedures, and systems.

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

- **Modes**: The "hardware" systems that transfer information.
- **Planning**: Planning for the use of all available communications resources.
- **Networks**: The procedures and processes for transferring information internally and externally.
Mobilization

At any incident:

- The situation must be assessed and the response planned.
- Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration.
- Personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.
COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF
Upon arriving at an incident, the higher ranking person will either assume command, maintain command as is, or transfer command to a third party.

In some situations or agencies, a lower ranking but more qualified person may be designated as the Incident Commander.
Incident Commander

The Incident Commander performs all major ICS command and staff responsibilities unless the ICS functions are delegated and assigned.
Incident Commander Role

The Incident Commander:

- Provides overall leadership for incident response.
- Delegates authority to others.
- Takes general direction from agency administrator/official.
Incident Commander Responsibilities

The Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

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

Command may change to meet the needs of the incident when incidents:

- Expand or contract.
- Change in jurisdiction or discipline.
- Become more or less complex.
Command Staff

It may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate a Command Staff who:

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

Diagram:
- Incident Commander
  - Public Information Officer
  - Liaison Officer
  - Safety Officer
Public Information Officer (PIO)

Advises Incident Commander on information dissemination and media relations. Incident Commander approves information that the PIO releases.

Obtains information from and provides information to Planning Section.

Obtains information from and provides information to community and media.
Safety Officer

Advises Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety.

Works with Operations to ensure safety of field personnel.

Ensures safety of all incident personnel.

Unit 2: ICS Overview
Liaison Officer

Assists Incident Commander by serving as point of contact for agency representatives who are helping to support the operation.

Provides briefings to and answers questions from supporting agencies.
Use of Position Titles

Using specific ICS position titles:

- Provides a common standard for performance expectations.
- Helps to ensure that qualified individuals fill positions.
- Standardizes communication.
- Describes the responsibilities of the position.
# ICS Supervisory Position Titles

Titles for all ICS supervisory levels are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Level</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Support Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident Command</td>
<td>Incident Commander</td>
<td>Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command Staff</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Staff (Section)</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division/Group</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike Team/Task Force</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Single Resource Boss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Staff

Unit 2: ICS Overview

Visual 2.40
The Operations Section Chief:

- Develops and implements strategy and tactics to carry out the incident objectives.
- Organizes, assigns, and supervises the tactical field resources.
- Supervises air operations and those resources in a Staging Area.
Operations Section

- Directs and coordinates all incident tactical operations.
- Is typically one of the first organizations to be assigned to the incident.
- Expands from the bottom up.
- Has the most incident resources.
- May have Staging Areas and special organizations.
Maintaining Span of Control

The following supervisory levels can be added to help manage span of control:

- **Divisions**
  Divide an incident geographically.

- **Groups**
  Describe functional areas of operation.

- **Branches**
  Used when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. Can be either geographical or functional.
Task Forces are a combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Task Force Leader.
Operations Section: Strike Teams

Strike Teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader.
Operations Section: Single Resources

Single Resources may be:

- Individuals.
- A piece of equipment and its personnel complement.
- A crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor.
The Planning Section Chief:

- Gathers, analyzes, and disseminates information and intelligence.
- Manages the planning process.
- Compiles the Incident Action Plan.
- Manages Technical Specialists.
Planning Section

- Maintains resource status.
- Maintains and displays situation status.
- Prepares the Incident Action Plan.
- Develops alternative strategies.
- Provides documentation services.
- Prepares the Demobilization Plan.
- Provides a primary location for Technical Specialists assigned to an incident.
The Logistics Section Chief:

- Provides resources and services required to support incident activities.
- Develops portions of Incident Action Plan and forwards them to Planning Section.
- Contracts for and purchases goods and services needed at the incident.
Logistics Section

Responsible for:

- Communications.
- Medical support to incident personnel.
- Food for incident personnel.
- Supplies.
- Facilities.
- Ground support.
The Finance/Admin Section Chief:

- Is responsible for financial and cost analysis.
- Oversees contract negotiations.
- Tracks personnel and equipment time.
- Processes claims for accidents and injuries.
- Works with Logistics to ensure resources are procured.
Finance/Administration Section

- Contract negotiation and monitoring
- Timekeeping
- Cost analysis
- Compensation for injury or damage to property
ICS . . .

- Is a standardized management tool for meeting the demands of small or large emergency or nonemergency situations.
- Represents "best practices," and has become the standard for emergency management across the country.
- May be used for planned events, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism.
- Is a key feature of NIMS.
ICS:

- **Utilizes management features** including the use of common terminology and a modular organizational structure.
- **Emphasizes effective planning** through the use of management by objectives and Incident Action Plans.
- **Supports responders by providing data** they need through effective information and intelligence management.
Summary

ICS:

- Utilizes the principles of chain of command, unity of command, Unified Command, and transfer of command.
- Helps ensure that resources are ready through accountability and mobilization.
- Ensures full utilization of incident resources by maintaining a manageable span of control, establishing predesignated incident facilities, implementing resource management practices, and ensuring integrated communications.