

# NIMS *Basic*

FEMA 501-8  
March 27, 2006  
Revision 0

## The Incident Command System

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<b>I. Purpose:</b>	This document provides the ICS requirements for the NIMS.
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<b>II. Scope:</b>	All Federal, State, tribal, and local levels of government, as well as many private sector and non-governmental organizations use ICS for a broad spectrum of emergencies. These range from small to complex incidents, both natural and manmade, and include acts of catastrophic terrorism.
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<b>A. Functional Areas</b>	ICS is usually organized around five major functional areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Command</li><li>• Operations</li><li>• Planning</li><li>• Logistics</li><li>• Finance/administration.</li></ul> <p>The IC will establish the sixth functional area, intelligence, based on the requirement of the situation at hand.</p>
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<b>B. Transitional Steps</b>	Some of the more important transitional steps that are necessary to apply ICS in a field incident environment include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize and anticipate the requirement that organizational elements will be activated and take the necessary steps to delegate authority as appropriate.</li><li>• Establish incident facilities as needed, strategically located, to support field operations.</li><li>• Establish the use of common terminology for organizational functional elements, position titles, facilities, and resources.</li><li>• Rapidly evolve from providing oral direction to the development of a written IAP.</li></ul>
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<b>C. Extract</b>	This document is extracted from FEMA 501, <i>National Incident Management System</i> . Refer to the NIMS in the event of conflicting information.
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### III. Table of Contents:

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<b>I. Purpose:</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Scope:</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A. Functional Areas.....	1
B. Transitional Steps.....	1
C. Extract .....	1
<b>III. Table of Contents:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>IV. Definitions:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>V. Process:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
A. ICS Organization .....	3
B. Operations Section .....	5
C. Planning Section.....	11
D. Logistics Section.....	16
E. Finance/ Administration Section .....	21
F. Area Command .....	23
G. Predesignated Facilities and Areas .....	26
H. Planning Process.....	27
I. ICS FORMS.....	35
<b>VI. References:</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>VII. Supersedure:</b> .....	<b>35</b>

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### IV. Definitions:

Refer to the NIMS document for definitions of key terms.

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#### *assigned resources*

Status condition where personnel, teams, equipment, or facilities are checked in (or in the case of equipment and facilities, received for) and are supporting incident operations.

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#### *available resources*

Status condition where personnel, teams, equipment, or facilities are checked in, or in the case of equipment and facilities received for, assigned to an incident, and are ready for a specific work detail or function.

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#### *command staff*

The command staff in an incident management organization consists of the incident command and the special staff positions of PIO, SO, LNO, their assistants, and other positions as required that report directly to the IC.

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#### *EMS*

Emergency Medical Services

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#### *EOC*

Emergency Operations Center

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#### *general staff*

A group of incident management personnel:

- Organized according to function.
  - Reporting to the incident commander.
  - Normally consisting of the operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration section chiefs.
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<i>HAZMAT</i>	Hazardous Material
<i>IAP</i>	Incident Action Plan
<i>IC</i>	Incident Commander, sometime used for Incident Command.
<i>ICP</i>	Incident Command Post
<i>ICS</i>	Incident Command System
<i>IMT</i>	Incident Management Team
<i>NIMS</i>	National Incident Management System
<i>out-of-service resources</i>	Status condition where personnel, teams, equipment, or facilities are assigned to an incident but are unable to function for mechanical, rest, or personal reasons, or because their condition makes them unusable.
<i>UC</i>	Unified Command

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## V. Process:

### A. ICS Organization

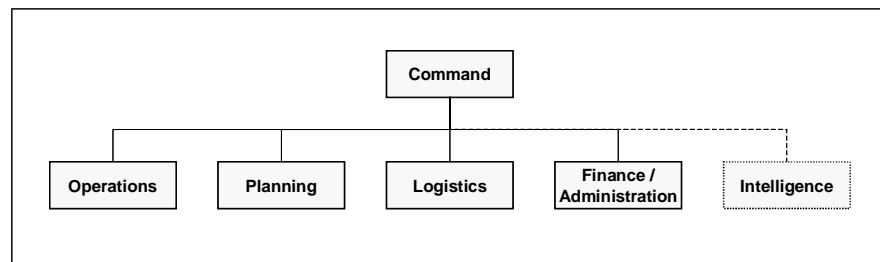
The ICS is applicable across a spectrum of incidents that may differ in terms of size, scope, and complexity because of its:

- Functional unit management structure.
- Modular organizational structure that is extendable to incorporate all necessary elements.

Responsibility and performance begin with the incident command element, the IC, and build from the top down.

#### 1. Functional Structure

Organize the major functional areas in sections as shown in Figure 1. Establish the intelligence section if required.



**Figure 1: Basic Functional Structure**

2. **Modular Extension**

The modular concept is based upon the following considerations.

- Develop the form of the organization to match the function or task to be performed.
- Staff only those functional elements that are required to perform the task.
- Observe recommended span-of-control guidelines.
- Perform the function of any non-activated organizational element at the next highest level.
- Deactivate organizational elements no longer required.

a) *Management Assignments*

The IC's initial management assignments will normally be one or more section chiefs to manage the major ICS functional areas.

- Section chiefs will further delegate management authority for their areas as required.
- If needed, section chiefs may establish branches or units as appropriate for the section.
- Each functional unit leader will further assign individual tasks within the unit as needed.
- Section chiefs serve as the general staff for the IC.

b) *Staffing*

Use the separate sections to organize staff as the need arises.

- If one individual can simultaneously manage all major functional areas, no further organization is required.
- Assign an individual to be responsible for functions requiring independent management.

3. **Titles**

Table 1 identifies the distinctive titles assigned in the ICS organization.

**Table 1: Leadership Titles**

Organizational Element	Leadership Title	Notes
Incident Command	Incident Commander	
Command Staff	Officer	
Section	Section Chief	
Branch	Branch Director	
Divisions/Groups	Supervisor	Supervisor is only used within the operations section.
Unit	Unit Leader	Applies to the subunits of the planning, logistics, and finance/ administration sections.

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## B. Operations Section

The section manages tactical operations at the incident site that are directed toward:

- Reducing the immediate hazard.
- Saving lives and property.
- Establishing situation control.
- Restoring normal conditions.

### 1. Operations Section Chief

The section chief:

- Directly manages all incident tactical activities.
- Implements the IAP.
- Should be designated for each operational period.
- Will have direct involvement in the preparation of the IAP for the period of responsibility.
- May have one or more deputies, preferably from other agencies in multi-jurisdictional incidents.
- Deputies will be qualified to a similar level as the operations section chief.

### 2. Partners

Several types of agencies could be in the operations section, and work together or in combinations depending on the situation.

- Fire
- Law enforcement
- Public health
- Public works
- Emergency services
- Etc.

Other participants may include private individuals, companies, or non-governmental organizations, some of which may be fully trained and qualified to participate as partners in the operations section.

### 3. Tactical Operations

The specific method selected for organizing and executing incident operations will depend on the:

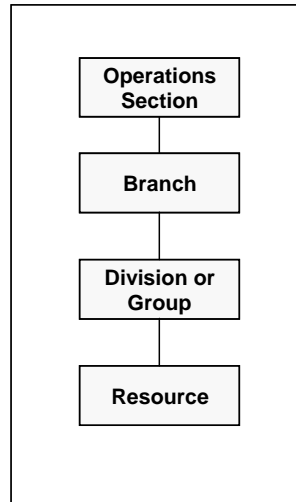
- Type of incident.
  - Agencies involved.
  - Objectives and strategies of the incident management effort.
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## 4. Organization

The organizational structure for incident tactical operations can vary and may be based on:

- A method to accommodate jurisdictional boundaries.
- An approach that is strictly functional in nature.
- A mix of functional and geographical approaches.

Figure 2 shows the primary organizational structure within the operations section.



**Figure 2: Major Organizational Elements**

## 5. Branches

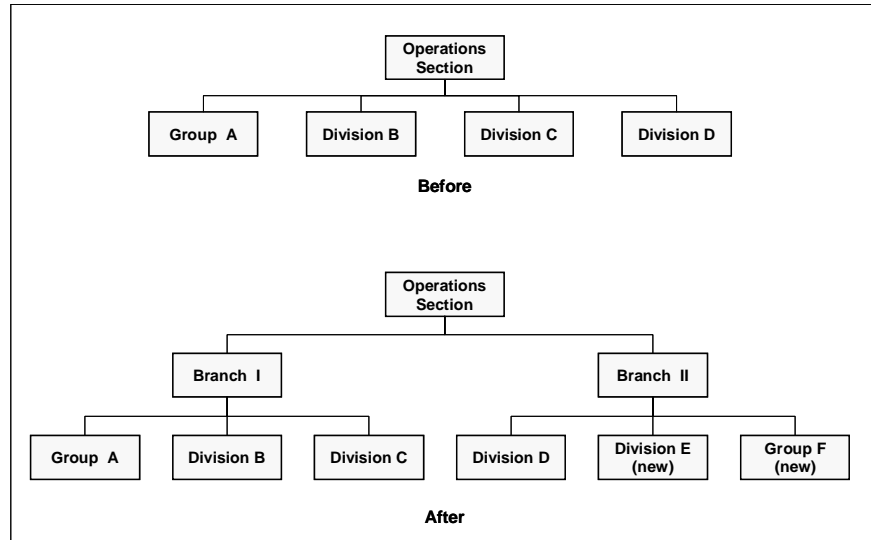
Establish branches for reasons such as:

- The numbers of divisions and/or groups exceed the recommended span of control for the operations section chief.
- The nature of the incident calls for a functional branch structure.
- The incident is multi-jurisdictional.

### a) *Span of Control*

The section chief shall set up branches and allocate divisions and groups within them to stay within the recommended span of control.

**Example:** If one group and three divisions are reporting to the operations section chief, and one division and one group are to be added, a two-branch organization should be formed as shown in Figure 3.

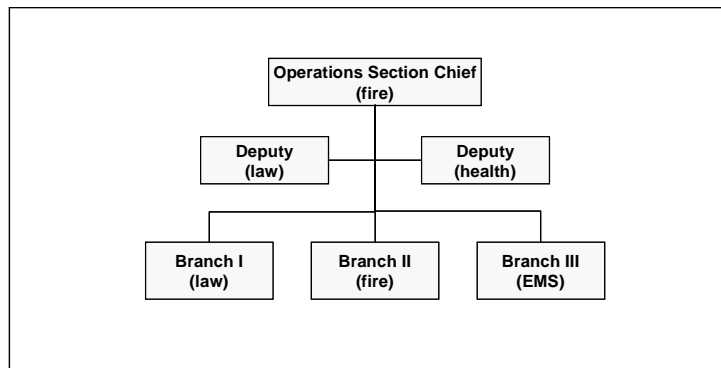


**Figure 3: Two-Branch Organization**

*b) Nature of the Incident*

**Example:** A large aircraft crashes within a city. Various departments within the city, to include police, fire, emergency services, and public health services, would each have a functional branch operating under the direction of a single operations section chief.

In Figure 4 the section chief and deputies are from different departments. The organization could be aligned differently depending upon the city plan and type of emergency.



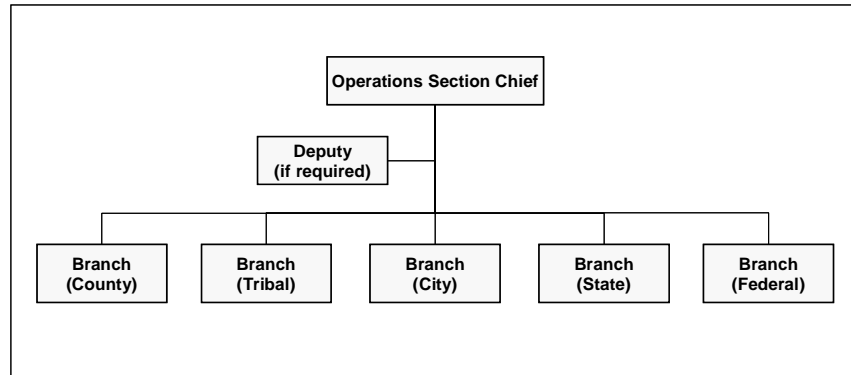
**Figure 4—Functional Branch Structure**

**Note:** This situation could be either a single command or UC, depending upon the jurisdiction.

*c) Multi-Jurisdictional*

Generally, manage multi-jurisdictional resources under the agencies that normally control them.

**Example:** In Figure 5, the response to a major flood might combine Federal, State, Tribal, county, and city resources.



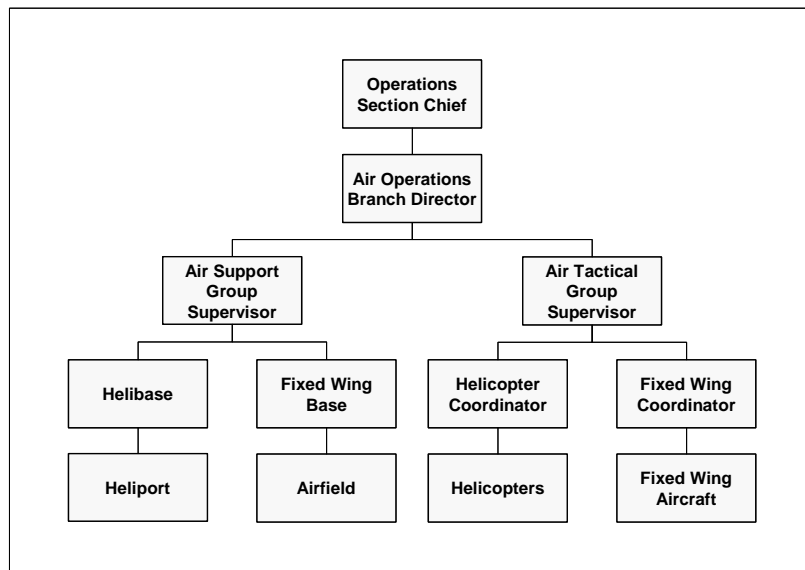
**Figure 5—Multi-jurisdictional Incident**

## 6. Air Operations Branch

An air operations branch may not be applicable to all incidents.

The section chief establishes the branch to meet mission requirements. The size, organization, and operation will depend primarily upon the nature of the incident and the availability of air assets. Figure 6 shows a typical organizational structure for air operations.

**Note:** When only one helicopter is used, it may be directly under the control of the operations section chief.



**Figure 6: Air Operations Organization**

### a) Safety

Flight safety is a paramount concern in complex operations and supports the requirement for a designated air operations branch to avoid conflict of assets, and integrate safety considerations into operational planning and mission execution.



*b) Director*

The section chief may designate a director for the air operations branch when:

- The complexity of air operations requires additional support and effort.
- The incident requires mixing tactical and logistical utilization of helicopters and other aircraft.

*c) Air Tactical Group Supervisor*

Designate an air tactical group supervisor whenever both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft must operate simultaneously within the incident air space.

This individual coordinates all airborne activity with the assistance of a helicopter coordinator and a fixed-wing coordinator.

*d) Air Support Group*

The air support group:

- Establishes and operates bases for helicopter air assets.
- Maintains required liaison with off-incident fixed-wing bases.
- Is responsible for all timekeeping for aviation assets assigned to the incident.

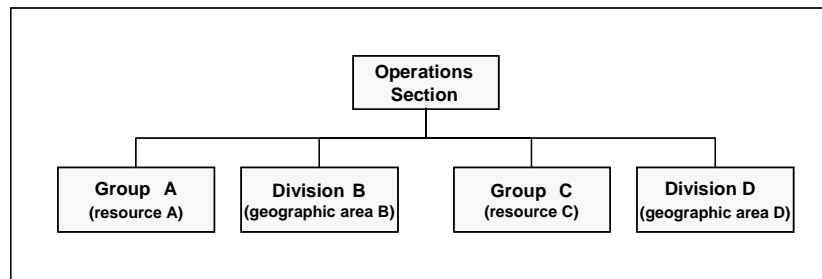
**7. Divisions and Groups**

Divisions and groups are established when the number of resources exceeds the section chief's manageable span of control. See Figure 7.

The use of the two terms is necessary, because:

- Division always refers to a geographical assignment, and demarcate physical or geographical areas of operation within the incident area.
- Group always refers to a functional assignment, and demarcate functional areas of operation for the incident.

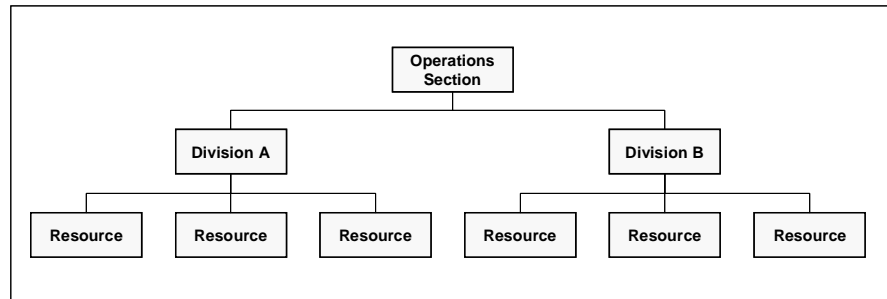
Both divisions and groups may be used in a single incident if there is justification for their use and if proper coordination can be effected.



**Figure 7: Divisions and Groups**

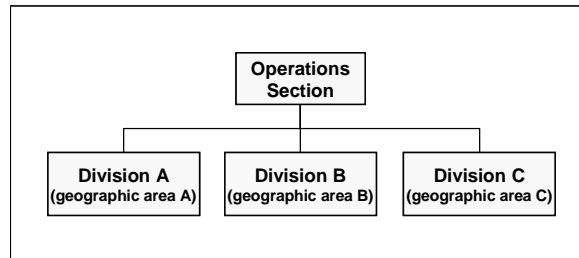
*a) Divisions*

As additional types of resources are added, the organization is restructured to assign resources into divisions as in Figure 8.



**Figure 8—Two-Division Organization**

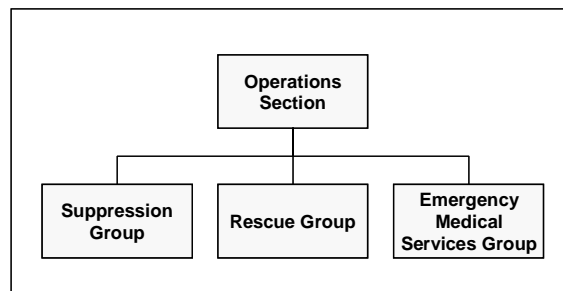
The best way to create geographical divisions is to divide an area according to natural separations of terrain or other prominent geographical features such as rivers. The size of the division should comply with appropriate span-of-control guidelines. See Figure 9.



**Figure 9—Use of Geographical Divisions**

*b) Functional Groups*

Use functional groups for areas of like activity, such as rescue, evacuation, and medical shown in Figure 10.



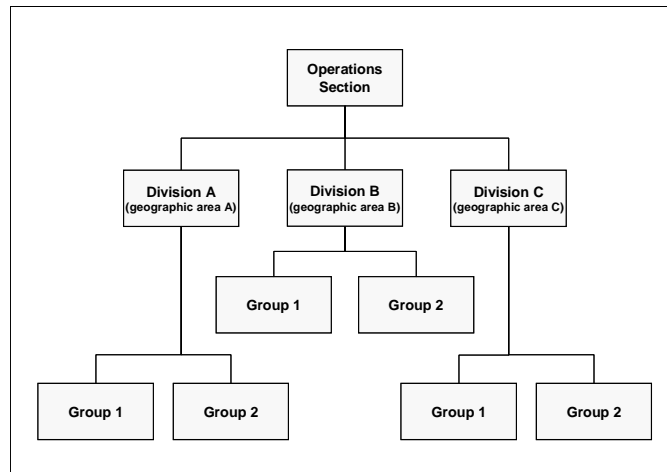
**Figure 10: Use of Functional Groups**

*c) Combined Geographical Divisions and Functional Groups*

It is also possible to have both divisions and groups within the Operations Section.

**Example:** Divisions A, B, and C are established based on jurisdictional boundaries, and might each have two groups, 1 and 2, to provide a management structure for different types of resources within that division

as shown in Figure 11.



**Figure 11: Combined Divisions and Groups**

**8. Resource Organization**

Initially in any incident, assigned individual resources will report directly to the IC. As the incident grows in size or complexity, individual resources may be organized and employed in a number of ways to facilitate incident management.

*a) Single Resources*

Employ these resources on an individual basis, as is typically the case in the initial response to the incident.

During sustained operations, situations will typically arise that call for the use of a single helicopter, vehicle, mobile equipment, etc.

*b) Task Forces*

Combine resources into task forces to manage several key resource elements under one individual's supervision to aid in span of control.

*c) Strike Teams*

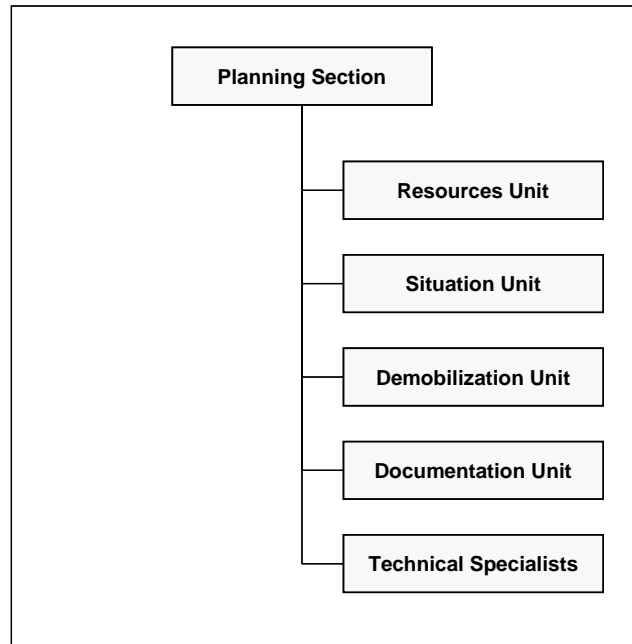
Strike teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type. They represent known capability and are highly effective management units.

**C. Planning Section**

- Collects, evaluates, and disseminates tactical information pertaining to the incident.
- Maintains information and intelligence on the current and forecasted situation.
- Maintains the status of resources assigned to the incident.
- Prepares and documents IAPs and incident maps.
- Gathers and disseminates information and intelligence critical to the incident.

## 1. Organization

The planning section has four primary units as shown in Figure 12, and may include a number of technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation and forecasting requirements for additional personnel and equipment.



**Figure 12: Planning Section Organization**

### 2. Section Chief

- Oversees all incident-related data gathering and analysis regarding incident operations and assigned resources.
- Develops alternatives for tactical operations.
- Conducts planning meetings.
- Prepares the IAP for each operational period.
- Is normally from the jurisdiction with primary incident responsibility.
- May have one or more deputies from other participating jurisdictions.

### 3. Resources Unit

- Makes certain that all assigned personnel and other resources have checked in at the incident.
- Has a system for keeping track of the current location and status of all assigned resources.
- Maintains a master list of all resources committed to incident operations.
- Categorizes resources by capability and capacity across disciplines.
- Continuously tracks resource status to effectively manage their employment.

#### a) *Managing Resources*

Use the following tools to maintain an up-to-date and accurate picture of resource utilization.

- 
- b) Status Conditions* Tactical resources at an incident can have one of three status conditions:
- Assigned resources.
  - Available resources.
  - Out-of-service resources.
- 
- c) Changes in Status* Normally, the individual who changes the status of a resource, such as equipment location and status, is responsible for promptly informing the resources unit.
- 
4. **Situation Unit**
- Collects, processes, and organizes on-going situation information.
  - Prepares situation summaries.
  - Develops projections and forecasts of future events related to the incident.
  - Prepares maps and gathers and disseminates information and intelligence for use in the IAP.
  - May also require the expertise of technical specialists, and operations and information security specialists.
- 
5. **Documentation Unit**
- Maintains accurate and complete incident files, to include a complete record of the major steps taken to resolve the incident.
  - Provides duplication services to incident personnel.
  - Files, maintains, and stores incident files for legal, analytical, and historical purposes.
  - Prepares the IAP.
  - Maintains many of the files and records that are developed as part of the overall IAP and planning function.
- 
6. **Demobilization Unit**
- Develops an *Incident Demobilization Plan* that includes specific instructions for all personnel and resources that will require demobilization.
  - Ensures the approved plan is distributed at the incident, and elsewhere as necessary.
  - Should begin its work early in the incident in order to create rosters of personnel and resources, and obtain any missing information as check-in proceeds.
- Note:** City and county provided resources are usually local in nature and many do not require specific demobilization instructions.
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## 7. Technical Specialists

The ICS functions in a wide variety of incident scenarios that may require the use of technical specialists with special skills that are activated only when needed.

Specialists may serve anywhere within the organization, to include the command staff. No minimum qualifications are prescribed as technical specialists:

- Normally perform the same duties during an incident that they perform in their everyday jobs.
  - Are typically certified in their field or profession.
- 

### a) Assignments

Technical specialists assigned to the planning section may:

- Report directly to its chief.
- Report to any function in an existing unit.
- Form a separate unit within the planning section.
- Depending upon the requirements of the incident and the needs of the section chief.
- When the expertise will be required on a long-term basis and may require several personnel.
- If, it is advisable to establish a separate technical unit.
- Also be assigned to other parts of the organization (e.g., to the operations section to assist with tactical matters or to the finance/administration section to assist with fiscal matters).

**Example:** A legal specialist or legal counsel may be assigned directly to the command staff to advise the IC on legal matters such as emergency proclamations, legality of evacuation orders, and legal rights and restrictions pertaining to media access.

Generally, assign an individual to the situation unit if the expertise is needed for only a short period of time and normally involves only one individual.

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### b) Types

The incident itself will primarily dictate the needs for technical specialists. Below are representative examples of the kinds of specialists that may be required.

- Meteorologist
  - Environmental impact specialist
  - Resource use and cost specialists
  - Flood control specialist
  - Water use specialist
  - Explosives specialist
  - Structural engineering specialist
  - Firefighter specialist
  - Medical/health care specialist
-

- 
- Medical intelligence specialist
  - Pharmaceutical specialist
  - Veterinarian
  - Agricultural specialist
  - Toxic substance specialist
  - Radiation health physicist
  - Intelligence specialist
  - Infectious disease specialist
  - Chemical or radiological decontamination specialist
  - Law enforcement specialist
  - Attorney/legal counsel
  - Industrial hygienist
  - Transportation specialist
  - Scientific support coordinator
- 

*c) Technical Unit*

Establish a distinct technical unit to meet specific requirements.

**Example:** Establish a unit to coordinate and manage large volumes of environmental sampling/analytical data from multiple sources in the context of certain complex incidents, particularly those involving biological, chemical, and radiation hazards.

To meet this requirement, an environmental unit could be established within the planning section to facilitate interagency environmental data management, monitoring, sampling, analysis, and assessment. The environmental unit would prepare environmental data for the situation unit and work in close coordination with other units and sections within the ICS structure to enable effective decision support to the IC/Unified Commander.

Technical specialists assigned to the environmental unit might include a scientific support coordinator, and sampling, response technologies, weather forecast, resources at risk, cleanup assessment, and disposal specialists.

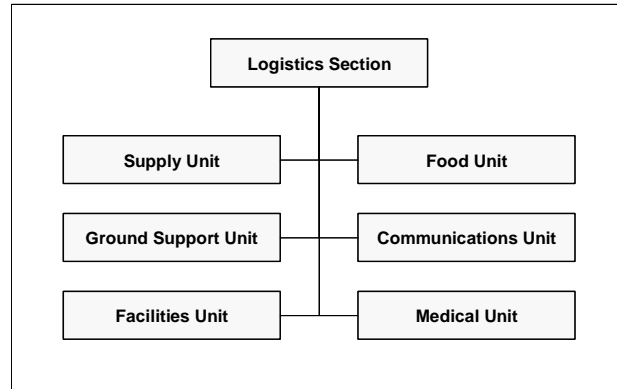
**Example:** Tasks accomplished by the environmental unit would include the following:

- Identifying sensitive areas and recommend response priorities.
  - Developing a plan for collecting, transporting, and analyzing samples.
  - Providing input on wildlife protection strategies.
  - Determining the extent and effects of site contamination.
  - Developing site cleanup and hazardous material disposal plans.
  - Identifying the need for and obtain permits and other authorizations.
-

## D. Logistics Section

The section as shown in Figure 13:

- Meets all support needs for the incident (except aircraft).
- Orders resources through appropriate procurement authorities from off-incident locations.
- Provides facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fueling, food service, communications, and medical services for incident personnel.

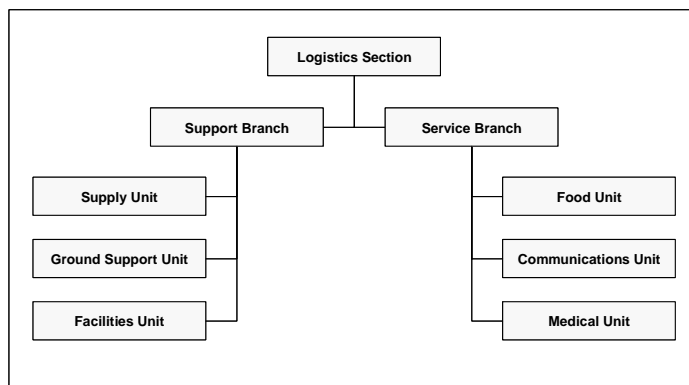


**Figure 13: Logistics Section Organization**

### 1. Management

The section chief leads the logistics section, and is encouraged to have a deputy when all designated units are established at an incident site.

The logistics section can be divided into two branches as shown in Figure 14 when the incident is very large or requires a number of facilities with large numbers of equipment.



**Figure 14: Two-Branch Organizational Structure**

### 2. Supply Unit

The unit:

- Orders all incident-related resources, personnel, and supplies.
- Provides the support required to receive, process, store, and distribute all supply orders.



- 
- Handles tool operations, which include storing, disbursing, and servicing of all tools and portable, nonexpendable equipment.

Once established, the supply unit also has the basic responsibility for all off-incident ordering, including:

- All tactical and support resources (including personnel).
  - All expendable and non-expendable supplies required for incident support.
- 

### 3. Facilities Unit

- Sets up, maintains, and demobilizes all facilities used in support of incident operations.
- Provides facility maintenance and security services required to support incident operations.
- Sets up the ICP, incident base, camps, and trailers or other forms of shelters for use in and around the incident area.
- Orders such additional support items as portable toilets, shower facilities, and lighting units through supply.
- Provides and sets up necessary incident personnel support facilities, including areas for:
  - Food and water service.
  - Sleeping.
  - Sanitation and showers.
  - Staging.

**Note:** Appropriate non-government organization staff such as the American Red Cross or other similar entities will normally conduct sheltering for victims.

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### 4. Ground Support Unit

- Maintains and repairs primary tactical equipment, vehicles, and mobile ground support equipment.
  - Records usage time for all ground equipment (including contract equipment) assigned to the incident.
  - Supplies fuel for all mobile equipment.
  - Provides transportation in support of incident operations (except aircraft).
  - Develops and implements the *Incident Traffic Plan*.
- 

#### a) *Transportation Pool*

The ground support unit:

- Maintains a transportation pool for major incidents, consisting of vehicles such as staff cars, buses, pick-ups, etc. that are suitable for transporting personnel.
  - Provides up-to-date information on the location and status of transportation vehicles to the resources unit.
-

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## 5. Communications Unit

Use a common communications plan and an incident-based communications center, established solely for the use of tactical and support resources assigned to the incident, to manage incident communications.

The communications unit:

- Develops the *Incident Communications Plan* to make the most effective use of the communications equipment and facilities assigned to the incident.
- Installs and tests all communications equipment.
- Supervises and operates the incident communications center.
- Distributes and recovers communications equipment assigned to incident personnel.
- Maintains and repairs communications equipment on site.

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### a) Incident Planning Meetings

The unit leader should attend all incident-planning meetings to ensure that the communication systems available for the incident can support tactical operations planned for the next operational period.

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### b) Advance Planning

Advance planning is required to ensure that an appropriate communications system is available to support incident operations requirements. The unit is responsible for:

- Effective communications planning for the ICS, especially in the context of a multi-agency incident.
- Determining required radio nets.
- Developing frequency inventories.
- Establishing interagency frequency assignments.
- Frequency-use agreements.
- Ensuring the interoperability and the optimized use of all assigned communications capabilities.
- Interagency radio caches.

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### c) Clear Messaging

**Note:** Do not use codes for radio communication.

A clear spoken message based on common terminology that avoids misunderstanding in complex and noisy situations reduces the chance for error.

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### d) Communications Plan

Most complex incidents will require an *Incident Communications Plan*. The unit:

- Plans the use of radio frequencies.
  - Establishes networks for command, tactical, support, and air units.
  - Sets up on-site telephone and public address equipment.
  - Provides any required off-incident communication links.
-

e) *Radio Networks*

Net set-ups should be determined as a joint function with planning, operations, and logistics. The unit leader will develop the overall plan.

Radio networks for large incidents will normally be organized as follows:

- Command net links together incident command, command staff, section chiefs, branch directors, division, and group supervisors.
- Tactical nets are established to connect agencies, departments, geographical areas, or specific functional units.
- A support net may be established primarily to handle changes in resource status but also to handle logistical requests and other non-tactical functions.
- Ground-to-air net coordinates ground-to-air traffic, either a specific tactical frequency may be designated, or regular tactical nets may be used.
- Air-to-air nets will normally be pre-designated and assigned for use at the incident.

6. Food Unit

The unit must:

- Be able to anticipate incident needs, both in terms of the number of people who will need fed, and whether the type, location, or complexity of the incident indicates that there may be special food requirements.
- Supply food needs for the entire incident, including all remote locations (i.e., camps and staging areas).
- Supply food service to operations personnel unable to leave operational assignments.
- Interact closely with the elements in table 2.

Efficient food service is especially important for any extended incident.

**Table 2: Interaction with Other ICS Elements**

Element	Activity
Planning Section	Determine the number personnel that must be fed.
Facilities Unit	Arrange food-service areas.
Supply Unit	Order food.
Ground Support Unit	Obtain ground transportation.
Air Operations Branch Director	Obtain air transportation.

**Note:** Appropriate non-government organizations, such as the American Red Cross or other similar entities will normally conduct victim feeding activities.

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*a) Planning*

Careful planning and monitoring is required to ensure food safety before and during food service operations, including the assignment of public health professionals with expertise in environmental health and food safety.

The unit:

- Determines food and water requirements.
  - Plans menus.
  - Orders food.
  - Provides cooking facilities.
  - Cooks, serves, and maintains food service areas to include food security and safety concerns.
- 

**7. Medical Unit**

The unit is responsible for the effective and efficient provision of medical services to incident personnel. The primary responsibilities of the unit include:

- Develop the Incident Medical Plan.
  - Develop procedures for handling any major medical emergency.
  - Provide continuity of medical care, including vaccinations, vector control, occupational health, prophylaxis, and mental health services.
  - Provide transportation for injured incident personnel.
  - Ensure tracking of patient movement from origin, to care facility, to final disposition.
  - Assist in processing all paperwork related to injuries or deaths of assigned personnel.
  - Coordinate personnel and mortuary affairs for fatalities.
- 

*a) Medical Plan*

The unit leader will develop a medical plan, which will form part of the IAP and should provide:

- Specific information on medical assistance capabilities at incident locations.
- Potential hazardous areas or conditions.
- Off-incident medical assistance facilities.
- Procedures for handling complex medical emergencies.

The unit will:

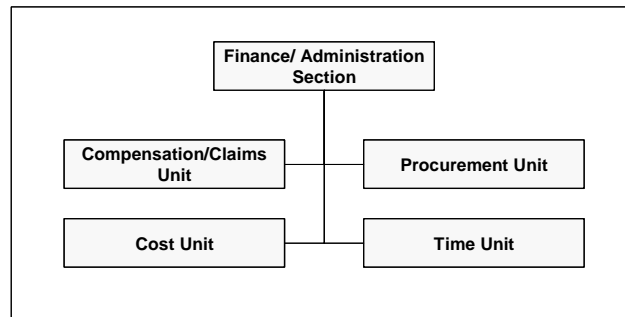
- Assist the finance/administration section with the administrative requirements related to injury compensation, including obtaining written authorizations, billing forms, witness statements, administrative medical documents, and reimbursement as required.
  - Ensure patient privacy to the fullest extent possible.
-

## E. Finance/ Administration Section

The section is established when there is a specific need for:

- Financial reimbursement for individual and agency/department.
- Administrative services to support incident management activities.

Under the ICS, not all agencies will require such assistance. In large, complex scenarios involving significant funding originating from multiple sources, the finance/administrative section is an essential part of the ICS. Figure 15 illustrates the basic section organizational structure.



**Figure 15: Finance and Administration Section Organization**

### 1. Section Chief

Because of the specialized nature of finance functions, the section chief should come from the agency that has the greatest requirement for this support. The section chief:

- May have a deputy.
- Monitors multiple sources of funds.
- May need to monitor cost expenditures to ensure that statutory rules that apply are met.
- Must track and report the financial “burn rate” to the IC as the incident progresses. This allows the IC to forecast the need for additional funds before operations are affected negatively, which is particularly important if significant operational assets are under contract from the private sector.

Close coordination with the planning section and logistics section is essential so that operational records can be reconciled with financial documents.

**Note:** In some cases, only one specific function may be required (e.g., cost analysis), which a technical specialist in the planning section could provide.

### 2. Subordinate Units

The section chief will determine the need for establishing specific subordinate units, given current and anticipated future requirements.

In some of the functional areas (e.g., procurement), an actual unit need not be established if it would consist of only one person. In such a case, assign a procurement technical specialist in the planning section.

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*a) Time Unit*

The unit ensures:

- Proper daily recording of personnel time according to the policies of the relevant agencies.
  - The unit leader may require the assistance of personnel familiar with the relevant policies of any affected agencies.
  - Determine excess hours worked and maintain in separate logs.
- The logistics section records or captures equipment usage time.
  - Through the ground support unit for ground equipment.
  - Through the air operations support group for aircraft.

If applicable, depending on the agencies involved, personnel time records will be:

- Collected and processed for each operational period.
- Verified, checked for accuracy, and posted according to existing policies.

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*b) Procurement Unit*

- Administers all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts.
- Coordinates with local jurisdictions to identify sources for equipment.
- Prepares and signs equipment rental agreements.
- Processes all administrative requirements associated with equipment rental and supply contracts.
- Work closely with local cost authorities.

**Note:** In some agencies, the supply unit in the logistics section will be responsible for certain procurement activities.

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*c) Compensation and Claims Unit*

A single unit handles injury compensation and claims.

- The specific activities are varied and may not always be accomplished by the same person.
- Close coordination with the medical unit is essential since they may also perform certain of these tasks.

The individual handling injury compensation:

- Ensures that all forms required by workers' compensation programs and local agencies are completed.
- Maintains files on injuries and illnesses associated with the incident and ensures that all witness statements are obtained in writing.

The claims function handles investigations of all civil tort claims involving property associated with or involved in the incident. The compensation and claims unit:

- Maintains logs on the claims.

- 
- Obtains witness statements.
  - Documents investigations and agency follow-up requirements.
- 

*d) Cost Unit*

- Provides cost analysis data for the incident.
  - Must ensure proper identification of equipment and personnel for which payment is required.
  - Obtains and records all cost data.
  - Analyzes and prepares estimates of incident costs.
  - Provides input on cost estimates for resource use to the planning section.
  - Must maintain accurate information on the actual costs of all assigned resources.
- 

**F. Area Command**

Generally, the administrator of the agency having jurisdictional responsibility for the incident makes the decision to establish an area command when the complexity of the incident, and incident management span-of-control considerations so dictate.

Incidents that are of different types and/or do not have similar resource demands, are usually handled as separate incidents or are coordinated through an EOC.

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**1. Relevant Events**

The area command oversees the management of:

- Public health emergencies that are non-site specific, not immediately identifiable, geographically dispersed, and evolve over time ranging from days to weeks.
  - Multiple incidents that are each being handled by a separate ICS organization.
  - A very large or complex incident that has multiple incident management teams engaged.
  - A number of incidents in the same area and of the same type, such as two or more HAZMAT spills or fires.
  - Incidents that may compete for the same resources.
  - Events that call for a coordinated intergovernmental, private sector, and nongovernmental organization response, with large-scale coordination typically conducted at a higher jurisdictional level.
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*a) Unified Area Command*

Establish a unified area command if the incidents under the authority of the area command span multiple jurisdictions. This allows each jurisdiction involved to have appropriate representation in the area command.

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<b>2. Responsibilities</b>	<p>The area command does not have operational responsibilities. For the incidents under its authority, the area command:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sets overall agency incident-related priorities.</li><li>• Allocates critical resources according to the established priorities.</li><li>• Ensures that incidents are properly managed.</li><li>• Ensures effective communications.</li><li>• Ensures that incident management objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policies.</li><li>• Identifies critical resource needs and reports them to the interagency coordination system (generally an EOC).</li><li>• Ensures that short-term “emergency” recovery is coordinated to assist in the transition to full recovery operations.</li><li>• Provides for personnel accountability and a safe operating environment.</li></ul>
<b>3. Action Plan</b>	<p>The area command develops an action plan detailing incident management priorities, needs, and objectives. This plan should clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State the policy, objectives, and priorities.</li><li>• Provide a structural organization with clear lines of authority and communications.</li><li>• Identify incident management functions to be performed by the area command, i.e. public communications.</li></ul>
<b>4. Organization</b>	<p>The area command organization operates under the same basic principles as ICS. Typically, key personnel who comprise an area command will possess appropriate qualifications and certifications.</p>
<b>a) Area Commander</b>	<p>The area commander is responsible for the overall direction of the incident management teams assigned to the same incident or to incidents in close proximity, and ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflicts are resolved.</li><li>• Incident objectives are established.</li><li>• Strategies are selected for the use of critical resources.</li><li>• Coordination with Federal, State, tribal, local, and participating private organizations.</li></ul>
<b>b) Logistics Chief</b>	<p>Provides facilities, services, and materials at the area command level and ensures the effective allocation of critical resources and supplies among the incident management teams.</p>
<b>c) Planning Chief</b>	<p>Collects information from various incident management teams to assess and evaluate potential conflicts in establishing incident objectives, strategies, and priorities for allocating critical resources.</p>

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5. Support Positions	Activate the following positions as necessary.
<hr/>	
a) <i>Critical Resources Unit Leader</i>	Tracks and maintains the status and availability of critical resources assigned to each incident under the area command.
<hr/>	
b) <i>Situation Unit Leader</i>	Monitors the status of objectives for each incident or IMT assigned to the area command.
<hr/>	
c) <i>Public Information Officer</i>	Provides public information coordination between incident locations and serves as the point of contact for media requests to the area command.
<hr/>	
d) <i>Liaison Officer</i>	Helps maintain off-incident interagency contacts and coordination.
<hr/>	
e) <i>Aviation Coordinator</i>	Assigned when aviation resources are competing for common airspace and critical resources.  Works in coordination with incident aviation organizations to evaluate potential conflicts, develop common airspace management procedures, and prioritize critical resources.
<hr/>	
6. Location	Area commands must establish effective, efficient communications, and coordination processes and protocols with subordinate ICPs and other incident management organizations involved in incident operations.  Follow these guidelines in locating an area command. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To the extent possible, the area command should be in close proximity to the incidents under its authority to make it easier for the area commander and the ICs to meet and otherwise interact.</li><li>• Do not collocate an area command with any individual ICP. Doing so might cause confusion with the command and management activities associated with that particular incident.</li><li>• The facility used to house the organization should be large enough to accommodate a full area command staff. It should also be able to accommodate meetings between the area command staff, the ICs, and agency executives, as well as news media representatives.</li><li>• An area command may be collocated with an EOC.</li></ul>
<hr/>	
7. Reporting Relationships	The following reporting relationships will apply when an area command is involved in coordinating multiple incident management activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The IC under the area command's authority reports to the area commander.</li><li>• The area commander is accountable to the agencies, jurisdictional executives, or administrators.</li><li>• Establish a unified area command if one or more incidents within the area command are multi-jurisdictional. In this instance, the ICs report to the unified area commander for their jurisdiction.</li></ul>

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## G. Predesignated Facilities and Areas

The requirements of the incident and the desires of the IC will determine the specific kinds of facilities used, their locations, and may include the below designated facilities, among various others.

- Several kinds and types of facilities may be established in and around the incident area.
- The incident base and camps may often be established in areas having existing structures, which may be used in their entirety or only in part.

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### 1. ICP

The ICP is the location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization. It is typically comprised of the IC and immediate staff, and may include other designated incident management officials and responders from Federal, State, tribal and local agencies, as well as private sector and non-governmental organizations.

- Locate the ICP at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site.
- Conduct the direct, on-scene control of tactical operations.
- Conduct incident planning.
- Establish an incident communications center (normally).

The ICP may:

- Be collocated with the incident base, if the communications requirements can be met.
- Perform local EOC-like functions in the context of smaller jurisdictions or less complex incident scenarios.

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### 2. Incident Base

Establish a single incident base to house all equipment and personnel support operations.

- Primary support activities are conducted at an incident base.
- The logistics section is located at this base.
- The incident base should be designed to support operations at multiple incident sites.

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### 3. Camps

Camps are separate from the incident base and:

- Are located in satellite fashion from the incident base where they can best support incident operations.
  - Provide certain essential auxiliary forms of support, such as food, sleeping areas, and sanitation.
  - May provide minor maintenance and servicing of equipment.
  - May be relocated to meet changing operational requirements.
-

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#### 4. Mobilization/ Staging Areas

A staging area can be any location in which personnel, supplies, and equipment can be temporarily housed or parked while awaiting operational assignment, and may include temporary feeding, fueling, and sanitation services.

- Personnel will check in with the resources unit at the staging area.
- Check in supplies and equipment with the supply unit.
- Resources report to the staging area manager for direction if neither of these functions is activated.

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##### a) Management

The operations section chief will:

- Establish staging areas for temporary location of available resources to enable positioning of, and accounting for resources not immediately assigned.
- Assign a manager for each staging area.

The staging area manager will:

- Check in all incoming resources.
- Dispatch resources at the operations section chief's request.
- Request logistics section support, as necessary, for resources located in the staging area.

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#### H. Planning Process

Sound, timely planning provides the foundation for effective domestic incident management. The process described below represents a template for strategic, operational, and tactical planning that includes all steps an IC and other members of the command and general staffs take to develop and disseminate an IAP.

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##### 1. Overview

The planning process may begin with the:

- Scheduling of a planned event.
- Identification of a credible threat.
- Initial response to an actual or impending event.

The process continues with the implementation of the formalized steps and staffing required to develop a written IAP.

The planning process provides:

- Current information that accurately describes the incident situation and resource status.
- Predictions of the probable course of events.
- Alternative strategies to attain critical incident objectives.
- An accurate, realistic, IAP for the next operational period.

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##### a) Initial Planning

During the initial stages of incident management, planners must develop a simple plan that can be communicated through concise oral briefings. Frequently, this plan must be developed very quickly and with incomplete

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situation information.

As the incident management effort evolves over time, additional lead-time, staff, information systems, and technologies enable more detailed planning and cataloging of events and “lessons learned.”

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## 2. IAP

A clear, concise IAP template is essential to guide the initial incident management decision process and the continuing IMT collective planning activities.

The IAP:

- Must provide clear strategic direction.
  - Includes a comprehensive listing of the tactical objectives, resources, reserves, and support required to accomplish each overarching incident objective.
  - Will state a coordinated sequence of events for achieving multiple incident objectives.
- 

## 3. Primary Phases

Five primary phases enable the accomplishment of incident objectives within a specified time and must be followed in sequence to ensure a comprehensive IAP.

The planning process is essentially the same for the:

- IC developing the initial plan.
  - IC and operations section chief revising the initial plan for extended operations.
  - IMT developing a formal IAP.
- 

### a) *Understand the Situation*

Gather, record, analyze, and display situation and resource information in a manner that will ensure:

- A clear picture of the magnitude, complexity, and potential impact of the incident.
  - The ability to determine the resources required to develop and implement an effective IAP.
- 

### b) *Establish Incident Objectives and Strategy*

The incident objectives and strategy must conform to the legal obligations and management objectives of all affected agencies.

- Formulate and prioritize incident objectives, and identify an appropriate strategy.
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate reasonable alternative strategies that will accomplish overall incident objectives to determine the most appropriate strategy for the situation at hand.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Public health and safety factors.
  - Estimated costs.
  - Various environmental, legal, and political considerations.
-

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<i>c) Develop the Plan</i>	<p>The IC is usually responsible for this phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine the tactical direction and the specific resource, reserves, and support requirements for implementing the selected strategy for one operational period.</li><li>• Base decisions on resources allocated to enable a sustained response.</li><li>• Determine the availability of resources.</li><li>• Develop a plan that makes the best use of resources.</li></ul>
<hr/>	
<i>d) Prepare and Disseminate</i>	<p>Prepare the plan in a format that is appropriate for the level of complexity of the incident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For the initial response, the format is a well-prepared outline for an oral briefing.</li><li>• Develop the plan in writing, according to ICS procedures, for most incidents that will span multiple operational periods.</li></ul>
<hr/>	
<i>e) Evaluate and Revise</i>	<p>Evaluate planned events and check the accuracy of information used for planning subsequent operational periods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The general staff should regularly compare planned progress with actual progress.</li><li>• Use deviations that occur and emerging information in the first step of the process used to modify the current plan, or develop the plan for the subsequent operational period.</li></ul>
<hr/>	
4. Planning Activities	<p>The following sections describe the general responsibilities associated with the planning meeting and IAP development. The planning section chief should review these with the general staff prior to the planning meeting.</p> <p>Prior to the formal planning meetings, each command staff member and functional section chief is responsible for gathering certain information to support decisions.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Patient care and medical services for non-incident personnel (i.e. victims of a bioterror attack, hurricane victims, etc.) are critical operational activities associated with a host of potential incident scenarios. As such, these activities are incorporated into the IAP as key considerations of the plans and operations sections. These sections should be staffed accordingly with appropriately qualified EMS public health, medical personnel, technical experts, and other professional personnel as required).</p>
<hr/>	
5. General Responsibilities	<p>The section chiefs collectively develop the plan during the planning meeting.</p>
<hr/>	
<i>a) Planning Section Chief</i>	<p>Conduct the planning meeting and coordinate preparation of the IAP.</p>

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- b) *IC*
- Provide overall control objectives and strategy.
  - Establish procedures for off-incident resource ordering.
  - Establish procedures for resource activation, mobilization, and employment.
  - Approve the completed IAP plan by signature.
- 
- c) *Finance Section Chief*
- Provide cost implications of control objectives as required.
  - Evaluate the facilities in use to determine any needed special arrangements.
  - Ensure that the IAP is within the financial limits established by the IC.
- 
- d) *Operations Section Chief*
- Determine division work assignments and resource requirements.
- 
- e) *Logistics Section Chief*
- Ensure that incident facilities are adequate.
  - Ensure that the appropriate agency dispatch centers know the resource ordering procedure.
  - Develop transportation system to support operational needs.
  - Ensure that the section can logistically support the IAP.
  - Place orders for resources.
  - Incorporate the following critical operational activities into the IAP.
    - o Feeding for victims.
    - o Sheltering for victims.
- 
6. *Preplanning Steps*
- Understand the problem and establish objectives and strategy.
- 
- a) *Planning Section Chief*
- The planning section chief should take the following actions prior to the initial planning meeting.
- If possible obtain completed ICS Form 201, *Incident Briefing*
  - Evaluate current situation and decide if the current planning is adequate for remainder of operational period (i.e., until next plan takes effect).
  - Apprise the IC and operations section chief of any suggested revisions to current plan as necessary.
  - Establish planning cycle for the IC.
  - Determine planning meeting attendees in consultation with the IC.
  - Establish location and time for Planning Meeting.
  - Ensure that planning boards and forms are available.
  - Notify necessary support staff of meeting and assignments.
  - Ensure that a current situation and resource briefing will be available for meeting.
-

- 
- Obtain estimate of regional resources availability from agency dispatch for use in planning for next operational period.
  - Obtain necessary agency policy, legal, or fiscal constraints for use in Planning Meeting.
- 

*b) Attendees*

For major incidents, attendees should include:

- IC
  - Command staff members
  - General staff members
  - Resources unit leader
  - Situation unit leader
  - Air operations branch director (if established)
  - Communications Unit Leader
  - Technical specialists (as required)
  - Agency representatives (as required)
- 

**7. Conducting the Planning Meeting**

The planning meeting steps below provide a basic sequence to aid the planning section chief in developing the IAP.

The planning steps are with the:

- ICS Planning Matrix Board.
- ICS Form 215, *Operational Planning Worksheet*.

The worksheet layout is the same as the planning matrix board.

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*a) IAP*

Every incident must have an action plan. However, not all incidents require written plans. Base the need for written plans and attachments on the requirements of the incident and the decision of the IC.

- Briefing on situation and resource status (planning).
  - Set control objectives (IC).
  - Plot control lines and division boundaries (operations).
  - Specify tactics for each division/group (operations).
  - Specify resources needed by division/group (operations, planning).
  - Specify facilities and reporting locations plot on map (operations, planning, logistics).
  - Place resource and overhead personnel order (logistics).
  - Consider communications, medical, and traffic plan requirements (planning, logistics).
  - Finalize, approve, and implement IAP (IC, planning, operations).
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8. **Situation and Resource Status** The planning section chief and/or resources and situation unit leaders should provide an up-to-date briefing on the situation. Information for this briefing may come from any or all of the following sources:
- Initial IC
  - *Incident Briefing Form*
  - Field observations
  - Operations reports
  - Regional resources and situation reports
- 
9. **Control Objectives** The IC completes this step.
- Control objectives will consider the total incident situation and are not limited to any single operational period.
- The IC will establish:
- The general strategy to be used.
  - State any major policy, legal, or fiscal constraints in accomplishing the objectives.
  - Appropriate contingency considerations.
- 
10. **Control Lines and Division Boundaries** The operations section chief for the next operational period in conjunction with the planning section chief will normally accomplish this step.
- The planning section chief will:
- Determine control line locations and plot on the map.
  - Establish division/branch boundaries for geographical divisions and plot on the map.
  - Determine the need for functional group assignments for the next operational period.
- 
11. **Specify Tactics** The operations section chief will establish the specific work assignments for each division for the next operational period after establishing geographical assignments.
- Note:** It may be necessary or desirable to establish a functional group in addition to geographical divisions.
- Tactics (work assignments) must be:
- Specific.
  - Within the boundaries set by the IC's general control objectives (strategies).
  - Recorded on the planning matrix.
- The IC, operations section chief, and logistics section chief should consider the need for any alternative strategies or tactics and ensure that these are properly noted on the planning matrix.
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## 12. Resources

After specifying tactics for each division, the operations section chief and planning section chief will determine the resource needs by division to accomplish the work assignments.

Resource needs:

- Will be recorded on the planning matrix.
  - Should be considered on basis of the type of resources required to accomplish the assignment.
- 

## 13. Operations Facilities and Reporting Locations

The operations, planning, and logistics section chiefs should designate and make available facilities and reporting locations required to accomplish operations section work assignments.

The operations section chief should indicate:

- The reporting time requirements for the resources.
  - Any special resource assignments.
- 

## 14. Resource and Personnel Order

The planning section chief should perform a resource needs assessment based on the:

- Needs provided by the operations section chief.
- Resources data available from the planning section resources unit.

The planning matrix, when properly completed, will show resource requirements and resource availability to meet those requirements. Additional resource needs can be determined by subtracting resources available from those required.

A new resource order can be:

- Developed from this assessment.
  - Provided to the IC for approval.
  - Placed through normal dispatch channels by the logistics section.
- 

## 15. Communications, Medical, and Traffic Plan Requirements

The IAP will normally consist of:

- ICS Form 202, *Incident Objectives*
- ICS Form 203, *Organization Chart*
- ICS Form 204, *Division Assignment List*
- A map of the incident area.

The planning section chief should review the division and group tactical work assignments for any changes due to lack of resource availability prior to plan completion.

The resource unit may then transfer division assignment information including alternatives from the planning matrix board or ICS 215 onto the *Division Assignment List*.

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a) *Supporting Attachments*

Larger incidents may require additional supporting attachments, such as:

- ICS Form 205, *Communications Plan*
- ICS Form 206, *Medical Plan*
- Traffic Plan.

The planning section chief must determine the need for these attachments and ensure that the appropriate units prepare such attachments. For major incidents, the IAP and attachments will normally include the items in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: IAP Common Components for a Major Incident**

Component	Form	Preparer
Incident Objectives	ICS 202	IC
Organization List or Chart	ICS 203	Resources Unit
Assignment List	ICS 204	Resources Unit
Communications Plan	ICS 205	Communications Unit
Logistics Plan		Logistics Unit
Responder Medical Plan	ICS 206	Medical Unit
Incident Map		Situation Unit
Health and Safety Plan		Safety Officer

**Table 3: IAP Scenario Dependent Components for a Major Incident**

Component	Preparer
Air Operations Summary	Air Operations
Traffic Plan	Ground Support Unit
Decontamination Plan	Technical Specialist
Waste Management or Disposal Plan	Technical Specialist
Demobilization Plan	Demobilization unit
Operational Medical Plan	Technical Specialist
Evacuation Plan	Technical Specialist
Site Security Plan	Law Enforcement Specialist
Investigative Plan	Law Enforcement Specialist
Evidence Recovery Plan	Law Enforcement Specialist
Other	As Required

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**16. Finalize, Approve, and Implement IAP**

The planning section ensures the IAP is completed, reviewed, and distributed using the following sequential steps.

- Set deadline for completing IAP attachments.
  - Obtain plan attachments and review for completeness and approvals.
  - Determine number of IAP copies required.
  - Arrange with documentation unit to reproduce IAP.
  - Review IAP to ensure it is up-to-date and complete prior to operations briefing and plan distribution.
  - Provide IAP briefing plan as required and distribute plan prior to beginning of new operational period.
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**I. ICS FORMS**

The ICS Forms discussed in this document are from the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. Other emergency management organizations also provide ICS hardcopy forms and software packages to generate ICS forms that may be used for incident management purposes.

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**VI. References:**

FEMA 501, *National Incident Management System*  
*Incident Communications Plan*  
*Incident Demobilization Plan*  
*Incident Medical Plan*  
*Incident Traffic Plan*

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*ICS Forms*

ICS 201, *Incident Briefing Form*  
ICS 202, *Incident Objectives*  
ICS 203, *Organization Chart*  
ICS 204, *Division Assignment List*  
ICS-205, *Incident Radio Communications Plan*  
ICS-206, *Medical Plan*  
ICS-215, *Operational Planning Worksheet*

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**VII. Supersedure:**

Original

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