

ICS 200 – Lesson 4: Incident Resources

Lesson Overview

The **Incident Resources** lesson:

- Describes functional roles in resource management.
- Describes the kinds of resources often used in incidents.
- Discusses how resources are procured.
- Provide examples of how resources are typed for various applications.
- Explains why resource status keeping is important to effective incident operations.

This lesson should take approximately **35 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 4 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the need for proper incident resource management.
- Describe the role of each function in resource management.
- Describe how incident resources are procured.
- Explain the purpose of resource typing.
- Describe three ways to organize resources and the advantages of each.
- Describe the three resource status conditions used at an incident, and the purpose and limits associated with each.
- Explain how resource status is changed, how notification of changes is made, and how status is maintained at an incident.

Roaring River Flood: Incident Update

- Key personnel are now onsite.
- The following incident facilities have been established:
 - Incident Command Post
 - Base
 - Helibase
 - Three staging areas
- Resources are arriving and being processed.
- Personnel are being organized and matched with equipment.

Most of the key personnel are now onsite. There are numerous personnel resources gathering in the three staging areas. Materials and equipment are arriving by plane, truck, and other means.

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Roaring River Flood: Incident Update (continued)

The Incident Commander is working closely with the Logistics Section to ensure that approved resources are ordered and distributed to requesting organizational elements. The Planning Section is busy developing maps, assessing damage, tracking resources assigned to the incident, and projecting future needs. The Finance and Administration Section is tracking time and expenditures, and making sure there are funds and contracts in place to cover the costs of the resources. Strike Team and Task Force Leaders are organizing their arriving personnel into teams, and personnel are being matched with their equipment.

Efficient and effective resource identification, procurement, and on-scene supervision are the keys to a successful and cost-effective incident outcome.

Resource Management Activities

Resource management activities fall into three general areas:

- **Resource Identification:** What resources are needed, and how they are defined or “typed?”
- **Resource Procurement:** Where are the resources located, who owns them, and what are the conditions of procurement and restrictions on use?
- **Resource Supervision:** How are the resources “packaged” for tactical application and tracking?

Resource Management Responsibilities

All ICS functions participate in resource management.

Incident Commander

“If this were a small incident, I would approve the ordering and release of resources in person. I would also assign and supervise those resources. On large incidents like the Roaring River Flood, I’ll have to delegate these responsibilities.”

Operations Section Chief

“As the Operations Section Chief, I supervise the majority of resources assigned to this incident, including detailed tracking of resources within my Section. When Operations needs additional resources, I order them directly from the Logistics Section.”

Planning Section Chief

“The Planning Section tracks all resources assigned to the incident including, but not limited to, those assigned to Operations. On small incidents, we may track resources assigned to hazardous tactical operations. On incidents as large as this one, it’s very difficult for us to track tactical resources in great detail. In addition to our resource tracking responsibilities, we assist in resource identification and procurement by forecasting incident growth and the need for specialized resources.”

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Logistics Section Chief

“Logistics provides “one-stop shopping” for all resources on the incident. Without us, it would be virtually impossible to provide cost-effective resource management, especially on large incidents like this. We’re also responsible for feeding all personnel and for fueling and maintaining equipment resources while they are used on the incident.”

Finance/Administration Section Chief

“The Finance and Administration Section is responsible for negotiating any contracts needed to purchase resources. We’re also responsible for maintaining time records and processing payroll documents. Because we pay the bills for the incident, we will probably be working long after everyone else has been demobilized.”

Identifying and Defining Resources

ICS resources can be factored into two categories:

- Tactical Resources
- Support Resources

Tactical Resources

Personnel and major items of equipment (with or without operator) available or potentially available to the Operations function on assignment to incidents are called **tactical resources**.

Because tactical resources are deployed in direct response roles, they are the primary concern in resource management. All tactical resources are assigned to the Operations Section.

Support Resources

In addition to tactical resources, there are support resources.

Support resources include all other resources required to support the incident. Food, communications equipment, tents, and buses with drivers are examples of support resources.

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Describing Resources: Kind

Resources can be described by both **kind** and **type**. Let's begin by reviewing resource kinds.

The **kind of resource** describes what the resource is. For example helicopter, medical staff, portable X-ray machine, bulldozer, and plow are all kinds of resources.

Kinds of resources can be as broad as necessary to suit the incident application.



Describing Resources: Kind

Some kinds of resources may be used by different ICS sections.



Logistics Section
Use: Potable Water

Operations Section
Use: Pumping Operation

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Describing Resources: Type

The **type of resource** describes a capability for that kind of resource.

Many tactical resources, such as helicopters, will have a wide variety of capabilities and uses. If the Operations Section Chief simply ordered a helicopter (kind of resource), the resource delivered may be inadequate.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the various kinds of resources used for ICS applications be “typed” whenever possible.



Advantages of Typing Resources

“Typing” is a system of describing the sized, capability, equipment, and staffing characteristics of a specific resource. Following are the advantages of typing resources:

- **In Planning:** Knowing the specific capabilities of the kinds of resources helps planners decide the type and quantity of resources needed.
- **In Ordering:** Ordering resources by type saves time, reduces errors, and reduces nonessential communications.
- **In Monitoring Resource Use:** Type descriptions enable managers to monitor for undercapability or overcapability. Careful monitoring of resource performance can lead to the use of less costly resources, ultimately increasing work performance and reducing cost.

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Procuring Resources: Sources

After identifying a needed resource, it is usually easy to figure out where to get it. Typical procurement sources for ICS resources include:

- **In-house sources:** Other locations or agencies within USDA.
- **Mutual-aid agencies:** Agencies with which USDA has formal agreements covering the use or sharing of resources.
- **Other government entities:** Agencies at any level of government that can provide the required resources.
- **Commercial sources:** Private-sector producers and/or suppliers of the needed resource.

Processing Orders

Even though processing orders for resources is the responsibility of the Logistics Section, all sections should understand the information needed to implement an efficient ordering process. Make sure that orders:

- Are approved by the chain of command.
- Describe the specific requirements, if the resource is not typed.
- State any other important factors or restrictions.
- Name a suggested source (if known).
- Include a specific timeframe in which the resource is needed.
- Specify a delivery point or contact.

Checklist for Ordering Resources

Instructions: Use the questions below as a guide when ordering resources. Considering each of these questions will help the Logistics Section process your order.

- ✓ Has the request followed the appropriate chain of command?
- ✓ Is the resource typed, or if not, are its requirements clearly defined?
- ✓ Which is more important: time or cost? (The faster you need it, the more it costs. If time is not a factor, cost can be weighted more heavily.)
- ✓ Do you have a suggested source in mind?
- ✓ Are there any restrictions on ordering? Some resources must be ordered through specific channels. Others may require special authorizations. Some resources may require a bid process.
- ✓ When is the resource needed? (ASAP is not an acceptable timeframe.)
- ✓ What is the delivery point or contact information?

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Payment

Procuring incident resources requires coordination between the Logistics and Finance/Administration Sections. In order to establish an effective procurement process, personnel assigned to Logistics and Finance/Administration must have the necessary procurement and contract authorities (another benefit of typing).

Incident activities may be halted or hampered without onsite procurement and contracting authority.

Organizing Resources

After resources have arrived at the incident, many will need to be organized to ensure efficient supervision within the limits of effective span of control. There are three ways of organizing resources at an incident:

- Single Resources
- Task Forces
- Strike Teams



Single Resources

Single resources are individual personnel, single pieces of equipment (with or without operator), or a crew of individuals, with an identified work supervisor. A single resource is often the most common way of using initial resources on an incident.



Single resources can be typed to reflect capability. Unless a Single resource is typed, its specific capabilities may not be clear to everyone.

Task Forces

Task Forces are any combination and number of single resources (within span-of-control limits) assembled for a particular tactical need. Task Forces may be:



- A mix of different kinds of resources.
- The same kind but different types of resources.

Organizing resources into Task Forces provides the mix of resources needed for a specific assignment, and reduces span of control. This is both safer and more efficient use of resources.

For example, the graphic depicts a Task Force consisting of three different kinds of spray equipment.

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Strike Teams

Incident resources can also be organized into Strike Teams. Strike Teams consist of resources that are of the same type.



Strike Teams are a good way to organize multiple Single Resources that share the same characteristics.

For example, the graphic depicts a Strike Team made up of three identical pieces of spray equipment.

Task Forces and Strike Teams: Requirements

Both Task Forces and Strike Teams are required to:

- Have a Leader.
- Have communications between team members and Leaders, and between Leaders and the next highest level of supervision.
- Have their own transportation, when required.
- Organize within span-of-control limits.

Advantages of Task Forces and Strike Teams

Organizing into Task Forces and Strike Teams offers several distinct advantages, including:

- Enabling more effective resource use planning.
- Providing an efficient way of quickly ordering what is necessary.
- A net reduction in the time required to communicate, because critical information is conveyed to Task Force and Strike Team Leaders rather than to single resources.
- Increasing the ability to expand the organization for large incidents while maintaining good span of control.
- Providing close resource control and accountability.

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Roaring River Flood: Organizing Resources

Vet Services Disposal Group Supervisor

The Vet Services Branch Director divided the Branch into three functional Groups. The Groups are:

- Euthanasia Group
- Disposal Group
- Relocation Group

“Disposing of animal carcasses requires different kinds of resources: a backhoe or front loader; a lowboy for transport; and a driver, an operator, and a supervisor. Having these resources organized into Task Forces makes an effective combination of resources for the task, and helps maintain my span of control.”

PPQ Survey/ID Group Supervisor

The PPQ Branch Director organized the Branch into two kinds of functional Groups. The Groups are:

- Survey and Identification Group
- Control Group
- Regulatory Group

“Each of my Strike Teams is comprised of four identically qualified and equipped specialists. A specialist has been appointed as the Leader of each team. Having them organized as Strike Teams helps to maintain an effective span of control.”

FSIS Division A Supervisor

The FSIS Branch Director divided staff resources geographically. Each plant is a Division. Each Division includes a Compliance Officer as Division Supervisor.

“We are organized into Divisions to cover specific geographical areas, corresponding to the five food processing plants. I am responsible for ensuring that my assigned plant comes back online in compliance with all applicable health and safety regulations. Since clean-up and decontamination are the responsibility of the plant itself, I don’t need any resources right now. But if I do need them, I will request them from the FSIS Branch Director.”

Maintaining Resource Status

Maintaining status of all resources assigned to the incident is an important aspect of resource management. Knowing where resources are at all times is vital to ensuring safety on the incident.

In addition, not all tactical resources at an incident may be usable at any given time. For a variety of reasons, some resources may be temporarily out-of-service or placed into an available (ready) but not assigned status.

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Resource Status Conditions

All tactical resources at an incident will be assigned to one of the three following status conditions:

- **Assigned:** Assigned resources are working on an assignment under the direction of a Supervisor.
- **Available:** Available resources are assembled, have been issued their equipment, and are ready for deployment. Available resources are located at one of the staging areas.
- **Out-of-Service:** Out-of-service resources are not ready for available or assigned status.

Out-of-Service Resources

Resources may be out-of-service for a number of reasons, including:

- Routine servicing of vehicles or other equipment.
- To allow for rest/downtime.
- Insufficient personnel to operate available equipment.
- Environmental reasons, such as darkness or weather.
- Financial reasons (e.g., when personnel exceed allowed overtime costs).

Resources that go out-of-service for other than mechanical or staffing reasons will usually be sent to the Incident Base.

Changing Resource Status

Resource status is maintained and changed by the supervisor who has the resources under assignment. On larger incidents, a Resources Unit, if established, will also maintain status on all resources assigned to the incident.

Who Can Change Resource Status?

Depending on the overall incident organization, the persons who supervise the resource either directly or indirectly can change its status. This can include:

- The person in charge of the single resource.
- A Task Force or Strike Team Leader.
- A Division or Group Supervisor.
- A Branch Director.
- The Operations Section Chief or Incident Commander.

The Resources Unit will not, on its own authority, change the status of resources assigned to Operations.

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Communicating Resource Status Changes

All status changes that last for more than a few minutes must be communicated to the appropriate organizational elements. The individual who makes the status change is responsible for making sure that the change is communicated up the chain of command and to the person or unit responsible for maintaining overall resource status at the incident.

For routine changes of status that do not impact the Incident Action Plan (end of shift, lunch breaks, etc), the information may not need to go beyond the next Supervisor. If the change of status is the result of mechanical break down, lack of supplies, or similar problems, the IAP could be impacted, and the information will be shared more widely among the Operations Staff and with the Incident Commander.

Information about the status change will be passed to the Resources Unit.

Resource Status Keeping Systems

There are several resource status keeping systems that can be used to track resources at incidents.

Manual Recordkeeping on Forms

The Resources Summary sections of the ICS forms listed below provide a manual method of recordkeeping. These forms provide areas for recording information about resources and their assignments.

- ICS Form 201, Incident Briefing Form
- ICS Form 211, Incident Check-In Form
- ICS Form 204, Division/Group Assignment Form

Card System

Several versions of card systems are available to track resource status. One of these systems uses different-colored T-shaped cards for each kind of resource. The cards are used to record information about the resource and filed in racks by assignment location.

- ICS Form 219, 1-8, Resource Status Card Form

Magnetic Symbols or Icons on Maps or Status Boards

Magnetic symbols or icons are sometimes used to track resources. Symbols are prepared in different shapes, sizes, and colors, with space to pencil in the resource designator. Then, the symbols are placed on maps or boards to indicate the location of assignment.

Computer System

A laptop computer can be used with a simple file management or spreadsheet program to maintain resource information. This system can be used to compile check-in information and then be maintained to reflect current resource status.

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Roaring River Flood: Demobilization

Demobilization planning starts at the very beginning of the incident. The complexity of the demobilization process is based on the needs of the incident. Personnel begin demobilizing when their objectives have been achieved. Then personnel will be released according to the demobilization plan.

“Just as we are getting our full complement of resources, we begin planning how we will eventually demobilize resources. I work closely with all Sections to identify when we’ll be ready to begin reducing the organization. We’ll begin demobilizing Veterinary Services personnel when all animal disease management concerns have been addressed. FSIS personnel will be needed until all of the processing plants have completed actions necessary for the plants to resume operations, and the plants’ compliance with sanitation standards and other operational requirements has been verified. It will be a longer period of time before we can demobilize the PPQ staff. Eradicating the fruit flies will take a long-term commitment. The flexibility of ICS allows us to demobilize the resources not needed, while keeping those that are still required.”

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Incident Resources** lesson. This lesson:

- Described functional roles in resource management.
- Described the kinds of resources often used in incidents.
- Discussed how resources are procured.
- Provided examples of how resources are typed for various applications.
- Explained why resource status keeping is important to effective incident operations.

You have now completed all of the ICS content lessons! When you are ready, you should proceed to the Summary and Posttest. To receive credit for the course, you must complete the posttest.