ICS 200 – Lesson 5: Summary and Posttest

Summary and Posttest: Overview

This lesson provides a brief summary of the ICS 200 Course contents. After reviewing the summary information, you will then take the course posttest.

Completing this summary and the posttest should take approximately **40 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the posttest to receive credit for this course.**

Why Use ICS?: Summary

The Incident Command System is an effective method for managing incident response activities. Using ICS:

- **Allows for the efficient delegation of responsibilities.** Effective incident management reduces potential chaos, establishes priorities, and helps manage workloads and resources.
- **Establishes a clear chain of command.** All incident personnel know where they fit in the organization, who their supervisors are, and what they are responsible for achieving.
- **Avoids unclear communications.** The use of common terminology allows personnel from different organizations to communicate with each other without being misunderstood.
- **Ensures key functions are covered.** Command staff are assigned key functions such as safety, liaison for coordination with other organizations, and public information. One voice is used to disseminate clear, accurate information.

ICS is a management system, not just an organizational chart. The organization is just one of ICS's major features.

Establishment of Command: Summary

The first arriving authority at the scene, who has jurisdiction for the incident, establishes incident command and identifies the initial Incident Command Post (ICP).   The initial Incident Commander will also:

- **Establish needed authorization and delegations of authority.** These agreements allow the Incident Commander to act on behalf of the Secretary, State Emergency Board and others who have responsibilities for the incident. They also allow the Incident Commander to make decisions and locate funds.

- **Begin establishing incident facilities.** The next priority is to establish the incident facilities, beginning with the Incident Command Post.

- **Consider the need to transfer command.**

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Responsibility for Incident Command: Summary

Frequently, command does not stay with the initial Incident Commander. A primary principle of ICS is the ability to assign the most experienced and skilled person as the Incident Commander, regardless of that employee's agency.

When the Agency Administrator(s) assigns the Incident Commander, the Administrator(s) delegates the appropriate agency authorities to that Incident Commander.

The process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one person to another is called transfer of command. All transfers of command must be approved by the agency.

Transfer of Command: Summary

The initial Incident Commander will remain in charge until transfer of command is accomplished. Command may transfer to higher qualified or more experienced personnel from the same agency, or be transferred to the employee of another responsible agency.

Higher qualified persons arriving at an incident may:

- Assume command (according to agency guidelines).
- Maintain command as it is.
- Transfer command to a better qualified or more experienced Incident Commander.

Transfer of command begins with an initial briefing on the extent of damage and probable response needs.

Transfer of Command Procedures

One of the main features of ICS are procedures to transfer command with minimal disruption. These procedures may be used anytime personnel in supervisory positions change.

Three key procedures should be followed, whenever possible:

- The transfer should be face to face.
- The transfer should include a complete briefing.
- The effective date and time of the transfer is announced to all affected personnel.

Other Reasons To Transfer Command

Command may be transferred when:

- A more qualified person is available to assume command.
- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- Changing command makes good sense.
- The incident complexity changes.
- There is turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents.
- Personnel are called home for any reason.
- Agency Administrators direct a change in command.

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Transfer-of-Command Briefing

A transfer-of-command briefing should **always** take place. The briefing should include the following critical information:

- Situation status
- Incident objectives and priorities (Incident Action Plan)
- Current organization
- Resource assignments
- Resources en route and/or ordered
- Facilities established
- Communications Plan
- Prognosis, concerns, and related issues
- Introduction of Command Staff and General Staff

Management by Objectives: Summary

Within ICS, management by objectives covers six essential steps. These steps take place on every incident regardless of size or complexity.

①	Understand agency policy and direction.
②	Assess incident situation.
③	Establish incident objectives.
④	Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
⑤	Perform tactical direction (applying tactics appropriate to the strategy, assigning the right resources, and monitoring their performance).
⑥	Provide necessary follow-up (changing strategy or tactics, adding or subtracting resources, etc.).

Types of Command: Summary

The Incident Commander knows that the command function may be carried out in two ways:

- As a **single command** in which the Incident Commander will have complete responsibility for incident management.
- As a **unified command** in which responding agencies and/or jurisdictions with responsibility for the incident share incident management.

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Single Command

Under a single command, one person—the Incident Commander—has responsibility for managing the entire incident.

Although the Incident Commander consults with other authorities as necessary, he or she approves the Incident Action Plan and makes the final decisions on the response.

Unified Command

In ICS, Unified Command is a unified team effort which allows all agencies with responsibility for the incident, either geographical or functional, to assign an Incident Commander to the Unified Command. The Incident Commanders in the Unified Command establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

This type of command structure is accomplished without losing or giving up agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

If a Unified Command is needed, Incident Commanders representing agencies or jurisdictions that share responsibility for the incident manage the response from a single Incident Command Post.

Under a Unified Command, a single, coordinated Incident Action Plan will direct all activities. The Incident Commanders will supervise a single Command and General Staff organization and speak with one voice.

ICS Management Functions - Summary

The five major management functions are:

- **Command**: Sets incident objectives and priorities and has overall responsibility at the incident or event.
- **Operations**: Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan. Develops the tactical assignments and organization, and directs all tactical resources.
- **Planning**: Prepares and documents the Incident Action Plan to accomplish the incident objectives, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status, and maintains documentation for incident records.
- **Logistics**: Provides support to meet incident needs. Provides resources and all other services needed to support the incident.
- **Finance/Administration**: Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Organizational Flexibility: Summary

The ICS organization reflects the principle of management by objectives. Every incident has different requirements. The organizational structure should reflect only what is required to meet and support planned incident objectives.

The size and structure of the current organization is determined by the incident objectives. Each activated element must have a person in charge of it. As objectives are achieved, elements that are no longer needed should be reassigned, or demobilized.

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Unity and Chain of Command: Summary

In the Incident Command System:

- **Unity of command** means that every individual has only one designated supervisor.
- **Chain of command** means that there is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels.

Unity and Chain of Command

These ICS principles are used to communicate direction and maintain management control. These principles do not apply to the exchange of information. Although orders must flow through the chain of command, members of the organization may directly communicate with each other to ask for or share information.

ICS team members work within the ICS position descriptions and follow the designated chain of command, regardless of their nonemergency positions or everyday administrative chain of command.

In almost 95 percent of all incidents, the organizational structure for incident management will consist of command and single resources. A single resource is an individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used at an incident.

However, as incidents expand, the chain of command is established through an organizational structure that can consist of several layers.

Span of Control: Summary

Span of control pertains to the number of individuals one supervisor can effectively manage. It is especially important to maintain an effective span of control at incidents where safety and accountability have top priority.

Management studies have shown that the span of control for a supervisor falls within a range of three to seven, depending upon the skills of the supervisor and the complexity of the task being overseen. If a supervisor has fewer than three or more than seven people reporting, some adjustment to the organization should be considered.

The general rule for span of control in ICS is one supervisor to five subordinates.

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Incident Action Plan: Summary

An Incident Action Plan is developed for each operational period (for example, every 12 hours).

The purpose of the Incident Action Plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with appropriate direction for that operational period. The plan may be verbal or written.

Incident Action Plan

All levels of a growing organization must have a clear understanding of the tactical actions for the next operational period. It is recommended that written plans be used whenever:

- Verbal plans could result in the miscommunication of critical information.
- Two or more jurisdictions or disciplines are involved.
- Large changes of personnel occur by operational periods.
- Personnel are working across more than one operational period.
- There is a full activation of the ICS organization.
- The incident has important legal, political, or public ramifications.
- Complex communication issues arise.

In addition, the Incident Commander may direct the organization to develop a written Incident Action Plan at any time.

In ICS, an Incident Briefing Form is used on smaller incidents to record initial actions and list assigned and available resources. As incidents grow in complexity and/or size, ICS provides a format and process for the development of a written Incident Action Plan.

Resources: Summary

Resources include personnel, tools, equipment and their operators, and expendable items. Resources can be described by both kind and type.

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.

Kind of Resource

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

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Type of Resource

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.

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.

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.

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Task Force and Strike Team 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.

Resources Management: Summary

After identifying a needed resource, it is usually easy to figure out where to get it.

All ICS resources are ordered, received, assigned, and tracked systematically. The Incident Commander uses the Resource Summary on page 4 of ICS Form 201 to document the resource status.

Resource Management Activities

All ICS functions participate in resource management. 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?

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Identifying and Defining Resources

ICS resources can be factored into two categories:

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

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.

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.

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.

Resource Status Keeping Systems

There are several resource status keeping systems that can be used to track resources at incidents.
- Manual recordkeeping on forms.
- Card system.
- Magnetic symbols on maps or status boards.
- Computer system.

No one technique is recommended; **all have advantages and disadvantages**.

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Communications: Summary

The ability to communicate within the ICS is absolutely critical. Essential methods for ensuring the ability to communicate include the use of:
- Integrated communications and
- Common terminology.

Integrated Communications: Elements

Effective ICS communications includes three elements:

- The "hardware" systems used to transfer information.
- Planning for the use of all available communications frequencies and resources.
- Procedures and processes for transferring information internally and externally.

Integrated Communications: Planning

Every incident needs a Communications Plan. The plan can be simple and stated verbally, or it can be complex and written. A Communications Plan (ICS Form 205) is a component of the written Incident Action Plan.

An awareness of available communications resources, combined with an understanding of incident requirements, will enable the Communications Unit Leader to develop an effective Communications Plan.

Integrated Communications: Modes

It is not unusual for the communications needs on large incidents to outstrip available radio frequency resources.

Some incidents are conducted entirely without radio support. In such situations, other communications resources—cell phones, alpha pagers, e-mail, secure phone lines, etc.—may be used as the only communication methods for the incident.

Integrated Communications: Networks

At a minimum, any communication network must accomplish the following:

- Link supervisory personnel within the Operations Section to each other and to the Incident Commander.
- Provide common communication among resources assigned to tactical elements such as Branches, Divisions/Groups, and ground-to-air and air-to-air assets.
- Provide a link to the rest of the organization for resource status changes, logistical support, etc.

Common Terminology

A critical part of an effective multiagency incident management system is for all communications to be in plain Englis. That is, **use clear text. Do not use radio codes, agency-specific codes, or jargon**.

- **Technical Jargon:**   We are particularly concerned about vectors causing damage to edible pulpy masses of host material.
- **Common Terminology:** We are concerned about the fruit flies damaging the apple crop.

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Applying Common Terminology

In ICS, common terminology and designations are applied to:

- **Organizational Elements:** Each ICS organizational element (e.g., Sections, Divisions and/or Groups, Branches) has a specified title.
- **Resources:** Some resources have common designations based on their type or kind. Many resources are also classified by type to indicate their capabilities (e.g., types of helicopters, trucks, heavy equipment, etc.).
- **Facilities:** Standard ICS facilities have specific names. Consistent names clarify the activities that take place at a specific facility, and what members of the organization can be found there.
- **Position Titles:** ICS management or supervisory positions are referred to by titles such as Officer, Chief, Director, Supervisor, etc.

Position Titles

The use of specific position titles in ICS serves three important purposes:

- Titles provide a common organizational language for multiagency use at an incident. For example, confusion can arise if one agency uses the title Branch Chief, another Branch Manager, another Branch Officer, etc.
- The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows a distinction to be made between the administrative position and rank of the individual and the ICS position. This allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by rank.
- The lack of standardization of position titles can also confuse the ordering process when requesting qualified personnel. For example, when ordering personnel to fill unit positions, common titles and associated qualifications ensure that qualified personnel will be acquired.

Personnel Accountability Procedures: Summary

Accountability is a key ICS element. Accountability ensures cost-effective use of resources and improved personnel safety. Several procedures within ICS ensure personnel accountability, including:

- **Check-In:** All personnel must check in upon arrival at an incident. **Check in only once!**
- **Unity of Command:** Everybody has only one supervisor.
- **Resource Status:** The Resources Unit maintains status of all incident resources.
- **Assignment Lists:** Division/Group Assignment Lists identify resources with active assignments in the Operations Section.
- **Unit Logs**: Unit Logs record personnel assigned and major events in all ICS organizational elements.

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Personnel Accountability

A large percentage of responder injuries and deaths can be directly attributed to a failure in personnel accountability.

While the Resources Unit in Planning tracks resources assigned to the incident, resource tracking is also taking place in Operations. The Resources Unit, unless operating on the scene of a small incident, is unlikely to be able to track the movement of resources into and out of a rapidly changing "hot zone." Resource tracking at this level is the responsibility of the Division/Group Supervisors, Branch Directors, or whoever has first-level supervisory responsibility for the resource.

ICS Organizational Chart: Summary

The ICS organizational chart is a graphic representation of the incident, including:

- Positions and functions activated.
- Chain of command.
- Reporting relationships.
- Responsibilities delegated.
- Information flow.

Standardization of the organizational chart and terms does not limit its flexibility. A key principle of ICS is its flexibility. The ICS organization may be expanded easily from a very small operation for routine incidents into a larger organization capable of handling catastrophic events.

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ICS Organizational Chart
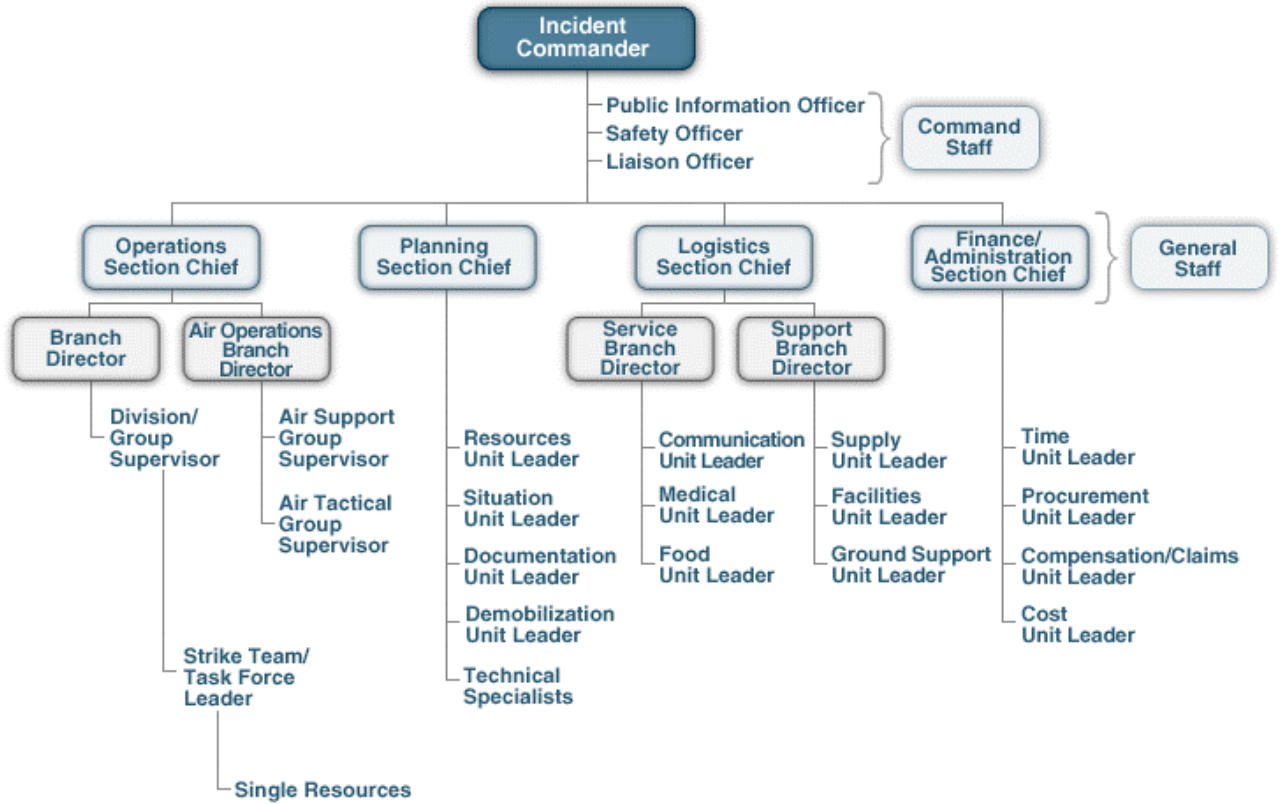
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Key Organizational Terms

Incident Commander: The Incident Commander is the individual responsible for overall management of the incident.

Command Staff: The Command Staff consists of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander.

Officer: Officer is the ICS title for the personnel responsible for the Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Information.

General Staff: The General Staff are assigned functional authority for Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. The General Staff also report directly to the Incident Commander.

Section: A Section is the organizational level with responsibility for a major functional area of the incident (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration).

Section Chief: Chief is the ICS title for individuals responsible for functional sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration

Branch: A Branch is the organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions.

Branch Director: Branch Director is the ICS title for individuals responsible for supervision of a Branch.

Division/Group: Divisions are used to divide an incident geographically. Groups are used to divide an incident functionally.

Division/Group Supervisor: Supervisor is the ICS title for individuals responsible for a Division or Group.

Strike Team: A Strike Team is a specified combination of the same kind and type of resources with common communications and a Leader.

Task Force: A Task Force is a combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need with common communications and a Leader.

Unit: A Unit is the organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistical, or financial activity.

Task Force/Strike Team/Unit Leader: Leader is the ICS title for an individual responsible for a Task Force, Strike Team, or functional Unit.

Resources: Resources are personnel and equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents. Resources may be described by kind and type (e.g., ground, water, air, etc.) and may be used in tactical, support, or overhead capacities at an incident.

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Organizing the Incident Command: Summary

As you know, the Incident Commander has the overall responsibility for the management of the incident. Even if other functions are not filled, an Incident Commander will always be designated.

After establishing command, the Incident Commander will consult with Agency Administrators to determine the type of command that is required for the incident. The Incident Commander will then identify the initial organization and staffing for the incident.

Expanding the Sections: Summary

There are no hard and fast rules for expanding the ICS organization. Experienced Incident Commanders can predict workloads and potential staffing needs, regardless of the kind of incident.

As the Operations Section expands, the Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections must expand to support it. It is common for organizations to need one support person for every three people in Operations. While the organization expands, an effective span of control must be maintained.

Deputies

The Incident Commander may have one or more deputies. An individual assuming a deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy Incident Commander must be able to assume the Incident Commander's role.

Following are three reasons to designate deputies:

- To perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.
- To perform the Incident Command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period).
- To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Command Staff

Public Information Officer: Serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders including the media, or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event.

Safety Officer: Monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.

Liaison Officer: Serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assigned to an incident.

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General Staff

Operations Section

The Operations function is where the tactical fieldwork is done and most incident resources are assigned to it. The Operations Section Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is normally the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand.

Planning Section

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying intelligence and information about the incident.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Conducting long-range and/or contingency planning.
- Developing plans for demobilization as the incident winds down.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.

Logistics Section

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs of an incident, including:

- Obtaining and maintaining essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing transportation.
- Providing medical services to incident personnel.

Finance/Administration Section

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

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

Branches

If the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control, it may be necessary to establish another level of organization, called a Branch, within the Operations Section. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. Deputies may also be used at the branch level.

While span of control is a common reason to establish Branches, Branches are also used on multidiscipline and multijurisdictional incidents.

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Divisions

Divisions are a common method of organizing tactical operations at an incident. Divisions **always** refer to geographically defined areas (e.g., the area around a stadium, the inside or floors of a building, or individual plants or facilities).

Divisions are managed by Division Supervisors. Division Supervisors do not have deputy positions.

Groups

Another common method of organizing operations at an incident is to establish functional Groups. As the name implies, this form of organization deals not with geographic areas, but with functional activity.

Groups, like Divisions, are managed by Supervisors. There are no Group Supervisor deputy positions.

Divisions and Groups work at the same level in the organization. Divisions do not work for Groups, or vice versa.

Demobilization: Summary

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.

Taking the Posttest

You should now be ready to take the ICS 200 posttest. The purpose of the test is to make sure that you have learned the course content. The posttest includes 25 multiple-choice items. To receive credit for this course, you must answer 70% of the questions correctly.

Tips for Taking the Posttest

- Review the printable version of this course. You may refer to your notes and materials printed from this course.
- When you are ready, begin the test by reading the directions carefully.
- Read each question and then review ALL possible answers before selecting one. Do **NOT** click on the first answer that looks good! Click on the single best answer from the options presented.
- Answer every test item. If you do not know the answer, review your reference materials.
- Review your work. Before clicking on the Submit button, check your answers.