

ICS 300 – Lesson 6: 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.

This lesson should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

The Incident Command System: Summary

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a proven management system based on successful business practices. ICS is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents. Designers of the system recognized that ICS must be interdisciplinary and organizationally flexible.

A poorly managed incident response can be devastating to our economy, to our food supply, and to our health and safety. With so much at stake, we must effectively manage our response efforts. ICS allows us to do so. This course presents a more in depth look at ICS and the vital role that you can play.

ICS Organization: Summary

The ICS organization is built around five major functions that may be applied on any incident whether it is large or small.

A major advantage of the ICS organization is the ability to fill only those parts of the organization that are required. For some incidents, and in some applications, only a few of the organization's functional elements may be required. However, if there is a need to expand the organization, additional positions exist within the ICS framework to meet virtually any need.

Lines of Authority

ICS establishes lines of supervisory authority and formal reporting relationships. Within ICS, there is complete unity of command, meaning that each position and each person within the system has only one designated supervisor.

Direction and supervision follows established organizational lines at all times, however, information can be shared freely throughout the organization.

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Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships

Chain of command means that there is an orderly line of authority and reporting relationships within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels

Chain of command is used to communicate direction and maintain management control. 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 reporting relationships, regardless of their non-emergency positions or everyday administrative chain of command.

Functional Delegation

The ICS organization may be expanded easily from a very small operation for routine incidents into a larger organization capable of handling catastrophic events. A basic ICS operating guideline is that the person at the top of the organization is responsible for a task until that responsibility is delegated to a subordinate position.

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.

Incident Commander's Overall Role: Summary

The Incident Commander's responsibility is the overall management of the incident. On most incidents, the command activity is carried out by a single Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is selected by qualifications and experience. The Incident Commander may have a Deputy, who may be from the same agency, or from an assisting agency.

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:

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

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Incident Commander's Overall Responsibilities

- Assess situation and/or obtain a briefing from the previous Incident Commander.
- Receive delegation of authority from Agency Administrator.
- Establish immediate priorities.
- Determine incident objectives and strategy.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Establish and monitor incident organization.
- Ensure adequate safety measures are in place.
- Schedule planning meetings as required.
- Approve and authorize Incident Action Plan implementation.
- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Coordinate with key off-incident personnel (e.g. community leaders, elected officials).
- Approve requests for additional resources or release of resources.
- Keep Agency Administrator informed of incident status.
- Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
- Authorize release of information to news media.
- Order the demobilization of incident when appropriate.

Incident Commander's Major Responsibilities

The Incident Commander has a wide variety of responsibilities, some of which are complex and require explanation:

- **Establish Immediate Priorities:** this must include responder safety and incident stabilization.
- **Determine Incident Objectives and Strategy:** this must reflect agency policy; incident objectives; strategy; and tactical direction.
- **Establish an Incident Command Post:** the coordination point from which the Incident Commander operates.
- **Establish and Monitor Incident Organization:** this may require expansion or contraction of the incident.
- **Ensure Adequate Safety Measures:** safety at the scene of an incident is always the top priority.
- **Schedule Planning Meetings as Required:** essential to achieving incident objectives.
- **Approve/Authorize Implementation of Incident Action Plan:** plans can be verbal or written.
- **Approve Requests for Additional/Release of Resources:** determine resource requirements and ensure adequate resources.
- **Authorize Release of Information to News Media:** release of information and responding to media inquiries.

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Characteristics of an Effective Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is normally the most visible person on the incident. The following are just some of the characteristics associated with an effective Incident Commander:

- Command presence
- Understands ICS
- Proven manager
- Puts safety first
- Proactive and decisive
- Calm and objective
- Quick thinking
- Effective communicator
- Adaptable and flexible
- Realistic about personal limitations
- Politically astute

Command Staff: Summary

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to provide public information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization. In ICS, these personnel make up the Command Staff. Each of the Command Staff members may also have an Assistant.

In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the Command Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

Public Information Officer

The Public Information Officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations. Only one Public Information Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Public Information Officer may have Assistants, as necessary, and the Assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions.

Reasons to designate a Public Information Officer include:

- The presence of an obvious high visibility or sensitive incident.
- Media demands for information are reducing Incident Commander effectiveness.
- Media capabilities to acquire their own information are increasing.
- Reduces the risk of multiple sources releasing information.
- Need to alert, warn or instruct the public.

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Safety Officer

All agencies stress the importance of safety as both a management and an individual responsibility. In addition, the Command Staff position of Safety Officer may be assigned to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety, and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations.

Only one Safety Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Safety Officer will correct unsafe situations by working through the chain of command. However, the Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to **directly stop** unsafe acts. HAZMAT incidents require the assignment of a Safety Officer. The Safety Officer may assign Assistant Safety Officers, as needed.

Liaison Officer

Incidents that are multi-jurisdictional, or have several agencies involved, may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff. The Liaison Officer is the contact for agency representatives assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. The Liaison Officer may have one or more Assistants, as needed.

Reasons to establish the Liaison Officer position at an incident include:

- When several agencies send, or plan to send, Agency Representatives to an Incident in support of their resources.
- When the IC can no longer provide the time for individual coordination with each Agency Representative.
- When it appears that two or more jurisdictions may become involved in the incident and the incident will require on-site liaison.

Information and Intelligence Functions

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence are important elements of ICS. In this context, intelligence includes not only national security or other types of classified information but also other operational information, such as risk assessments, medical intelligence (i.e., surveillance), weather information, geospatial data, structural designs, toxic contaminant levels, utilities and public works data, etc., that may come from a variety of different sources.

Traditionally, information and intelligence functions are located in the Planning Section. However, in exceptional situations, the IC may need to assign the information and intelligence functions to other parts of the ICS organization. In any case, information and intelligence must be appropriately analyzed and shared with personnel, designated by the Incident Commander, who have proper clearance and a "need-to-know" to ensure they support decision-making.

The intelligence function may be organized in one of the following ways:

- Within the Command Staff. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with little need for tactical or classified intelligence, and in which incident-related intelligence is provided by supporting Agency Representatives, through real-time reach-back capabilities.
- As a Unit within the Planning Section. This option may be most appropriate in an incident with some need for tactical intelligence, and when no law enforcement entity is a member of the Unified Command.

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- As a Branch within the Operations Section. This option may be most appropriate in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence (particularly classified intelligence), and when law enforcement is a member of the Unified Command.
- As a separate General Staff Section. This option may be most appropriate when an incident is heavily influenced by intelligence factors, or where there is a need to manage and/or analyze a large volume of classified or highly sensitive intelligence or information. This option is particularly relevant to a terrorism incident, for which intelligence plays a crucial role throughout the incident life cycle.

Regardless of how it is organized, the information and intelligence function is also responsible for developing, conducting, and managing information-related security plans and operations as directed by the Incident Commander. These can include information security and operational security activities, as well as the complex task of ensuring that sensitive information of all types (e.g., classified information, sensitive law enforcement information, proprietary or personnel information, or export controlled information) is handled in a way that not only safeguards the information, but also ensures that it gets to those who need access to it in order to effectively and safely conduct their missions. The information and intelligence function also has the responsibility for coordinating information- and operational-security matters with public awareness activities that fall under the responsibility of the Public Information Officer, particularly where such public awareness activities may affect information or operations security.

Assistants

The Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer may have assistants, as necessary. The assistants may represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions, or simply assist in managing the workload associated with the position. An Assistant must be as qualified as the Officer and be able to assume the Officer's role.

Assistant Public Information Officers may be assigned to the field or Joint Information Center or assigned to handle internal information.

Assistant Safety Officers may have specific responsibilities, such as aviation, hazardous materials, etc.

Assistant Liaison Officers may coordinate with specific agency representatives or groups of representatives.

Agency Representatives

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated **full authority** to make decisions on all matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer, or to the Incident Commander in the absence of a Liaison Officer.

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Assisting Agency

An agency that is assisting on an incident is directly contributing **tactical resources** to the agency or jurisdiction that is responsible for the incident. Thus, fire, police, or public works equipment sent to Department of Agriculture incident would be considered assisting agency resources.

Cooperating Agency

An agency, which supports the incident or supplies assistance **other than tactical resources** would be considered a cooperating agency. Examples include the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, utility companies, etc. On some law enforcement incidents a fire agency may not send fire equipment, but may supply an Agency Representative for coordination purposes. In this case, the fire agency would be considered a cooperating agency.

General Staff: Summary

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, it may also be necessary for the Incident Commander to designate personnel to perform the other four management functions. These personnel are designated as the General Staff. Each of the General Staff members may also have one or more Deputies. In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the General Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

Deputies

The Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief may have one or more Deputies. An individual assuming a Deputy role must be equally capable of assuming the primary role. Therefore, a Deputy must be able to assume the General Staff member's role.

Following are three reasons to designate Deputies:

1. To perform specific tasks as requested by the General Staff member.
2. To perform the function of the General Staff member in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over the next operational period).
3. To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Operations Section: Summary

There is no precise guideline for when the Operations Section Chief will be established on an incident. In some cases, it may be the first staff position to be established. In other situations, the Incident Commander may elect to maintain control of Operations.

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The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing all tactical operations at an incident. The build-up of the Operations Section is generally dictated by the number of tactical resources involved and span of control considerations. The Operations Section consists of ground or surface-based tactical resources, aviation or air resources, and Staging Areas. Incidents will use any or all of these components, depending on the need.

Branches, Division and Groups

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

In the Operations Section, Branches are established when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. Divisions have geographic responsibility and Groups have functional responsibility.

The Air Operations Branch may be established to manage aircraft assigned to provide logistical or tactical support to the incident. An optional Information and Intelligence Branch may be established in incidents with a high need for tactical intelligence.

Directors, Managers and Supervisors

The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. The person in charge of each Staging Area is designated as a Manager. The person in charge of each Division or Group is designated as a Supervisor.

In the Operations Section, Branch Directors and Staging Managers report to the Operations Section Chief. Divisions and Groups are at an equal level in the organization and the Supervisors report to Branch Directors or the Operations Section Chief.

General Staff Units: Summary

Organization of the remaining General Staff functions includes subdivisions called Units supervised by Unit Leaders. While most Unit responsibilities are specific to the function, some are common to all.

Common responsibilities include:

- Obtaining briefings from the Section Chief.
- Participating in incident planning meetings as required.
- Determining current status of Unit activities.
- Confirming dispatch and estimated time of arrival of staff and supplies.
- Assigning specific duties to staff; supervise staff.
- Developing and implementing accountability, safety, and security measures for personnel and resources.
- Supervising demobilization of Units, including storage of supplies.
- Providing Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished.
- Maintaining Unit records, including Unit Log.

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Planning Section: Summary

The Planning Section is responsible for managing all information relevant to an incident. The Planning Section collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the incident. Dissemination can be in the form of the written Incident Action Plan, formal briefings, or through map and status display boards. This Section is managed by the Planning Section Chief. In addition, information and intelligence functions are traditionally located in the Planning Section.

Resources Unit

The Resources Unit is responsible for maintaining the status of all resources assigned to an incident. This includes both tactical and support resources. The Resources Unit achieves this through:

- Overseeing the check-in of all resources,
- Maintaining a status-keeping system that indicates the current location and status of all resources, and
- Maintaining of a master list of all resources assigned to the incident, for example, supervisory personnel, tactical and support resources, etc.

Situation Unit

The collection, processing, and organizing of all incident information takes place within the Situation Unit. The Situation Unit may prepare future projections of incident growth, maps, and intelligence information.

Two positions report directly to the Situation Unit Leader:

- **Display Processor** - maintains incident status information. Incident status information is posted on maps and status boards as appropriate.
- **Field Observer** - collects and reports on situation information from the field.

Technical Specialists, such as Weather Observers, may also report directly to the Situation Unit Leader.

Documentation Unit

The Documentation Unit is responsible for the maintenance of accurate, up-to-date incident files. Incident files are then stored for legal, analytical, and historical purposes. Duplication services are also provided by the Documentation Unit.

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Demobilization Unit

The Demobilization Unit is responsible for developing the Incident Demobilization Plan. On large incidents, demobilization can be quite complex, requiring a separate planning activity.

Planning for demobilization should begin at the early stages of an incident, particularly in the development of rosters of personnel and resources, thus ensuring the efficient and safe demobilization of all resources.

After generating an approved plan, the Demobilization Unit is responsible for distributing the plan at the incident and off-incident, as necessary.

Technical Specialists

Some incidents may require personnel with specialized skills or knowledge to be temporarily assigned to the Planning Section. These persons are called Technical Specialists.

Technical Specialists may function within the Planning Section, or be assigned wherever their services are required. In the Planning Section, Technical Specialists may report to the:

- Planning Section Chief,
- Situation Unit Leader, or
- Technical Specialist Unit Leader

In some cases, they may be reassigned to other parts of the organization. For instance Resource Use Specialists may be assigned to the Logistics Section.

If several specialists are assigned to the same task, a separate Unit may be established in the Planning Section. For example, if hazardous materials are a major ongoing factor within an incident, a Toxic Hazards Analysis Unit comprised of toxic substance specialists such as chemists and pathologists may be created. This is also the principle behind the establishment of the Information and Intelligence Unit.

While each incident dictates the need for Technical Specialists, some examples of commonly used specialists are:

- Meteorologist
- Environmental Impact Specialist
- Flood Control Specialist
- Pathologist
- Hazardous Substance Specialist
- Entomologist
- Structural Engineer
- Training Specialist

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Logistics Section: Summary

With the exception of aviation support, all incident support needs are provided by the Logistics Section. The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistics Section is responsible for facilities, transportation, communications, equipment maintenance and fueling, food services, medical services, and ordering and distributing resources and supplies.

Service Branch

The Service Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all service activities at the incident, including food, communications, and medical support.

The Service Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units the:

- Communication Unit.
- Food Unit.
- Medical Unit.

The Communications Unit is responsible for developing plans that ensure that all elements of the incident organization can communicate with each other. This includes installing and testing communications equipment; supervising the Incident Communications Center, if established; and distributing and maintaining communications equipment. Communications planning is particularly important in ICS, where an incident may grow to include numerous agencies.

The Food Unit is responsible for supplying the food needs for the entire incident, including all remote locations, such as Camps and Staging Areas. The Food Unit works with the Planning Section Resources Unit to anticipate the number of personnel to be fed and develop plans for supplying food to all incident areas. The Food Unit also interacts with other Logistics Units to locate fixed-feeding sites; and to order and transport food.

The Medical Unit is responsible for all medical services for incident personnel. Medical assistance to the public or victims of the emergency is provided by the Operations Section, and not by the Logistics Section Medical Unit. The Medical Unit is responsible for developing an Incident Medical Plan; developing procedures for managing major medical emergencies; providing medical aid; and assisting the Finance/Administration Section with processing injury-related claims.

Support Branch

The Support Branch, when activated, is responsible for the management of all support activities at the incident, including facilities, resource ordering, and ground support.

The Support Branch Director supervises three Logistics Units the:

- Supply Unit.
- Facilities Unit.
- Ground Support Unit.

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The Supply Unit is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing, storing, and distributing all incident-related resources and supplies. The ordering process includes personnel, tactical and support resources, as well as all expendable and non-expendable supplies.

The Facilities Unit is responsible for set-up, maintenance, and demobilization of all incident support facilities except Staging Areas. These facilities may include:

- The Incident Command Post,
- The Incident Base,
- Camps, and
- Other facilities to be used for feeding, sleeping, and sanitation services.

Existing structures in the vicinity of the incident may be used as incident facilities, as appropriate. The Facilities Unit will also provide security services to the incident as needed.

The Ground Support Unit is primarily responsible for the maintenance, service, and fueling of all mobile equipment and vehicles, with the exception of aviation resources. The Ground Support Unit also has responsibility for the ground transportation of personnel, supplies, and equipment, and the development of the Incident Traffic Plan.

Finance/Administration Section: Summary

The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. This Section is managed by the Finance/Administration Section Chief. Due to the specialized nature of the Finance/Administration Section, the Finance/Administration Section Chief is usually an employee of the jurisdiction or agency requiring financial services.

Procurement Unit

All financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements are managed by the Procurement Unit. The Procurement Unit establishes local sources for equipment and supplies; manages all equipment rental agreements; and processes all rental and supply fiscal document billing invoices. This Unit is also responsible for maintaining equipment time records.

The Procurement Unit works closely with local fiscal authorities to ensure efficiency and compliance with local regulations. In some agencies, certain procurement activities will be filled by the Supply Unit in the Logistics Section. Therefore, it is necessary that these two Units closely coordinate their activity.

Time Unit

The Time Unit is responsible for ensuring the accurate recording of daily personnel time, compliance with specific agency time recording policies, and managing commissary operations, if established at the incident.

As applicable, personnel time records will be collected and processed for each operational period. In many cases, the Time Unit Leader may find it helpful to select Time Recorders familiar with participating agency time recording policies.

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Cost Unit

The Cost Unit provides all incident cost analyses. It ensures the proper identification of all equipment and personnel requiring payment; records all cost data; analyzes and prepares estimates of incident costs; and maintains accurate records of incident costs.

The Cost Unit is becoming increasingly important, with frequent requests by the Planning Section for cost estimates related to strategies for achieving Incident Objectives. Accurate information on the actual costs of all assigned resources is essential.

Compensation/Claims Unit

The Compensation/Claims Unit is responsible for administering financial matters arising from injuries, property damage or deaths occurring on an incident. As part of this responsibility, the Unit gathers evidence and prepares claims documentation for any event involving damage to public or private property, which could result in a claim on behalf of or against the Government. In addition, the Unit ensures proper documentation and tracking of any personnel injured on the incident.

Information Exchange and Transfer: Summary

As the incident organization grows to meet the needs of the incident, care must be taken to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively. The ICS organizational framework is open for individuals to freely supply and exchange information. Orders and directives within the ICS Organization must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Information Transfer Principles

There are essentially two principles to be followed to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively:

1. There is complete freedom within the organization to exchange information among and between personnel.
2. Orders, directives, resource requests, and status changes must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

Examples of Information Exchange

Three examples of information exchange are:

1. The Food Unit Leader may directly contact the Planning Section's Resources Unit to determine the number of persons requiring feeding.
2. The Cost Unit Leader may directly discuss and share financial information on alternative strategies with the Planning Section Chief.
3. Division A Supervisor may contact the Situation Unit to share information on an unusual environmental hazard in the Division.

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Examples Illustrating the Flow of Orders

Three examples illustrating the flow of orders are:

1. Division B Supervisor requests fuel for resources within the Division. This request will be passed through the Branch or Operations Section Chief to ensure that fuel requests can be consolidated before going to Logistics.
2. In an organization using Branches and Divisions, the Operations Section Chief will pass directives to change the resource assignments within a particular Division through the appropriate Branch Director. This ensures that the Branch Director is aware of any changes.
3. The Situation Unit Leader will request additional personnel to work in the Unit through the Planning Section Chief. This ensures that personnel already assigned to the Planning Section will be used if available.

Principles of Resource Management: Summary

There are three basic principles of resource management:

1. **Planning:** Planning involves evaluating the situation, determining objectives, selecting a proper strategy, and deciding which resources should be used to achieve those objectives in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.
2. **Organizing:** Organizing involves the Incident Commander and other members of the Command and General Staff grouping resources into an organization designed to meet incident objectives.
3. **Supervising:** Supervising is the process of directing and controlling the efforts of resources toward the attainment of specified incident objectives. Directing hinges on delegation of authority through the ranks of the organization. Controlling involves evaluating the performance of an organization against changing conditions and the Incident Action Plan, making necessary corrections so that incident objectives are accomplished.

Incident Resource Management: Summary

At any incident or event, the situation must be assessed and response planned. Resources must be organized, assigned and directed to accomplish the incident objectives. As they work, resources must be managed to adjust to changing conditions.

Managing resources safely and effectively is the most important consideration at an incident. The formalized resource management process in ICS ensures that the management principles translate into practice at the incident.

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Role of Management Functions in Resource Management

All five ICS functions play important roles in resource management. In a simplified way, these roles are:

- **Command:** Develops incident objectives, approves resource orders and demobilization.
- **Operations:** Identifies, assigns and supervises resources needed to accomplish the incident objectives.
- **Planning:** Tracks resources, and identifies resource shortages.
- **Logistics:** Orders and supports resources.
- **Finance/Administration:** Pays for resources.

Resource Management Activities

The seven activities in the incident resource management process are:

1. **Determining resource needs:** Determining resource needs involves five steps:
 - Conduct assessment and develop incident objectives;
 - Identify strategies;
 - Develop detailed tactics;
 - Assign resources; and
 - Evaluate outcomes.
2. **Resource Ordering:** As incidents grow in size and/or complexity, more tactical resources may be required:
 - If the Logistics Section Chief position has been filled, then he/she has the delegated authority to place the resource order after the order has been approved by the Incident Commander.
 - On larger incidents, where the Logistics Section contains a Supply Unit, the Supply Unit has the authority to place the approved resource order.
 - Final approval for ordering additional resources is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. In addition, the Incident Commander will define who on the incident can place orders with Logistics or the Supply Unit.
 - The Finance/Administration Section may also play a significant role in resource procurement, especially if the resource request requires a contracted obligation.
 - The Resource Order is used to document resource requests. Most resource orders will be communicated by computer, voice, or FAX from the incident to an agency ordering point. Incident resource orders may be placed with either a single ordering point or multiple ordering points.
3. **Check-In Process:** ICS has a simple and effective resource check-in process to establish resource accountability at an incident. The Resources Unit will establish and conduct the check-in function at designated incident locations. If the Resources Unit has not been activated, the responsibility for ensuring check-in will be with the Incident Commander or Planning Section Chief. The incident locations where check-in can be done are:
 - Incident Base,
 - Camp,
 - Staging Area,
 - Resources Unit at the Incident Command Post, and
 - Helibase.

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4. **Utilizing Resources:** Supervisory personnel direct, guide, monitor and evaluate the efforts of subordinates toward attaining specific objectives. A designated supervisor or leader always directs resources. All positions have the delegated authority of the position. Incoming resources will initially be assigned in one of the following ways at an incident:
- Assignment of tactical resources to the incident base or camps;
 - Personnel assigned to management or support positions;
 - Tactical resources are often assigned to report immediately to Divisions or Groups; or
 - Incoming tactical resources may be assigned to Staging Areas.

5. **Tracking Resources:** Resource tracking responsibilities are shared between the:
- **Planning Section**, which is responsible for tracking all resources assigned to the incident and their status (assigned, available, out of service).
 - **Operations Section**, which is responsible for tracking the movement of resources within the Operations Section itself.

There are many resource-tracking systems, ranging from simple status sheets to sophisticated computer-based systems.

6. **Evaluating Resources:** While some poor performance is due to the lack of motivation on the part of assigned personnel, it is more likely that management actions have produced or contributed to the problem. Management actions which may cause poor performance include:
- Unrealistic or poorly defined incident objectives, strategies or tactics.
 - The wrong resource was allocated for the assignment.
 - There are inadequate tactical resources or logistical support for the assignment.
 - The resource is not trained or equipped to carry out the assignment.
 - Conflicting agency policies or procedures prevent the resource from carrying out the assignment.

Sometimes the reason for lack of performance can be identified and addressed at the incident. Other times it may be necessary to either change the objective or replace the resource and address the issue through the Liaison Officer and/or agency training and policy. Failure at the tactical level is likely to reflect a failure to appropriately manage the resource during the planning process. Evaluation needs to go on constantly and corrections made as necessary throughout the life of the incident.

7. **Demobilizing Resources:** At all times during an incident, the Incident Commander and General and Command Staff members must determine when assigned resources are no longer required to meet incident objectives. Signs that the incident may be winding down include:
- More resources are spending more time in staging.
 - Excess resources are identified during the planning process.
 - Incident objectives have been accomplished.

Excess resources must be released in a timely manner to reduce incident-related costs, and to “free up” resources for other assignments.

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Resource Efficiency

On every incident, resource mobilization follows a predictable course compared to the lifecycle of the incident itself.

Initially, the incident may build faster than resources can get there. Eventually, the resources catch up to the incident, and begin to control it. Ultimately, the incident declines, and resources exceed the needs of the incident.

Process of Demobilization Summary

On large incidents, a Demobilization Unit within the Planning Section should be established early in the life of the incident. A written demobilization plan is essential on larger incidents.

As soon as a determination is made that the need for a resource no longer exists, the appropriate Section Chief should be notified. In coordination with the Operations Section, the Demobilization Unit, may recommend release priorities for the Incident Commander's approval based upon continuing needs both on and off the incident.

Even at the most basic level, demobilization should take into account two factors:

- **Safety** and
- **Cost.**

Background on Unified Command: Summary

The standard ICS organizational framework with a single Incident Commander from one jurisdiction or agency often did not lend itself to creating an effective organization for multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. Two solutions were considered:

1. Divide the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization. This was unacceptable for cost and effectiveness reasons.
2. Create a single ICS structure with a built-in process for an effective and responsible multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency approach. This solution was called Unified Command.

Unified Command

Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with geographical or functional responsibility for an incident, to assign an Incident Commander to a Unified Command organization.

The Unified Command then establishes a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or giving up agency authority, responsibility or accountability.

Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.

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Elements to Consider in Applying Unified Command

There are four basic elements to consider in applying Unified Command in ICS:

1. **Policy, Objectives, and Strategy:** Jurisdictional and agency administrators set policy. The Unified Command sets objectives and strategy.
2. **Organization:** The Unified Command organization consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene representatives (qualified agency Incident Commanders) operating within the Unified Command structure.
3. **Resources:** Resources, supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility or with whom responsible agencies have agreements, stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. However, operationally they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the Incident Action Plan.
4. **Operations:** After the objectives, strategies, and interagency agreements are decided, the Operations Section Chief is designated to develop tactical action plans and to direct tactical operations.

Advantages of Using Unified Command

Below are the principal advantages of using Unified Command:

- One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident objectives.
- Information flow and coordination is improved among all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's authority or legal requirements are compromised or neglected.
- Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions, and constraints of all others on the incident.
- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.
- Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.

Unified Command Applications

Unified Command is a practical and cost effective solution to multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. Some examples of how Unified Command might be applied to different kinds of incidents include, incidents that impact:

- More than one jurisdiction.
- Multiple agencies or departments within the same jurisdiction.
- Several jurisdictional and functional agencies.
- Different levels of government.

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Primary Features of a Unified Command Organization

In ICS, organizations using Unified Command share key primary features. These include:

- **A Single, Integrated Incident Organization:** Under Unified Command, jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated, unified team. The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.
- **Collocated (Shared) Facilities:** A single Command Post is essential to an effective Unified Command. Bringing the responsible Incident Commanders and Command and General Staff together in a single Incident Command Post can allow a coordinated effort for as long as the Unified Command structure is required. One Base can serve the needs of multiple agencies. Similarly, resources from several agencies can be brought together in Staging Areas.
- **A Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan:** The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident. One important distinction is the need for all assigned Incident Commanders to meet before the first Operational Period planning meeting in a command meeting. The command meeting provides the Incident Commanders with an opportunity to discuss and agree on important issues that will become the foundation of a single planning process. The end result of the planning process will be an Incident Action Plan that addresses multi-jurisdiction or multi-agency priorities, and provides tactical operations and resource assignments for the unified effort.
- **Integrated Staffing:** The Unified Command incident organization can also benefit by integrating multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency personnel into various other functional areas.
 - **Operations and Planning:** Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction or a functional agency, who may in future Operational Periods have primary responsibility for Operations and Planning functions.
 - **Planning:** Placing other agencies' personnel in the Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units can result in significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.
 - **Logistics:** A Deputy Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support, as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies' personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide Communications Plan.
 - **Finance/Administration:** Although this Section often has detailed agency specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.
 - **Command Staff:** An integrated Command Staff can result in more credible information dissemination, better interagency relations, and increased personnel safety.
- **A Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering:** Decisions on incident resource ordering procedures are made during the Command Meeting, while the Planning Meeting determines resource requirements for all levels of the organization. If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be pre-designated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the Incident Commanders in the Unified Command meeting. If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency ordering point receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.

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Guidelines for the Use of Unified Command

There are six guidelines for the use of Unified Command:

1. Understand ICS Unified Command.
2. Collocate essential functions.
3. Implement Unified Command at an early stage.
4. Concur on an Operations Section Chief and other Command and General Staff members.
5. Designate one of the Incident Commanders to be a spokesperson.
6. Train often as a team.

Functioning in Unified Command: Summary

Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command have certain responsibilities at an incident. The members of the Unified Command:

- Must be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations and must know any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions.
- Must be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent.
- Have the responsibility to manage the incident.
- Must function together as a team and ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command.

Organizing for Events and Incidents: Summary

It is easiest to prepare for events. Managers can establish exactly what is required prior to the event, and ensure appropriate and efficient activation of the organization.

Unplanned incidents require immediate attention and actions must be taken to ensure effective incident management and control. The first responding units to the incident **must** take the initial steps to provide organization for the incident. While that may appear obvious, the longer-term importance of these initial decisions is often overlooked.

Although unplanned incidents such as fires, searches, law enforcement, hazardous materials, pest or disease outbreaks, and emergency medical situations have different characteristics and require specially trained personnel, they are quite similar in how they are approached from an incident management standpoint.

Examples of Planned Events

Examples of the kinds of events which lend themselves to an ICS application include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Organizing for a major field training exercise or simulated emergency.
- A planned public event such as a major parade or concert.
- A planned activity such as a prescribed fire, a law enforcement sweep, a major pest control effort, or a marine hazardous materials exercise.

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Considerations for Planned Events

In order to plan effectively, the planner must know as much as possible about the intended event. Considerations include:

- Type of event.
- Location, size, and expected duration.
- Single or multi-jurisdiction/multi-agency involvement.
- Command Staff needs (Public Information, Safety, Liaison).
- Kind, type, and number of resources required.
- Projected aviation operations.
- Staging areas and other facilities required.
- Kind and type of logistical support needs, e.g., communications, food, medical considerations.
- Financial concerns.
- Known limitations or restrictions.
- Available communications.

With information about each of the above factors, the planning staff can develop the appropriate organizational structure to meet the essential needs of the incident.

Characteristics of Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents often have the following characteristics:

- Time is of the essence.
- The situation is unstable.
- The incident presents a threat to safety and/or property.
- The incident has the potential to expand rapidly.
- Communications and information may be incomplete.
- Staff on-scene may be experienced in control measures, but are not necessarily experienced in managing expanding incidents.

Incident complexity increases as the situation deteriorates and the incident grows.

Staffing the ICS Organization: Summary

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are totally dependent on the size and complexity of the incident. **There is no absolute standard to follow.**

Some general guidelines are:

- Deputies may be used at Incident Command, General Staff (Section), and Branch levels.
- Command Staff may have Assistants as required.
- The Incident Commander may establish Divisions and/or Groups prior to designating an Operations Section.

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- The use of Unified Command is recommended in most multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency incidents. An Incident Commander from each responsible agency or jurisdiction should be included in the Unified Command.
- As the Operations organization expands, activation of Planning and Logistics functions should be considered. The decision to activate additional Sections will always be based on the present and anticipated needs of the incident.

Reasons for Transferring Command: Summary

The initial Incident Commander will remain in charge until transfer of command is accomplished. Command may be transferred when:

- A more qualified person is available to assume command.
- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- 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.
- Changing command makes good sense.

Transfer of Command

The six important steps in effectively transferring command of an incident in progress are:

1. The incoming Incident Commander should, if at all possible, personally perform an assessment of the incident situation with the existing Incident Commander.
2. The incoming Incident Commander must be adequately briefed.
3. Delegation of authority initiated or updated to reflect change in command.
4. The incoming Incident Commander should determine an appropriate time for the official transfer of command.
5. At the appropriate time, notice of a change in incident command should be made to incident and off-incident personnel.
6. The incoming Incident Commander may give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident.

Incident Briefing Major Elements: Summary

The incident briefing must cover the following elements:

- Incident history.
- Priorities, objectives, and current plan.
- Resource assignments and incident organization.
- Resources ordered and needed.
- Facilities established.
- Status of communications.
- Any constraints or limitations.
- Incident potential.

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The ICS Form 201 is especially designed to assist in incident briefings. It should be used whenever possible because it provides a written record of the incident as of the time prepared. The Incident Briefing Form is particularly valuable during the first operational period of an incident, and in many cases it will be the Incident Action Plan for the first Operational Period.

Changing the Initial Incident Action Plan (IAP): Summary

It is possible that the incoming Incident Commander will need to modify incident objectives. Changes could be required for the following reasons:

- Change in agency administrator goals.
- Change in available resources, kinds or types.
- Lack of success or completion of tactical assignments.
- Improved intelligence.
- Cost factors.
- Political considerations.
- Environmental considerations.

Guidelines for Making IAP Changes

Changes can cause disruptions and when possible should be implemented at the start of the next operational period. On the other hand, delaying changes may result in additional control problems, greater loss, and increased expense and risk.

Making a change does not imply that previous decisions and actions were wrong. Many things can influence the need for change. The Incident Commander must be assertive, but also aware of potential risk and safety considerations involved in changes. Four guidelines to changes are:

- Implement appropriate safety procedures for all changes.
- Make changes only if you must.
- Make them sooner rather than later.
- Make sure the changes are communicated clearly throughout the organization.

Taking the Posttest

You should now be ready to take the ICS 300 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.