THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM
Disaster:
A sudden event, such as an accident or a natural catastrophe, that causes great damage or loss of life.
WHAT RESPONSE CHALLENGES HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH?
THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM
### THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

<table>
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<th>What is it?</th>
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<td>Where did it come from?</td>
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<td>Why is it needed?</td>
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WHAT IS ICS?

ICS:
• Is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management concept
• Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions, agencies, private companies and NGOs
• Establishes common processes for planning & management of resources
• Allows for integration within a common organizational structure
WHY ICS?

Weaknesses in emergency response management were often due to:

- Lack of personnel accountability
- Unclear chains of management and supervision
- Poor communication
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure
- No predefined methods to integrate other agencies into the management structure
Mandatory ICS training for all First Responders including:

- Fire
- Police
- Medical Personnel
- Road and Bridge
- Public Health agencies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISASTERS MANAGED WITH ICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fires</td>
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<td>• Tornadoes</td>
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<td>• School Shootings</td>
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<td>• 9-11 Attacks</td>
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<td>• Hurricanes</td>
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<td>• Religious Gatherings</td>
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<td>• Hazardous Material Spills</td>
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<td>• Mass Casualty Incident</td>
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<td>• Landslides</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Terrorist Attacks</td>
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<td>• Bridge Collapse</td>
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<td>• Refugees and Displaced People</td>
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ICS FEATURES:

- **Command**
  - Establishment and transfer of Command
  - Chain of Command and unity of Command

- **Planning**
  - Management by objectives
  - Incident Action Plan (IAP)

- **Organizational Structure**
  - Modular organization
  - Manageable span of control

- **Standardization**
  - Common terminology

- **ICS Functions**
  - Command Staff
  - General Staff

- **Facilities**
  - Incident locations and facilities

- **Resources**
  - Comprehensive resource management

- **Communications/Information Management**
  - Integrated communications
  - Information and intelligence management
**Command**: The act of directing by virtue of explicit authority.
Why is it critical to establish Command at the beginning of an incident?
Establishing command and organization is crucial to a successful response. Typically it is established with the first arriving official, who assumes the Incident Commander role.

How is Command established in your countries?
TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Moves the responsibility for Command from one Incident Commander to another.

- A more qualified Incident Commander arrives
- A jurisdiction or organization is legally required to take charge
- Incident complexity changes
- The current Incident Commander needs rest
DISCUSSION QUESTION

What information would you include in a transfer of Command briefing?
CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Is an orderly line of authority within the response organization
- Allows Incident Commanders to direct the actions of all personnel under their supervision
- Avoids confusion by requiring that orders flow from supervisors
- Does not prevent personnel from sharing information
UNITY OF COMMAND

Under Unity of Command, personnel:

• Report to only one incident supervisor
• Receive work assignments only from the assigned supervisor
ACTIVITY: ASSUMING COMMAND

**Scenario:** An unexpected tsunami has struck your port. There is widespread damage, several people are injured, dead, or missing.

**Questions:**
1. What agencies are involved in the response?
2. Who’s in charge?
3. What are the priorities?
Incident objectives are used to ensure that everyone within the ICS organization has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

Priorities for incident objectives typically are:

1:  Life Safety
2:  Incident Stabilization
3:  Property/Environmental Preservation
ESTABLISHING AND IMPLEMENTING OBJECTIVES

Step 1: Understand agency policy and direction.
Step 2: Assess incident situation.
Step 3: Establish incident objectives.
Step 4: Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
Step 5: Perform tactical direction.
Step 6: Provide necessary follow-up.
MANAGEMENT
BY OBJECTIVES

Goal

Follow-up

Perform tactical direction

Select appropriate strategy

Establish incident objectives

Assess incident situation

Understand agency policy and direction.
THE INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

It’s important that the Incident Commander convey his or her “plan of attack” while managing the disaster. This helps ensure that everyone:

• Is on the same page
• Knows the priorities
• Knows their assignment
• Knows who they report to
INCIDENT ACTION PLANNING

Every incident should have an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

• Specifies the incident objectives
• States the activities taking place
• Covers a specified timeframe, called a operational period

IAPs may be verbal (short incidents) or written (extended incidents)
Every IAP addresses the following questions:

- What do we want to do?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if someone is injured?
ELEMENTS OF AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

• The IAP is used to brief responders at the beginning of each operational period
• IAPs also provide information to the EOC, the policy group, and other stakeholders
• Work periods can vary based on the incident. During 24 hour operations that include a day shift and a night shift, there will be one IAP
• IAPs are typically only written for incidents that last more than 24 hours or for preplanned events
ELEMENTS OF AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

- Goals and Objectives
- Organizational structure
- Situation Status
- Incident map
- Weather forecast
- Tactical assignments
- Public Information Message
- Communications plan
- Safety message
BASIC ICS ORGANIZATION

Incident Commander

- Public Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer

Operations Section
Planning Section
Logistics Section
Finance/Admin Section
ICS ORGANIZATION

Differs from day-to-day organizational structures and positions by:

- Using unique ICS position titles and organizational structures
- Assigning personnel is based on expertise, not rank.
MODULAR ORGANIZATION

Incident Command organizational structure is based on:

• Size, type, and complexity of the incident
• Specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident
• Incident planning process and incident objectives
Span of control:

- Pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident.
- Is key to effective and efficient incident management.
MANAGEABLE SPAN OF CONTROL

ICS span of control for any supervisor:

- Is between 3 and 7 subordinates
- Optimally does not exceed 5 subordinates
Using common terminology helps define:

- Organizational functions
- Incident facilities
- Resource descriptions
- Position titles
FIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance/Administration
- Incident Commander
## MANAGEMENT FUNCTION DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident Commander</td>
<td>• Establishes incident objectives, strategies, and priorities  &lt;br&gt;• Assume overall responsibility for the incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>• Determines tactics and resources for achieving objectives  &lt;br&gt;• Directs the tactical response</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNCTION</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>• Collects and analyzes information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Tracks resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Maintains documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>• Provides resources and needed services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance/Admin</td>
<td>• Accounts for expenditures, claims, and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compensation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Procures needed resources</td>
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THE ORGANIZATION

Command Staff: Support the IC by providing information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization.

General Staff: Delegated functional responsibilities.

Operations Section
Planning Section
Logistics Section
Finance/Admin Section
The Incident Commander is responsible for all ICS management functions until they are delegated to someone else.
The Incident Commander only creates those Sections that are needed. If a Section is not staffed, the Incident Commander will personally manage those functions.
The Incident Commander is also responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety
- Providing information to internal and external stakeholders
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other ministries participating in the incident
A Deputy (Assistant) Incident Commander may be designated to:

• Perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander

• Perform the incident Command function in a relief capacity

• Represent an assisting agency that shares jurisdiction
DISCUSSION QUESTION

What should take place before a Deputy Incident Commander assumes command of an incident?
EXPANDING THE ORGANIZATION

Command Staff:
Support the IC by providing information, safety, and liaison services for the entire organization.

General Staff:
Delegated functional responsibilities.

Incident Commander

Deputy (Assistant) Incident Commander

Public Information Officer

Safety Officer

Liaison Officer

Operations Section

Planning Section

Logistics Section

Finance/Admin Section

Deputy (Assistant)
Incident Commander
The Public Information Officer:
• Advises the Incident Commander on information dissemination & media relations
• Obtains information from & provides information to the Planning Section, the community, & the media

* The Incident Commander approves information that the PIO releases.
PIO’S ROLE & FUNCTIONS

• Act as advisory resource for the Incident Commander.
• Inform the public via the media.
• Collect, verify, assemble and disseminate information.
• Manage the media at the scene
• Manage the flow of information
PURPOSE OF INFORMATION

Save lives through:

- Evacuation or curfew orders
- Advising the public on how to seek medical attention
- Other safety instructions
GOALS OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

• Stop rumors and false information
• Educate and inform the public
• Change behaviors and attitudes
• Call people to act
• Create positive image
• Be truthful
WHEN IS A PIO NEEDED?

• Breaking news
• Response actions required
• Issue warnings and advisories
• News conferences and briefings
• Build confidence
IT’S IMPORTANT FOR THE PIO TO:

- Know the community
- Build credibility with community and the media.
- Understand media needs and deadlines
- Communicate with community organizations
DISCUSSION QUESTION

Who’s in charge of releasing information to the public during a disaster in your country?
SAFETY OFFICER

The Safety Officer:

• Advises the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety

• Works closely with Operations to identify risks and hazards

• Can stop actions if deemed unsafe
The Safety Officer:

- Develops a Safety Plan
- May have assistants based on the size of the incident
- Determines proper safety gear and protective equipment based on hazards
Qualities of the Safety Officer:

- Has experience dealing with the incident at hand
- Is not afraid to speak up if he/she sees unsafe actions
The Liaison Officer:

- Assists the Incident Commander by serving as point of contact for representatives from other response organizations.
LIAISON OFFICER

The Liaison Officer:

- Develops a contact list of assisting and cooperating agency representatives
- Keeps them up to date with current information
Qualities of a Liaison Officer:

- Is detail oriented
- Follows through
- Is tactful and professional when interacting with other agencies
ACTIVITY: COMMAND STAFF ROLES

DISCUSSION:

Based on the tsunami scenario:

1. Which Command Staff positions would be assigned?

2. What specific activities would the Incident Commander delegate to each Command Staff member.
GENERAL STAFF OVERVIEW – EXPANDING INCIDENTS

Incident Commander

Operations Section
Planning Section
Logistics Section
Finance/Admin Section

Directs all response/tactical actions to achieve the incident objectives.
Activated as needed, to support the incident response.
THE OPERATIONS SECTION
OPERATIONS SECTION: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Directs & coordinates all incident tactical operations
- Is typically one of the first organizations to be assigned to the incident
- Expands from the bottom up
- Has the most incident resources
- May have Staging Areas & special organizations
On a smaller incident, the Operations Section may be comprised of an Operations Section Chief and single resources.
Single resources may be organized into teams. Using standard ICS terminology, the two types of team configurations are:

- **Task Forces**, which are a **combination of mixed resources** with common communications supervised by a Leader.
- **Strike Teams**, which include all **similar resources** with common communications supervised by a Leader.

**Benefits:** Span of Control, more organized response
SAMPLE STRIKE TEAMS & TASK FORCES

- Fire Suppression Task Force
- Ambulance Strike Team
- Damage Assessment Task Force

Operations Section Chief
OPERATIONS: TOO MANY TEAMS!

Additional levels of supervision should be added as the number of teams expands.
THE SOLUTION: ADD FUNCTIONAL GROUPS

Groups, led by a Supervisor, are used to perform functional areas of operation.
GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS & GROUPS

Divisions, led by a Supervisor, are used to divide an incident geographically.

- **East Division Supervisor**
  - Search & Rescue Strike Team 1
  - Security Strike Team 1
  - Medical Aid Strike Team 1
  - Shelter and Feeding Task Force 1

- **West Division Supervisor**
  - Search & Rescue Strike Team 2
  - Perimeter Security Strike Team 2
  - Medical Aid Strike Team 2
  - Shelter and Feeding Task Force 2

- **Recovery Group Supervisor**
  - Damage Assessment Task Force
  - Road Repair Task Force

**Operations Section Chief**
Adding Branches helps to:

• More effectively supervise multiple Groups and Divisions
• Improve span of control
Discussion: Using the tsunami scenario

1. Develop an organization chart depicting how the Operations Section could be organized into teams.

2. Discuss the responsibilities of each team.
THE PLANNING SECTION
PLANNING SECTION: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Tracking resources assigned to the incident
- Collecting, evaluating, & displaying incident intelligence and information
- Preparing Incident Action Plans
- Maintaining incident documentation
- Developing plans for demobilization
On more complex incidents, the planning section can be divided into these smaller units.

Technical Specialists can be assigned to the Planning Section, Operations, or report directly to the Incident Commander.
The Resources Unit is responsible for tracking all personnel & equipment assigned to the incident.

- Record all resources that have already been assigned to the incident
- Establish a “check-in” process
- Establish a “check-out” process
- Advise Operations what resources are available
A main principle of ICS is to keep people safe. Accountability, knowing where they are and how to contact them, is a big step towards safety.
The Situation Unit is responsible for maintaining current information about the situation at hand. This may include:

- Developing maps
- Counting & tracking injured, displaced & dead people
- Gathering other intelligence such as weather forecasts, terrorist or criminal activity, and other things that may affect the response.
The Documentation Unit is responsible for maintaining all documents related to the response. This may include:

- Copies of the Incident Action Plan
- Copies of check in/out sheets
- Activity logs
- Investigations or reports
- After-action report
The Demobilization Unit is responsible for developing a plan for demobilizing resources as the incident reduces in size and complexity.
Technical Specialists are persons with specific knowledge or experience related to the incident.

For example:

- Structural engineer – earthquake or dam failure
- Chemical engineer – hazardous materials spill
THE PLANNING PROCESS

First priority is developing a good understanding of the situation

It is the responsibility of the Planning Section to capture:

- The size, scope, and location of the incident
- The number and types of resources that are committed to the incident, as well as those available to assist
The Planning P

Initial Response

- Incident Occurs/
  Threat Identified
- Notification
- Initial Response
- Incident Brief

Execute Plan & Assess Progress

- IM/UM Develop/Update
  Objectives
- Management &
  General Staff
  Meeting
- Preparing for
  Tactics Meeting
- Tactics Meeting

Prepare for Planning Meeting

Planning Meeting

IAP Prep & Approval

Operations Briefing

New Operation Period
The ICS organization & planning processes allow for the efficient exchange of information.
THE LOGISTICS SECTION

- Incident Command
  - Operations Section
  - Planning Section
  - Logistics Section
  - Finance/Admin Section
LOGISTICS SECTION: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies
- Providing communication support and resources
- Setting up food services for responders
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities
- Providing support transportation
- Providing medical services for injured personnel
LOGISTICS SECTION: MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Anticipates future needs
- Communicates with the Planning Section so they have accurate numbers of people to feed.
- Orders supplies and equipment including drivers, fuel, etc.
The Logistics Section can be further staffed by two Branches & six Units.
The Communications Unit provides radios, phones and other communication devices and a communications plan.
• The Medical Unit provides medical support to personnel assigned to the incident.
• It develops the Medical Plan which identifies locations of nearby medical facilities and a means to get there.
LOGISTICS SECTION: BRANCHES & UNITS

- The Food Unit is responsible for feeding all responders.
- It makes arrangement for food to be provided in outlying areas.
The Supply Unit is responsible for procuring and distributing supplies to the responders.

- This may include:
  - Gowns, masks & gloves
  - Medical supplies & vaccines
  - Shovels and other tools

It’s important that accurate and current inventory be kept of all supplies.
The Facilities Unit is responsible for establishing and supporting facilities that may be needed for the response.

These may include Incident Command Posts, Operation Centers, Staging Areas.

Other support might include computers, phones, internet, etc.
The Ground Support Unit is responsible for arranging transportation for responders and possibly the public in case of evacuation.
The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

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

They work closely with Logistics to track costs for supplies and equipment, and with the Planning Section to track costs for personnel.
Expanding incidents may add supervisory layers to the organizational structure as needed.
Section Chiefs may have one or more deputies

Deputies must be as proficient and qualified as the Section Chief
When an incident involves multiple organizations, assigning Deputies from other organizations can increase interagency coordination.
INCIDENT FACILITIES
A single Incident Command Post should be established on all incidents—even small ones. Typically in the field located near the incident or event. Has an Incident Commander. Directs resources operating in the field. May include other ICS functions as necessary.
INCIDENT FACILITIES:

• Incidents may require additional facilities such as a base camp or a staging area.

• Facilities and areas may be predesignated for use during an incident. For example: shelters, staging areas, and medical centers.

• A staging area is a location designated to hold resources until they are needed.

• Larger incidents may require more than one staging areas.
RESOURCES: DEFINITION

Resources are personnel and major items of equipment available or potentially available for assignment to incident operations and for which status is maintained.
COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource management includes processes for:

- Categorizing resources
- Ordering resources
- Dispatching resources
- Tracking resources
- Recovering resources
- Reimbursing other organizations
COMMUNICATIONS
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS

Incident communications are facilitated through:

• The development and use of a common communications plan
• The interoperability of communication equipment, procedures, and systems
UNIFIED COMMAND
The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various ministries or organizations operating together to form a single Command structure.
UNIFIED COMMAND BENEFITS

- A shared understanding of priorities & restrictions
- A single set of incident objectives
- Collaborative strategies
- Improved internal & external information flow
- Less duplication of efforts
- Better resource utilization
UNIFIED COMMAND FEATURES

• A single integrated incident organization
• Co-located (shared) facilities
• Single planning process, and Incident Action Plan
• Integrated General Staff – Only one Operations Section
• Coordinated process for resource ordering
Discussion Question

What are potential barriers to implementing Unified Command?
MAKING UNIFIED COMMAND WORK

- Include key officials in planning
- Ensure that everyone knows their responsibilities
- Learn ICS
- Plan, Train & Exercise together
INCIDENT COORDINATION

Coordination activities are usually prior to the disaster and include:

- Establishing policy
- Collecting information
- Establishing priorities
- Resolving resource issues
- Facilitating support
- Synchronizing public messages
The Joint Information Center (JIC):

- Is comprised of Public Information Officers from the agencies represented in the Unified Command
- Is established to coordinate public information activities
- Serves as the central point of contact for all news media
- Helps improve consistent public messaging which builds public confidence
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Provides:
- Logistical Support
- Strategic Guidance
- Plans for Long-term Recovery
- Link to Policy Makers
ICS FEATURES:

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QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?