FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE
INTRO TO INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM FOR FEDERAL WORKERS
(IS-100.FWA) STUDY GUIDE

This Study Guide has been created to provide an overview of the course content presented in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Independent Study Course titled ***"IS-100.FWA Intro to Incident Command System for Federal Workers".*** This guide has been created from material provided in the IS-100FWA "Course Summary". This study guide is not intended to replace the content presented in the IS-100FW course. The IS-100FWA course must be completed online and successful completion of the final exam for official course credit.
The FEMA IS-100FWA interactive web-based course can be accessed online at:
http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-100.FWa

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Lesson 1: Incident Command System: Promoting Response Partnerships

Due to the scale of certain disasters partnerships are often required among local, tribal, State, and Federal agencies as well as nongovernmental and private-sector organizations.

The Incident Command System, or ICS, can help ensure integration of our response efforts.

- ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards approach to incident management.
- ICS allows all responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure that matches the complexities and demands of the incident while respecting agency and jurisdictional authorities.
- ICS organizational structure can expand or contract to meet incident needs.

Lesson 2: ICS Overview & Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5)

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, *"Management of Domestic Incidents,"* directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). HSPD–5 requires all Federal departments and agencies to adopt NIMS and to use it in their individual incident management programs and activities, as well as in support of all actions taken to assist State, tribal, and local governments.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.

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NIMS standardizes the use of the Incident Command System and provides for:

1. A consistent, nationwide approach for all levels of government to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for and respond to domestic incidents.
2. A core set of concepts, principles, and terminology for incident command and multiagency coordination.

National Response Framework

NIMS works hand in hand with the National Response Framework (NRF). NIMS is a template for incident management at all levels. The NRF provides structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management.

NIMS Components – 5 Key Areas

1. **Preparedness:** Focuses on the following elements: planning; procedures and protocols; training and exercises; personnel qualifications, licensure, and certification; and equipment certification.

2. **Communications and Information Management:** NIMS promotes the use of flexible communications and information systems built on the key concepts of interoperability, reliability, scalability, and portability to ensure that personnel from different agencies are able to communicate with each other.

3. **Resource Management:** NIMS describes standardized resource management practices such as typing, inventorying, organizing, and tracking which allow for effective sharing and integration of critical resources across jurisdictions.

4. **Command and Management:** Provides for a flexible, standardized incident management structure. This structure integrates three key organizational constructs: the Incident Command System, Multiagency Coordination Systems, and Public Information.

5. **Ongoing Management and Maintenance:** The FEMA National Integration Center (NIC)'s Incident Management Systems Integration (IMSI) supports ongoing maintenance and continuous refinement of NIMS concepts and principles.

NIMS Command and Management Elements

What is ICS?

Within the NIMS Command and Management component, ICS:

- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private.
- Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources. Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

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ICS Beginnings and Benefits

ICS was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires in California. Property damage ran into the millions, and many people died or were injured. Studies found that response problems were far more likely to result from inadequate management than from any other single cause.

Weaknesses in incident management were often due to:

- Lack of accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Poor communication, due to inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process.
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure.
- No predefined methods to integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process effectively.

ICS: Best Practices helps to ensure:

- The safety of responders, community members, and others.
- The achievement of response objectives.
- The efficient use of resources.

When Is ICS Used?

ICS can be used to manage any type of incident, including a planned event (e.g., the Olympics, Presidential Inauguration, etc.). The use of ICS is applicable to all hazards, including:

- **Natural Hazards:** Disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, floods, ice storms, earthquakes, or epidemics.
- **Technological Hazards:** Dam breaks, radiological or hazmat releases, or power failures.
- **Human-Caused Hazards:** Criminal or terrorist acts, school violence, or other civil disturbances.

ICS: Not Just For Large-Scale Incidents

ICS provides an organizational structure for incident management and guides the process for planning, building, and adapting that structure. Using ICS for every incident or planned event helps improve and maintain skills needed for the large-scale incidents.

Lesson 3: ICS Features and Principles

Making ICS Work

ICS organization and roles differ from day-to-day management approaches. Effective incident management relies on a tight command and control structure.

ICS within the Joint Field Office

FEMA's operations are normally carried out in a Joint Field Office (JFO), which is defined in the NRF as the Federal Government's primary incident management field structure.

ICS Features and Principles: Overview

- ICS uses common terminology and clear text.
- ICS emphasizes effective planning, including management by objectives and reliance on an Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- The ICS features related to command structure include chain of command and unity of command.
- I C S gets all of the different organizations working under the same framework.
- ICS helps ensure full utilization of all incident resources by:
  - Maintaining a manageable span of control,
  - Establishing pre-designated incident locations and facilities,
  - Implementing resource management practices.
  - Ensuring integrated communications.

Chain of Command

Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Chain of command:

- Allows an incident manager to direct and control the actions of all personnel under his or her supervision.
- Avoids confusion by requiring that orders flow from supervisors.

Unity of Command

Under unity of command, personnel:

- Report to only one ICS supervisor and receive work assignments only from their ICS supervisors.

Transfer of Command

The process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another is called transfer of command. Transfer of command may take place when a more qualified Incident Commander arrives and assumes command.

- The transfer of command process always includes a transfer of command briefing, which may be oral, written, or a combination of both.

Incident Management Roles

The Incident Commander is the primary person in charge at the incident. The ICS hierarchy of command must be maintained and not even executives and senior officials can bypass the system.

Emergency Operations Center

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be activated to support the on-scene response during an escalating incident by relieving the burden of external coordination and securing additional resources.

An EOC is a physical location staffed with trained personnel, and equipped with mechanisms for communicating with the incident site and obtaining resources and potential resources.

Management by Objectives

Incident objectives are used to ensure that everyone within the ICS organization has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:

1. Life Safety
2. Incident Stabilization
3. Property Preservation

ICS Organization

The ICS organization is unique and has no correlation between the ICS organization and the administrative structure of any single agency or jurisdiction. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and organizational structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past. For example, someone who serves as a director every day may not hold that title when deployed under an ICS structure.

Modular Organization

The ICS organizational structure:

- Develops in a top-down, modular fashion that is based on the size and complexity of the incident.
- Is determined based on the incident objectives and resource requirements. Only those functions or positions necessary for a particular incident are filled
- Expands and contracts in a flexible manner.

Reliance on an Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have a written or verbal Incident Action Plan (IAP) that identifies measurable tactical operations and also:

- Specifies the incident objectives.
- States the tactical operations, actions/activities to be completed within a specified period.
- Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period.
- May be oral or written—except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP.

Manageable Span of Control

Span of control pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident.

Maintaining an effective span of control is important at incidents where safety and accountability are a top priority.

Span of Control

The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span of control considerations.

Effective span of control on incidents may vary from 3 - 7, and a ratio of one supervisor to five subordinates is recommended.

Accounting for Incident Resources

In ICS, “resources” refers to personnel, supplies, and equipment. During an incident, it is critical to know what resources are needed and available in addition to where deployed resources are located.

Resource Management

Includes processes for resource:

- Categorizing; Ordering; Dispatching (activating); Tracking; & Recovering.

Incident Command Facilities

- **Incident Command Post**, or ICP, is the location from which the on-scene Incident Commander oversees all incident operations. The ICP may be located outside, in a vehicle, trailer, or tent, or within a building. The ICP will be positioned outside of the present and potential hazard zone but close enough to the incident to maintain command.

- **Staging Areas** are temporary locations at an incident where personnel, supplies and equipment are staged while awaiting to be assigned.
- **Incident Base** is the location from which primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered.
- **Camp** is a location where resources may be kept to support incident operations if a Base is not accessible to all resources. Camps are equipped and staffed to provide food, water, sleeping areas, and sanitary services. A hotel, school gym, or other large facility may serve as a Camp for a community-wide incident.
- **Helibase** is a location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted. Helibases are generally used on a more long-term basis and include such services as fueling and maintenance.

Integrated Communications

Prior to an incident, responders must work to ensure that communication equipment, procedures, and systems can operate together during a response. This is known as interoperability.

Information and Intelligence Management

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence is an important component of ICS. Intelligence includes other operational information that may come from a variety of different sources, such as:

- Risk assessments.
- Threats including potential for violence.
- Weather forecasts.
- Structural plans and vulnerabilities.

Accountability

Effective accountability during incident operations is essential. Individuals must abide by their agency policies and guidelines.

Dispatch/Deployment

A systematic deployment process improves safety and reduces chaos. Once deployed the first task is to check in and receive an assignment. After check-in, you will locate your incident supervisor and obtain your initial briefing.

The check-in and briefing(s) assist to:

- Ensure personnel accountability
- Track resources
- Prepare personnel for assignment(s) and/or reassignment.
- Organize the demobilization process.
- Identification of available lodging and food.
- Outline procedural instructions for obtaining needed resources.
- Identify operational periods/work shifts.
- Identify required safety procedures and personal protective equipment (PPE), as appropriate.

Lesson 4: Incident Commander and Command Staff Functions

Performance of Management Functions

Every incident requires that certain management functions be performed. Regardless of the size of the incident, these same management functions are still required.

Five Major Management Functions

These are the foundation upon which an incident management organization develops. These functions apply to incidents of all sizes and types, including planned events and emergencies that occur without warning.

Management Function Descriptions

1. **Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident.
2. **Operations:** Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes tactics and directs all tactical operational resources.
3. **Planning:** Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.
4. **Logistics:** Arranges for resources and needed services to support achievement of the incident objectives.
5. **Finance & Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

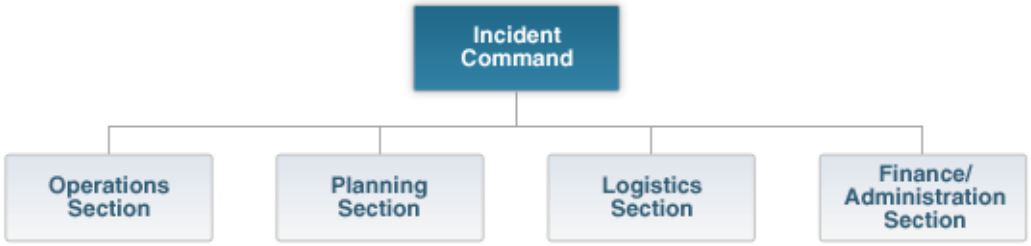
Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications.

The Incident Commander is responsible for all ICS management functions until authority is delegated to another person.

Delegating Incident Management Functions

The Incident Commander may create Sections and delegate the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration functions.



Incident Commander Responsibilities

- Ensuring overall incident safety.
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders, such as agency executives and senior officials.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.

Federal Coordinating Officer

The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) represents the FEMA Administrator in the field to discharge all FEMA responsibilities for the response and recovery efforts.

Although the role of the FCO is similar to that of an Incident Commander, there are some important differences. The FCO:

- Coordinates with the State to support State, local and tribal officials' efforts to meet the needs of disaster survivors.
- Identifies needs and sets objectives for an effective collaborative response.
- Does not supersede the authority of the Incident Commander at the scene to manage the incident within his or her jurisdiction.

Selecting and Changing Incident Commanders

The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response. A formal transfer of command at an incident always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander.

Deputy Incident Commander

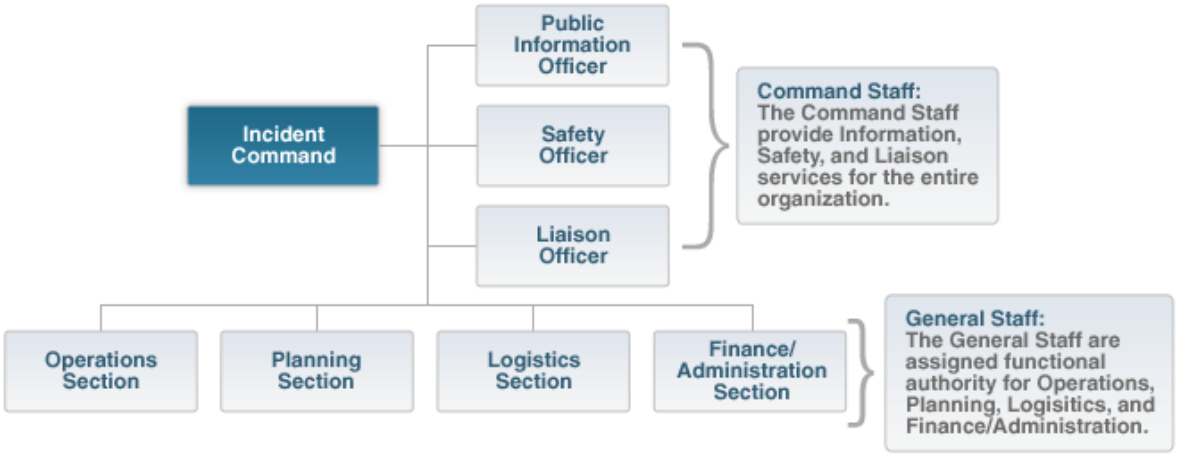
A Deputy Incident Commander may be designated to:

- 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.

If a Deputy is assigned, he or she must be fully qualified to assume the Incident Commander's position.

Expanding the Organization

As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff. The Incident Commander will add positions ***only*** as needed.



Command Staff

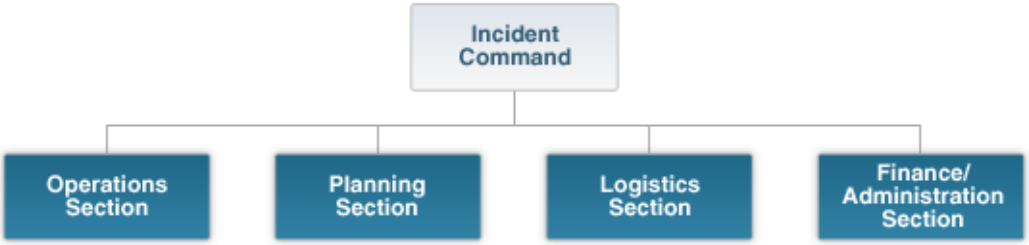
- **Public Information Officer**, who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media.
- **Safety Officer**, who monitors safety conditions and develops measures for ensuring the safety of all response personnel.
- **Liaison Officer**, who serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assisting at an incident.

The Command Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.

Lesson 5: General Staff Functions

General Staff

To maintain span of control, the Incident Commander may establish the following General Staff Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. The General Staff report directly to the Incident Commander. The person in charge of each Section is designated as a ***Section Chief***. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their Sections to meet the needs of the situation.



General Staff Overview

Operations Section
Is responsible for developing and implementing strategy to accomplish the incident tactical objectives by organizing, assigning, and supervising all the tactical operations or response tactical resources assigned to the incident.

The Operation Section is supervised by the **Operation Section Chief**

Operations Section: Single Resources
Single Resources are individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor.

Operations Section: Teams
Single resources may be organized into teams. Using standard ICS terminology, the two types of team configurations are:

- **Task Forces** — A combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Leader.
- **Strike Teams** — Consist of all similar resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Leader.

Operations Section: Groups or Divisions

These are used to divide an incident geographically or to describe functional areas of operation. The person in charge of each Group or Division is designated as a Supervisor**.** The Operations Section may add the following elements to manage span of control:

- Groups — used to describe functional areas of operation.
- Divisions — used to divide an incident geographically.

Operations Section: Branches

Used when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director. The Operations Section Chief may add Branches to supervise Groups and Divisions and further reduce his or her span of control.

Planning Section

Is responsible for:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident intelligence and information.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Developing plans for demobilization.

The Planning Section is supervised by the **Planning Section Chief**

Logistics Section

Is responsible for all services and support needs, including:

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services for responders.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing support transportation.
- Providing medical services to incident personnel (not injured disaster survivors).

The Logistics Section is supervised by the **Logistics Section Chief**

Finance/Administration Section

The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Managing Costs related to the incident.
- Contract procurement, accounting, negotiation and monitoring.
- Timekeeping.
- Compensation for injury or damage to property.
- Documentation for reimbursement under memorandums of understanding (MOUs)).

The Finance/Administration Section is supervised by the **Finance/Administration Section Chief**

ICS Position Titles

ICS position/supervisory titles are distinct and important because they allow many different agencies to work together and serve three purposes:

1. To staff/ fill positions with the most qualified person rather than by rank.
2. Titles provide a common standard for all responders.
3. Is useful when requesting qualified/certified personnel.

Lesson 6: Unified Command

Unified Command

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure and also enables agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

Unified Command Benefits

In a Unified Command, institutions and responding agencies blend into an integrated, unified team. A unified approach results in:

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

Unified Command and NIMS

Unified Command allows all agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for the incident to jointly provide management direction through a common set of incident objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan. Each participating agency maintains its authority, responsibility, and accountability.

Unified Command Features Co-located (Shared) Facilities

- In a Unified Command, incident facilities are co-located or shared.

Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan

- Unified Command uses a single planning process and produces one Incident Action Plan.

Integrated General Staff

- Integrating multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas may be beneficial.

Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering

- The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command work together to establish resource ordering procedures.

Joint Field Office and Unified Command Principles

- To ensure unity of effort, the Joint Field Office (JFO) is led by the Unified Coordination Group.

Unified Coordination Group Members

For a Stafford Act incident, key group members include:

- Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO).
- State Coordinating Officer (SCO).
- Senior Federal Officials (SFOs).