Basics of the Incident Command System

The New England Consortium
Hazards Material & Emergency Response Training Program
Objectives

• Learn basic concepts of Incident Command / Unified Command System organization

• Understand ICS terminology
Incident Command System (ICS)

• A standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management tool for the command, control, and coordination of resources

• May be used for both emergency and non-emergency incidents

• Uses proven business principals to improve efficiently and effectiveness and apply those principals to a response

• Has a flexible design that allows for many jurisdictions and many agencies to work together
Incident Command System Has Been Proven Effective For Responding To All Types Of Incidents

- Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) Incidents
- Planned Events (Parades, Concerts)
- Response To Natural Hazards
- Single And Multiagency Incidents
- Fires
- Multi-jurisdictional Incidents
- Transportation Accidents
- Mass Casualty Incidents
- Search And Rescue Missions
- Private Sector Emergency Management
ICS Benefits

• Meets The Needs Of Incidents Of Any Kind Or Size
• Allows Personnel From A Variety Of Agencies To Meld Rapidly Into A Common Management Structure
• Provides Logistical And Administrative Support To Operational Staff
• Is Cost Effective By Avoiding Duplication Of Efforts
ICS Important Features

• Common terminology
• Consistent organizational structure
• Consistent position titles
• Integrated communications
• Common incident facilities
• Incident & Operational Action Plans
• Span Of Control
Definitions

• Incident: An occurrence that requires action by emergency service personnel

• Unity Of Command: Report to only one supervisor and receive work assignments only from one supervisor

• Operational Periods: The time scheduled for executing a given set of operation actions, as specified in the incident plan, and can be of various lengths, although usually not over twenty-four (24) hours.
Command Staff

INCIDENT COMMANDER

INFORMATION OFFICER
SAFETY OFFICER
LIAISON OFFICER
Incident Commander

- In charge at the incident
- Assigned by responsible jurisdiction or agency assigns personnel to the command staff & general staff positions
- Sets the objectives for the incident response
- May have one or more deputy incident commanders, if the incident is large or will have a response that will extend over many operational periods
Incident Commander’s Overall Priorities

Incident Objectives & The Decision to Expand (Or Contract ) the ICS Organization Are Base On The Following Priorities:

- #1: Life Saving
- #2: Incident Stabilization
- #3: Property Preservation
Unified Command

– Enables all agencies with responsibility to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

– Allows Incident Commanders to make joint decisions by establishing a single command structure.

– Maintains unity of command. Each employee reports to only one supervisor.
The Command Staff

• Safety Officer (SO): Assesses all safety hazards and works to ensure response personnel safety during incident operations. They can stop any operations at any time if they believe it is unsafe.

• Liaison Officer (LO): Is responsible for facilitating the integration of resources into the incident organization. Function is to be a point of contact for representatives from assisting and cooperating agencies.

• Public Information Officer (PIO): Gather facts, information and data and distributes them to public and the media.
Operations Section Chief

• Develop & manage the operations section
• Accomplish the incident objectives
• Only one person assigned to this role
Planning Section Chief

• Collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources
• Responsible for creating action plans
Logistics Section Chief

• Provides all support needs
• Orders all resources from off-incident locations
• Responsible to acquire:
  ✓ Facilities
  ✓ Services
  ✓ Personnel
  ✓ Equipment
  ✓ Materials
Finance Section Chief

• Responsible for tracking all incident costs and evaluating the financial considerations of the incident
  ✓ Time units
  ✓ Procurement unit
  ✓ Compensation/claims unit
  ✓ Cost unit
Detailed ICS Organization

Sections – Responsible for major functional areas of the incident

Unit – Has responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistics, or finance/administration activity

Branches – Used when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control

Group – Responsible for functional areas of operations
Divisions

- **Divisions** – Responsible for certain geographic areas of the incident
Span of Control

• Span Of Control refers to the number of individuals or resources that one person can effectively manage.

• Effective span of control ranges from 3 to 7 reporting elements per supervisor, optimum is five.

• If the number of reporting elements is not within this range, expansion or consolidation of the ICS organization may be needed.
ICS Organizational Components

• **Single Resources** – Individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor

• **Task Force** – Mixed resources with common communications (Task Force Leader)

• **Strike Teams** – Resources of the same kind and type with common communications (Strike Team Leader)
Incident Facilities

• Incident Command Post (ICP):
  ✔ Temporary facilities and the physical location of the on-scene incident command and management organization.
  ✔ Typically, the ICP is located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site and is the focus of direct, on-scene control of operations.
  ✔ It comprises the Incident Commander and staff and may include other designated incident management officials and responders from Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies, as well as private-sector, nongovernmental, and volunteer organizations.

• Staging Areas: Temporary location of available resources, whether tactical or support. They are located anywhere on the incident where personnel, supplies and equipment can be temporarily housed while awaiting an operational assignment.
Emergency Operations Center

• Typically a pre-designated facility
• Maintained by a jurisdiction
• Staffing includes:
  • Department heads
  • Government officials
  • Volunteer agencies
• It is not a part of on-scene management
Incident Action Plan (IAP)

- Can be written or electronic
- Includes measurable tactical objectives
- Lists activated organizations involved
- Assignments to accomplish the objectives
- Supporting information
- Informs all incident supervisory personnel
- Minimum Of Four Elements
  ✓ What Do We Want To Do?
  ✓ Who Is Responsible For Job?
  ✓ How To Communicate?
  ✓ Procedures For Injuries?
Joint Information Center (JIC)

• Established by the lead agency as a focal point for the coordination and provision of information to the public and media concerning the response to the emergency

• It may be located at an on-scene location in coordination with State and local agencies

• Coordinates info from agencies to speak with one voice
Common Responsibilities for All Incident Personnel

• Receive assignment from your agency
• Bring any specialized supplies or equipment
• Follow check-in procedures
• Obtain a briefing upon arrival
• Follow all safety rules