

JOB AID

HAZWOPER

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

ICS OVERVIEW

HAZWOPER: Incident Command System (ICS) Overview

Applicability and Scope of ICS

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized approach to managing an incident that:

- Can be used for managing all kinds of incidents, including emergencies as well as planned events
- Can be used by all types of organizations and at any level of government • Enables a coordinated response
- Establishes common processes for planning and resource management • Allows for integration of resources

Accountability

There are several principles that you need to adhere to:

- **Check-In/Check-Out** – checking out is as important as checking in • **Incident Action Planning** – the response must be coordinated according to the Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- **Unity of Command** – each individual will be assigned to one supervisor • **Personal Responsibility** – everyone must be responsible for his/her own actions • **Span of Control** – supervisors must adequately supervise, control and manage resources
- **Resource Tracking** – supervisors must track the status of their resources from the initial request through the time the resource returns to their home base safely

Command Structure

Major functional areas include Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration, and Intelligence and Investigations. Incident Command assigns Command Staff and General Staff. Incident Command can be a single Incident Commander or Unified Command.

Incident Commander

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

- Setting incident objectives
- Ensures overall incident safety
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders • Ensuring and maintaining liaisons with other participating agencies

Unified Command

In a Unified Command, there is no single "Commander." Unified Command: •

Manages incidents through jointly approved objectives

- Allows agencies having different legal, geographic and functional responsibilities to work together

- Is typically established when no single jurisdiction has the authority or resources to manage the incident on its own.

Command Staff

Incident Command leads the effort during an incident and assigns Command Staff. The **Public Information Officer** interfaces with the public and media and/or with others seeking information related to the response. The **Safety Officer** monitors the incident operations and advises the Incident Commander on all matters relating to safety, including the health and safety of incident management personnel. The **Liaison Officer** serves as the Incident Commander's point of contact for representatives of governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

General Staff

During a larger incident, the Incident Commander may create Sections and delegate responsibilities. The primary jurisdiction of the incident will designate an Incident Commander and the process for transferring command, which can occur during the incident. The transfer of command should include a briefing to capture essential information.

Operations Section

The Incident Commander first establishes the Operations Section, which directs all responses and tactical actions relating to the incident. When the Operations Section Chief is designated, the staging and management of operational resources moves from Incident Command to Operations.

The Operations Section:

- Implements strategies and develops tactics to carry out the incident objectives
- Directs the management of all tactical activities on behalf of the Incident Commander
- Supports the development of an Incident Action Plan
- Organizes, assigns and supervises resources

When determining the resources needed to accomplish incident objectives, the complexity of the incident needs to be considered. Incident complexity is the level of difficulty faced when managing an incident.

- Type 1 (most complex)
- Type 5 (least complex)

Many factors determine the complexity of the incident including but not limited to impact to life, property and the economy; potential hazardous material; weather and other environmental influences; and availability of resources.

Planning Section

Under the direction of the Planning Section Chief, the Planning Section collects situation and resource status information, evaluates it, and processes the information for use in developing an **Incident Action Plan (IAP)**. Information may be distributed via the IAP, formal briefings or through maps and status board displays.

An IAP is a concise, coherent means of capturing and communicating overall incident priorities, objectives, strategies, tactics and assignments. To be effective, an IAP should:

- Cover a specified timeframe
- Be proactive
- Specify the incident objectives
- State the activities to be completed

- Assign responsibilities

- Identify needed resources • Specify communication protocols

Incidents involving hazardous material must have a written IAP.

Logistics Section

The Logistics Section coordinates services and support for effective and efficient management of the incident. Responsibilities include:

- 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

Incident Facilities are set up to support the response. The **Incident Command Post** is the field location where the primary tactical-level on-scene incident command functions are performed. The **Staging Area** is where resources can be placed while waiting for their tactical assignment. The **Incident Base** is the location where primary logistics functions are coordinated. There is only one incident base per incident. The **Camp** is where food, water rest and sanitary services are provided to incident personnel.

Finance and Administration Section

There is a significant investment in responding to, managing and recovering from an incident involving hazardous material. Appropriate funding is needed for all aspects of the Incident Command System. Staff responsibilities include:

- Recording personnel time
- Negotiating leases and maintaining vendor contracts
- Administering claims
- Tracking and analyzing costs relating to the incident

Intelligence and Investigations Section

Some incidents (such as those involving a criminal or terrorist act; major biological incident; or mass fatality) may require intelligence gathering and investigative activity. Groups may be established to support intelligence and investigative activity. These include:

- **Investigative Operations Group** – is responsible for the overall investigative effort
- **Intelligence Group** – obtains, analyzes and manages unclassified and classified information
- **Forensic Group** – collects physical evidence and maintains the integrity of the crime scene
- **Missing Persons Group** – directs the missing persons investigations and provides assistance to families of missing persons

- **Mass Fatality Management Group** – directs the intelligence/investigative activities involving mass casualties
- **Investigative Support Group** – ensures necessary investigative personnel are made available

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