ICS 300 – Lesson 2: Staffing Fundamentals

Lesson Overview

The **Staffing Fundamentals** lesson will provide a review of the ICS organization and descriptions of the responsibilities of the organizational elements within each section of the ICS. It will also review the general duties of each organizational element, terminology, staffing considerations, and reporting relationships.

This lesson should take approximately **60 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Match responsibility statements to each ICS organizational element.
- List the ICS positions which may include Deputies, and describe Deputy roles and responsibilities. Describe differences between Deputies and Assistants.
- Describe ICS reporting and working relationships for Technical Specialists and Agency Representatives.
- Describe reporting relationships and information flow within the organization.
- Describe the Air Operations Branch and its relationship to other Functions.

ICS Management Functions

As you learned in ICS 200, the ICS organization is built around five major functions that may be applied on any incident whether it is large or small. The five major management functions are:

- Incident Command
- Operations Section
- Planning Section
- Logistics Section
- Finance/Administration Section

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ICS Organization

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.
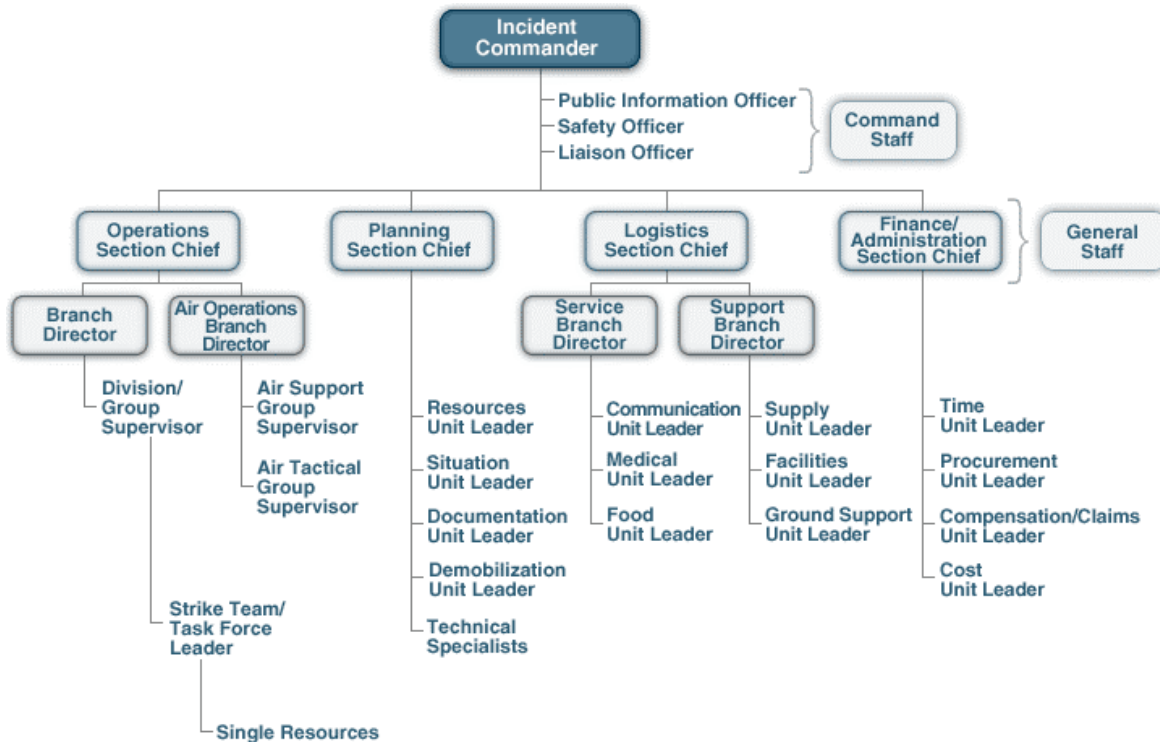
ICS Positions

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

Command Staff: The Command Staff consists of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander.   They may have an Assistant or Assistants, as needed.

Officer: Officer is the ICS title for the personnel responsible for the Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Public Information.

General Staff: The group of incident management personnel reporting to the Incident Commander. They may have one or more Deputies, as needed. The General Staff consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Section: The organizational level with responsibility for a major functional area of the incident, e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration.

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Chief: The ICS title for individuals responsible for functional Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

Branch: The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions.

Director: The ICS title for individuals responsible for supervision of a Branch.

Division/Group: Divisions are used to divide an incident geographically. Groups are used to divide an incident functionally.

Supervisor: The ICS title for individuals responsible for a Division or Group.

Strike Team: A specified combination of the same kind and type of resources with common communications and a Leader.

Task Force: A combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need with common communications and a Leader.

Unit: The organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific incident Planning, Logistics, or Finance/Administration activity.

Leader: The ICS title for an individual responsible for a Task Force, Strike Team, or functional Unit.

Resources: Personnel and equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents. Resources are described by kind and type (e.g., Type III Helicopter) and may be used in tactical, support, or overhead capacities at an incident.

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.

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.

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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

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.

Incident Commander's Overall Responsibilities

Before examining the Incident Commander's major responsibilities in detail, let's look at a list of 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.

The first responsibility is to **establish immediate priorities**. The Incident Commander's first priority is always the safety of:

- People involved in the incident;
- Responders;
- Other emergency workers; and
- Bystanders.

The second priority is incident stabilization. When considering how to stabilize the incident situation, the Incident Commander must:

- Ensure life safety;
- Ensure continuity of command; and
- Manage resources efficiently and cost effectively.

The next responsibility is to **determine incident objectives and strategy**. All agencies employ some sequence of steps to meet incident objectives. A suggested four-step approach is:

Step 1) Know Agency Policy: Agency policy can affect the establishment of incident objectives. The Incident Commander must be fully aware of agency policy and his or her authority to manage the incident.

Step 2) Establish Incident Objectives: Incident objectives are statements of tasks to be accomplished related to the overall incident. For some incidents the time to achieve the objectives is critical. In others, time may not be an overriding issue. In all cases, incident objectives must be measurable.

Step 3) Develop Appropriate Strategy: Strategy describes the general method or methods that should be used to achieve an incident objective. Strategies can be used either singly or in combination.

Step 4) Execute Tactical Direction: Tactical direction describes what resources must be used and what actions must be taken within the selected strategy or strategies in order to achieve the incident objectives.

The next responsibility is to **establish an Incident Command Post**. The Incident Command Post (ICP) provides a central coordination point from which the Incident Commander, Command Staff, and Planning functions will normally operate. The ICP can be any type of facility that is available and appropriate. Once established, the ICP should not be moved unless absolutely necessary.

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The next responsibility is to **establish and monitor incident organization**. The organization needs to be large enough to do the job at hand; yet, resource use must be cost-effective. Anticipated expansion or contraction of the incident will require changes to the organization. The Incident Commander is responsible for overseeing the management organization.

As you've just learned, the Incident Commander has a wide variety of responsibilities. In the next video segment, we'll discuss the remaining major responsibilities of the Incident Commander.

The next responsibility is to **ensure adequate safety measures**. Life Safety at the scene of an incident is always the top priority. If the incident is complex, or the Incident Commander is not a tactical expert in all the hazards present, a Safety Officer should be assigned.

The next responsibility is to **Schedule Planning Meetings as Required**. Planning meetings and the overall planning process are essential to achieving incident objectives. Although time constraints often do not allow for prolonged planning, it is important to know and use an effective planning process, as a lack of planning can be disastrous.

The next responsibility is to **approve and authorize implementation of an Incident Action Plan**. ICS offers great flexibility in the development of Incident Action Plans. Plans can be verbal or written. Written plans should be provided for multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents, or when the incident will continue for more than one Operational Period.

The next responsibility is to **approve requests for additional resources or release of resources**. On small incidents, the ordering responsibility for resources lies with the Incident Commander. He or she will personally determine resource requirements and order or release resources, as needed.

The final responsibility is to **authorize release of information to news media**. On small incidents, the Incident Commander is responsible for authorizing the release of information to the media. On larger incidents, it may be necessary to assign a Public Information Officer to help ensure that procedures are in place for managing the release of information to the media and responding appropriately to media inquiries.

The Incident Commander's major responsibilities are varied. Of primary concern, however is the overall responsibility for the management of the incident.

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

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Command Staff

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.

The addition of the **Information and Intelligence Officer**, as a Command Staff member, may be most appropriate in incidents with little need for tactical intelligence or classified intelligence, and where the intelligence is provided by supporting Agency Representatives, through real-time reach-back capabilities.

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.

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.

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- 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.
- 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.

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.

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.

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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.

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.

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.

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General Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, t 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**. The General Staff is made up of four **sections**:

- Operations Section
- Planning Section
- Logistics Section
- Finance/Administration Section
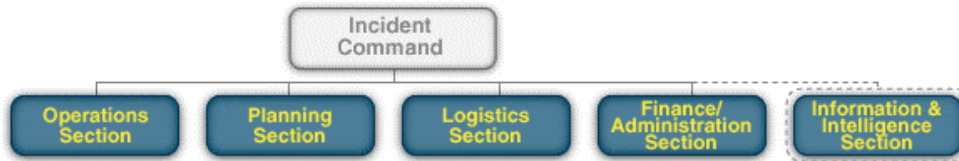
Each of the General Staff members may also have one or more Deputies. In exceptional situations, the Incident Commander may need to assign an additional member to the General Staff to provide information and intelligence functions.

The addition of the **Information and Intelligence Section Chief**, as a General Staff member, may be most appropriate in those instances where 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.

Operations Section

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

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 the following components:

- Ground or surface-based tactical resources.
- Aviation or air resources.
- Staging Areas.

Incidents will use any or all of these components, depending on the need.

The first component of the Operations Section is Ground or Surface Tactical Resources. There are three ways of organizing tactical resources on an incident. Resources can be used as:

- Single Resources.
- Task Forces.
- Strike Teams.

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The determination of how resources will be used will be decided based on the area involved and the tactical requirement. Depending on the need, tactical resources can be placed into an Operations organization made up of:

- Resources, which report directly to the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief;
- Divisions, which are used to divide an incident geographically;
- Groups, which are used to describe functional areas of operation; or
- Branches, which can be either geographical or functional and are used in Operations when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control.

Another organizational option for the Operations Section is the establishment of an Information and Intelligence Branch. 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.

The second component of the Operations Section is aviation resources. Many incidents require the use of aircraft to support the incident. In ICS, all aviation resources assigned for the exclusive use of the incident, whether tactical or logistical, are assigned to the Operations Section. The Air Operations Branch may be established by the Operations Section Chief:

- When the complexity of air operations and/or the number of aircraft assigned to the incident requires additional management support; or
- When the incident requires both tactical and logistical use of air support.

The Air Operations Branch Director supervises both tactical and support aviation operations on the Incident. The Air Operations Branch Director reports to the Operations Section Chief. The Air Attack Group Supervisor manages all aircraft carrying out tactical assignments, such as personnel or cargo transport, spraying, photo or surveillance, etc.
The Air Support Group Supervisor manages the bases for the aircraft, including fuel and maintenance, and keeps time for all aircraft on the incident.

The third component of the Operations Section is Staging Areas. Staging Areas are temporary facilities, which should be located close enough to the incident so that resources can quickly be at the scene of their assignments. All Resources assigned to a Staging Area belong to the incident and are available for active assignment. Staging Areas can be set up at any appropriate location in the incident area and moved or deactivated as needed. Several Staging Areas may be used on a single incident. Staging Area Managers report to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if the Operations Section Chief position has not been filled.

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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.
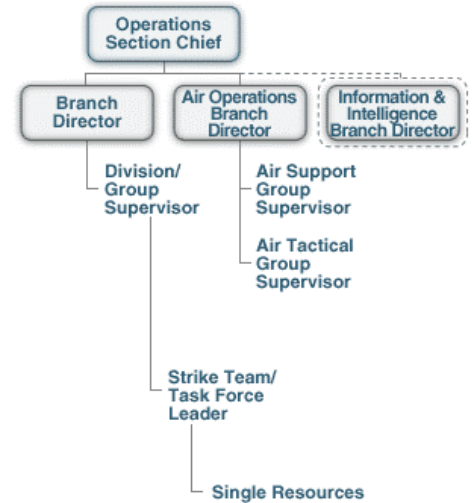
Directors, Managers and Supervisors

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

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

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.

The person in charge of each Planning Unit is designated as a Leader. In the Planning Section, Unit Leaders and Technical Specialists report to the Planning Section Chief. The Planning Section Chief can activate the following components as necessary:

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.

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.

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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

Logistics Section

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 the following:

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Communications
- Equipment maintenance and fueling
- Food services
- Medical services
- Ordering and distributing resources and supplies

On very large incidents, or on incidents requiring a great deal of equipment or facilities, the Logistics Section may be divided into two Branches. Each Logistics Branch is led by a Director, who reports to the Logistics Section Chief. Each Branch Director supervises three Units lead by Leaders.

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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 Communication 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,
- The Facilities Unit, and
- The Ground Support Unit.

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.

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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

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.

The person in charge of each Finance/Administration Unit is designated as a Leader. In the Finance/Administration Section, Unit Leaders report to the Finance/Administration Section Chief. The Finance/Administration Section Chief can activate the following components as necessary:

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.

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.

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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.

Reporting Relationships and Information Flow

As the incident organization grows to meet the needs of the incident, care must be taken to ensure that information transfer is handled effectively.

There are essentially two principles to be followed:

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.

Information Exchange

The ICS organizational framework is open for individuals to freely supply and exchange information.

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.

Flow of Orders and Directives

Orders and directives within the ICS Organization must follow the chain of command, unless otherwise directed.

ICS 300 – Lesson 2: Staffing Fundamentals

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.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Staffing Fundamentals** lesson. This lesson provided a review of the ICS organization and descriptions of the responsibilities of the organizational elements within each section of the ICS. It also reviewed the general duties of each organizational element, terminology, staffing considerations, and reporting relationships.

The next lesson will describe the resource management process at an incident.