

Lesson Summary

Lesson 4: Functional Areas & Positions

Lesson Overview

The Functional Areas & Positions lesson introduces you to ICS organizational components, the Command Staff, the General Staff, and ICS tools.

Lesson Objectives

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

Describe the functions of organizational positions within the Incident Command System (ICS).

Identify the ICS tools needed to manage an incident.

Demonstrate the use of an ICS Form 201.

This lesson provides more indepth information on ICS organizational elements.

Incident Commander

The Incident Commander:

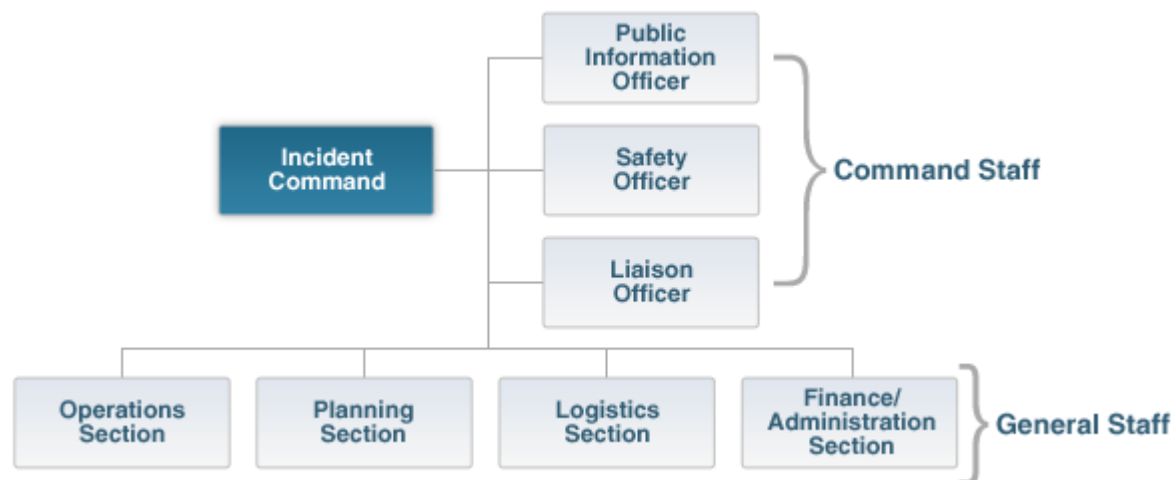
Has overall incident management responsibility delegated by the appropriate jurisdictional authority.

Develops the incident objectives to guide the incident planning process.

Approves the Incident Action Plan and all requests pertaining to the ordering and releasing of incident resources.

In some situations or agencies, a lower ranking but more qualified person may be designated as the Incident Commander.

The Incident Commander performs **all** major ICS Command and General Staff responsibilities unless these functions are activated.



Deputy Incident Commander

The Incident Commander may have one or more Deputies. Deputies may be assigned at the Incident Command, Section, or Branch levels. The only ICS requirement regarding the use of a Deputy is that the Deputy must be fully qualified and equally capable to assume the position.

The three primary reasons to designate a Deputy Incident Commander are to:

Perform specific tasks as requested by the Incident Commander.

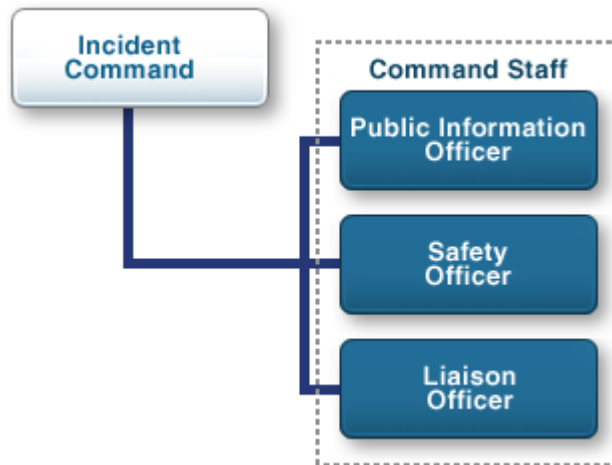
Perform the incident command function in a relief capacity (e.g., to take over for the next operational period). In this case, the Deputy will assume the primary role.

Represent an Assisting Agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Command Staff

The Command Staff is only activated in response to the needs of the incident. Command Staff includes the following positions:

- Public Information Officer
- Liaison Officer
- Safety Officer



Command Staff Functions

Command Staff carry out staff functions needed to support the Incident Commander. These functions include interagency liaison, incident safety, and public information. The following Command Staff positions are established to assign responsibility for key activities not specifically identified in the General Staff functional elements.

Command Staff	Responsibilities
Public Information Officer (PIO)	<p>The PIO is responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The PIO develops accurate and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external consumption. The PIO may also perform a key public information-monitoring role.</p> <p>Only one incident PIO should be designated. Assistants may be assigned from other agencies or departments involved. The Incident Commander must approve the release of all incident-related information.</p>
Safety Officer (SO)	<p>The SO monitors incident operations and advises the Incident Commander on all matters relating to operational safety, including the health and safety of emergency responder personnel. The ultimate responsibility for the safe conduct of incident management operations rests with the Incident Commander or Unified Command and supervisors at all levels of incident management. The SO is, in turn, responsible to the Incident Commander for the set of systems and procedures necessary to ensure ongoing assessment of hazardous environments, coordination of multiagency safety efforts, and implementation of measures to promote emergency responder safety, as well as the general safety of incident operations. The SO has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts during incident operations. In a Unified Command structure, a single SO should be designated, in spite of the fact that multiple jurisdictions and/or functional agencies may be involved. The SO must also ensure the coordination of safety management functions and issues across jurisdictions, across functional agencies, and with private-sector and nongovernmental organizations.</p>
Liaison Officer (LNO)	<p>The LNO is the point of contact for representatives of other governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and/or private entities. In either a</p>

single or Unified Command structure, representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies and organizations coordinate through the LNO. Agency and/or organizational representatives assigned to an incident must have the authority to speak for their parent agencies and/or organizations on all matters, following appropriate consultations with their agency leadership. Assistants and personnel from other agencies or organizations (public or private) involved in incident management activities may be assigned to the LNO to facilitate coordination.

Source: National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Assistants

In a large or complex incident, Command Staff members may need one or more Assistants to help manage their workloads. Each Command Staff member is responsible for organizing his or her Assistants for maximum efficiency. Assistants are subordinates of principal Command Staff positions.

As the title indicates, Assistants should have a level of technical capability, qualifications, and responsibility subordinate to the primary positions.

Assistants may also be assigned to Unit Leaders (e.g., at camps to supervise unit activities).

Assisting Agency

An agency or jurisdiction will often send resources to assist at an incident. In ICS these are called assisting agencies.

An assisting agency is defined as an agency or organization providing personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with **direct responsibility for incident management**.

Cooperating Agency

A cooperating agency is an agency **supplying assistance other than direct operational or support functions** or resources to the incident management effort.

Don't get confused between an assisting agency and a cooperating agency! An assisting agency has direct responsibility for incident response, whereas a cooperating agency is simply offering assistance.

Agency Representative

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency. The Agency Representative is delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident.

Expanding Incidents

An incident may start small and then expand. As the incident grows in scope and the number of resources needed increases, there may be a need to activate Teams, Divisions, Groups, Branches, or Sections to maintain an appropriate span of control.

The ability to delegate the supervision of resources not only frees up the Incident Commander to perform critical decisionmaking and evaluation duties, but also clearly defines the lines of communication to everyone involved in the incident.

Next, we'll review the major organizational elements that may be activated during an expanding incident.

Operations Section

The Operations Section:

- Directs and 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 and special organizations.



Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief:

- Is responsible to the Incident Commander for the direct management of all incident-related operational activities.
- Establishes tactical objectives for each operational period.
- Has direct involvement in the preparation of the Incident Action Plan.

The Operations Section Chief may have one or more Deputies assigned. The assignment of Deputies from other agencies may be advantageous in the case of multijurisdictional incidents.

Operations Section: Staging Areas

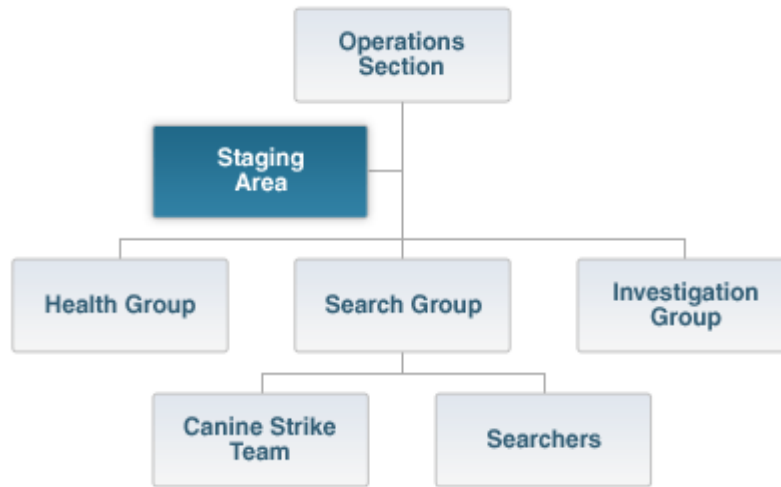
Staging Areas are set up at the incident where resources can wait for a tactical assignment.

All resources in the Staging Area are assigned and ready for deployment. Out-of-service resources are NOT located at the Staging Area.

After a Staging Area has been designated and named, a Staging Area Manager will be assigned. The Staging Area Manager will report to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if the Operations Section Chief has not been designated.

Staging Areas: Chain of Command

The graphic below shows where the Staging Area Manager fits into the Operations Section.

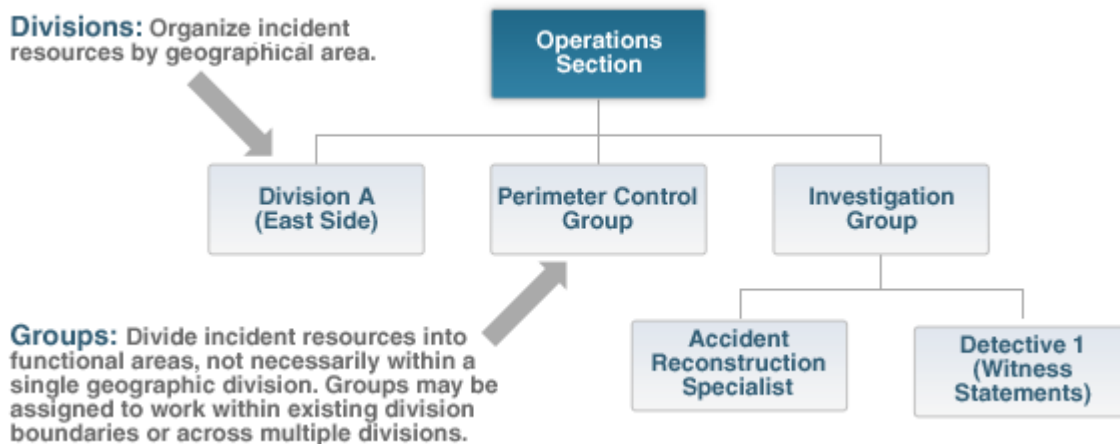


Divisions and Groups

Divisions are established to divide an incident into physical or geographical areas of operation.

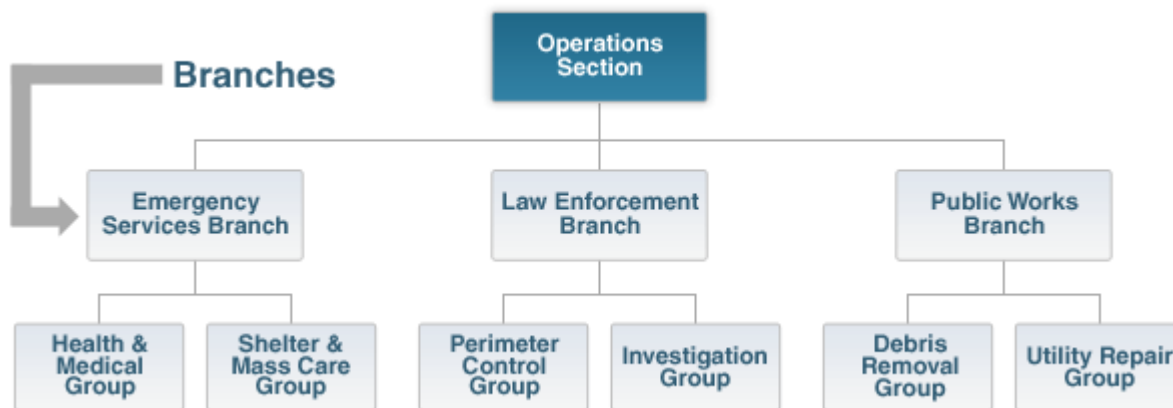
Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation.

For example, a Damage Assessment Task Force, reporting to the Infrastructure Group Leader, could work across divisions established to manage two distinct areas of the building that had been damaged — the west side of the building (West Division) and the north side (North Division).



Branches

Branches may be used to serve several purposes, and may be functional or geographic in nature. Branches are established when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the recommended span of control of one supervisor to three to seven subordinates for the Operations Section Chief. Branches are identified by Roman numerals or functional name, and are managed by a Branch Director.



Air Operations Branch

Some incidents may require the use of aviation resources to provide tactical or logistical support. On smaller incidents, aviation resources will be limited in number and will report directly to the Incident Commander or to the Operations Section Chief.

On larger incidents, it may be desirable to activate a separate Air Operations organization to coordinate the use of aviation resources. The Air Operations organization will then be established at the Branch level, reporting directly to the Operations Section Chief.

The Air Operations Branch Director can establish two functional groups. The Air Tactical Group coordinates all airborne activity. The Air Support Group provides all incident ground-based support to aviation resources.

Planning Section

The Planning Section has responsibility for:

- Maintaining resource status.
- Maintaining and displaying situation status.
- Preparing the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- Developing alternative strategies.
- Providing documentation services.
- Preparing the Demobilization Plan.
- Providing a primary location for Technical Specialists assigned to an incident.

One of the most important functions of the Planning Section is to look beyond the current and next operational period and anticipate potential problems or events.

Planning Section Key Personnel

The Planning Section will have a Planning Section Chief. The Planning Section Chief may have a Deputy.

Technical Specialists:

- Are advisors with special skills required at the incident.
- Will initially report to the Planning Section, work within that Section, or be reassigned to another part of the organization.
- Can be in any discipline required (e.g., epidemiology, infection control, chemical-biological-nuclear agents, etc.).

Planning Section Units

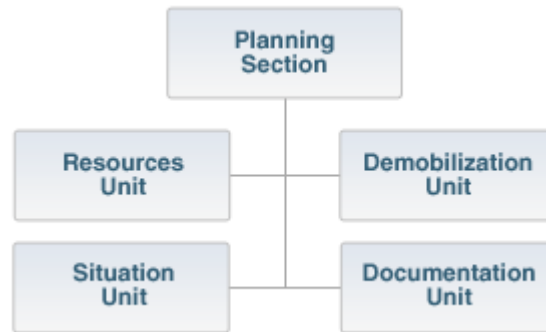
The major responsibilities of Planning Units are:

Resources Unit: Responsible for all check-in activity and for maintaining the status on all personnel and equipment resources assigned to the incident.

Situation Unit: Collects and processes information on the current situation, prepares situation displays and situation summaries, and develops maps and projections.

Demobilization Unit: On large, complex incidents, assists in ensuring that an orderly, safe, and cost-effective movement of personnel is made when they are no longer required at the incident.

Documentation Unit: Prepares the Incident Action Plan, maintains all incident-related documentation, and provides duplication services.

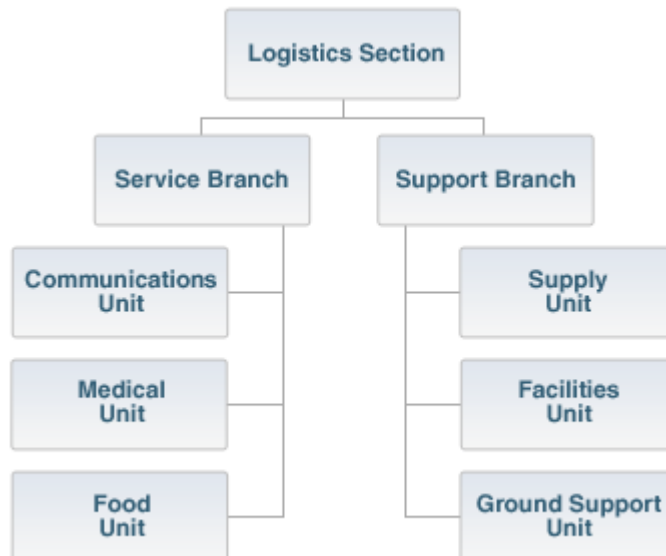


Logistics Section

Early recognition of the need for a Logistics Section can reduce time and money spent on an incident. The Logistics Section is responsible for all support requirements, including:

- Communications.
- Medical support to incident personnel.
- Food for incident personnel.
- Supplies, facilities, and ground support.

It is important to remember that Logistics Unit functions, except for the Supply Unit, are geared to supporting personnel and resources directly assigned to the incident.



Logistics Section: Service Branch

The Service Branch may be made up of the following units:

The **Communications Unit** is responsible for developing plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities, installing and testing of communications equipment, supervision of the Incident Communications Center, distribution of communications equipment to incident personnel, and maintenance and repair of communications equipment.

The **Medical Unit** is responsible for the development of the Medical Plan, obtaining medical aid and transportation for injured and ill incident personnel, and preparation of reports and records.

The **Food Unit** is responsible for supplying the food needs for the entire incident, including all remote locations (e.g., Camps, Staging Areas), as well as providing food for personnel unable to leave tactical field assignments.

Logistics Section: Support Branch

The Support Branch within the Logistics Section may include the following units:

The **Supply Unit** is responsible for ordering personnel, equipment, and supplies; receiving and storing all supplies for the incident; maintaining an inventory of supplies; and servicing nonexpendable supplies and equipment.

The **Facilities Unit** is responsible for the layout and activation of incident facilities (e.g., Base, Camp, and Incident Command Post (ICP)). The Facilities Unit Leader provides sleeping and sanitation facilities for incident personnel and manages Base and Camp(s) operations. Each facility (Base, Camp) is assigned a manager who reports to the Facilities Unit Leader and is responsible for managing the operation of the facility. The basic functions or activities of the Base and Camp Managers are to provide security service and general maintenance.

The **Ground Support Unit** is responsible for supporting out-of-service resources; transporting personnel, supplies, food, and equipment; fueling, service, maintenance, and repair of vehicles and other ground support equipment; and implementing the Traffic Plan for the incident.

Finance/Administration Section

The Finance/Administration Section:

Is established when incident management activities require finance and other administrative support services.

Handles claims related to property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident.

Not all incidents will require a separate Finance/Administration Section. If only one specific function is needed (e.g., cost analysis), a Technical Specialist assigned to the Planning Section could provide these services.

Finance/Administration Units

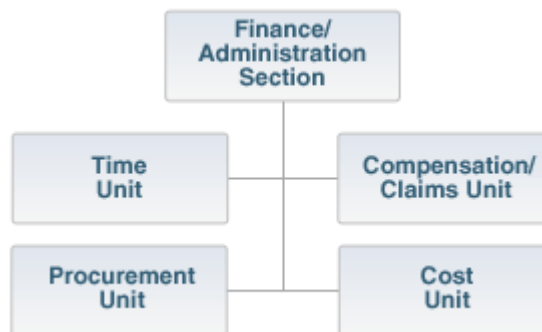
Finance/Administration Units include the following:

The **Time Unit** is responsible for equipment and personnel time recording.

The **Procurement Unit** is responsible for administering all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements.

The **Compensation/Claims Unit** is responsible for financial concerns resulting from property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident.

The **Cost Unit** is responsible for tracking costs, analyzing cost data, making cost estimates, and recommending cost-saving measures.



ICS Tools

Some important tools you should have available at the incident include:

ICS forms.

Position description and responsibilities document.

Emergency operations plan.

Agency policies and procedures manual.

Maps.

ICS Forms

When receiving ICS forms, some questions you should ask yourself about each form are:

Purpose — What function does the form perform?

Preparation — Who is responsible for preparing the form?

Distribution — Who needs to receive this information?

ICS Form 201, Incident Briefing

The Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201) is an eight-part form that provides an Incident Command/Unified Command with status information that can be used for briefing incoming resources, an incoming Incident Commander or team, or an immediate supervisor. The basic information includes:

Incident situation (map, significant events).

Incident objectives.

Summary of current actions.

Status of resources assigned or ordered for the incident or event.

Occasionally, the ICS Form 201 serves as the initial Incident Action Plan (IAP) until a Planning Section has been established and generates, at the direction of the Incident Commander, an IAP.

The ICS Form 201 is also suitable for briefing individuals newly assigned to the Command and General Staffs.

Other Commonly Used ICS Forms

The following commonly used Incident Command System forms can be found on the NIMS Resource Center at <http://www.fema.gov/nims>:

ICS Form 201, Incident Briefing

ICS Form 202, Incident Objectives

ICS Form 203, Organization Assignment List

ICS Form 204, Assignment List

ICS Form 205, Incident Radio Communications Plan

ICS Form 206, Medical Plan

ICS Form 207, Organizational Chart

ICS Form 209, Incident Status Summary

ICS Form 210, Status Change Card

ICS Form 211, Check-In List

ICS Form 213, General Message

ICS Form 214, Unit Log

ICS Form 215, Operational Planning Worksheet

ICS Form 215a, Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis

ICS Form 216, Radio Requirements Worksheet

ICS Form 217, Radio Frequency Assignment Worksheet

ICS Form 218, Support Vehicle Inventory

ICS Form 220, Air Operations Summary

ICS Form 221, Demobilization Plan

ICS Form 308, Resource Order Form