

ICS 300 – Lesson 5: Incident Management

Lesson Overview

The **Incident Management** lesson will describe process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events. It will also describe the process of transfer of command, and the major elements of the incident briefing.

This lesson should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete. **Remember, you must complete the entire lesson to receive credit.**

Lesson 5 Learning Objectives

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

- Describe the process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events.
- Describe the steps in transferring incident command.
- List the major elements included in the incident briefing.
- Develop a sample organization around a planned event.

Approaches to Incident Organization

There are two basic approaches to using ICS:

1. **Planning for a known event.** Using ICS for planned events allows the luxury of more time and fewer life safety issues (this makes the approach an excellent opportunity for training).
2. **Reacting to an unplanned incident.** Unplanned incidents are characterized by rapid change, time constraints, and public and responder safety issues.

The principles, features and processes of ICS are the same for both.

Organizing for Events

It is easiest to prepare for events. Managers can establish exactly what is required prior to the event, and ensure appropriate and efficient activation of the organization.

Examples of the kinds of events which lend themselves to an ICS application include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Organizing for a major field training exercise or simulated emergency.
- A planned public event such as a major parade or concert.
- A planned activity such as a prescribed fire, a law enforcement sweep, a major pest control effort, or a marine hazardous materials exercise.

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Considerations for Planned Events

In order to plan effectively, the planner must know as much as possible about the intended event. Considerations include:

- Type of event.
- Location, size, and expected duration.
- Single or multi-jurisdiction/multi-agency involvement.
- Command Staff needs (Public Information, Safety, Liaison).
- Kind, type, and number of resources required.
- Projected aviation operations.
- Staging areas and other facilities required.
- Kind and type of logistical support needs, e.g., communications, food, medical considerations.
- Financial concerns.
- Known limitations or restrictions.
- Available communications.

With information about each of the above factors, the planning staff can develop the appropriate organizational structure to meet the essential needs of the incident.

Organizing for Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents require immediate attention and actions must be taken to ensure effective incident management and control. The first responding units to the incident **must** take the initial steps to provide organization for the incident. While that may appear obvious, the longer-term importance of these initial decisions is often overlooked.

Although unplanned incidents such as fires, searches, law enforcement, hazardous materials, pest or disease outbreaks, and emergency medical situations have different characteristics and require specially trained personnel, they are quite similar in how they are approached from an incident management standpoint. For any incident, the Incident Commander has certain designated responsibilities.

Incident Commander 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.

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Characteristics of Unplanned Incidents

Unplanned incidents often have the following characteristics:

- Time is of the essence.
- The situation is unstable.
- The incident presents a threat to safety and/or property.
- The incident has the potential to expand rapidly.
- Communications and information may be incomplete.
- Staff on-scene may be experienced in control measures, but are not necessarily experienced in managing expanding incidents.

Incident complexity increases as the situation deteriorates and the incident grows.

Organizing Incident Operations

The Operations Section organization generally develops from the bottom up. As more resources are assigned to the incident, it is necessary to find ways to effectively organize and manage them.

Organization is often accomplished initially by the Incident Commander establishing Divisions and/or Groups. This may be done before an Operations Section Chief is assigned. The primary consideration when expanding to a Division and/or Group structure is usually span of control, but functional considerations may also affect that decision.

Staffing the ICS Organization

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are totally dependent on the size and complexity of the incident. **There is no absolute standard to follow.**

Some general guidelines are:

- Deputies may be used at Incident Command, General Staff (Section), and Branch levels.
- Command Staff may have Assistants as required.
- The Incident Commander may establish Divisions and/or Groups prior to designating an Operations Section.
- The use of Unified Command is recommended in most multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency incidents. An Incident Commander from each responsible agency or jurisdiction should be included in the Unified Command.
- As the Operations organization expands, activation of Planning and Logistics functions should be considered. The decision to activate additional Sections will always be based on the present and anticipated needs of the incident.

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Reasons for Transferring Command

The initial Incident Commander will remain in charge until transfer of command is accomplished. Command may be transferred when:

- A more qualified person is available to assume command.
- A jurisdiction or agency is legally required to take command.
- The incident complexity changes.
- There is turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents.
- Personnel are called home for any reason.
- Agency Administrators direct a change in command.
- Changing command makes good sense.

Transfer of Command

There are six important steps in effectively transferring command of an incident in progress.

The first step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander, if at all possible, to personally perform an assessment of the incident situation with the current Incident Commander.

The second step in the transfer of command is to adequately brief the incoming Incident Commander. This briefing must be by the current Incident Commander, and take place face-to-face, if possible.

The third step in the transfer of command is the delegation of authority. In some agencies and for some incidents the delegation of authority is required in writing, and may include, but not be limited to:

- Legal and fiscal authority;
- The ability to assign and reassign agency personnel; and
- The ability to develop interagency agreements necessary to manage the incident.

The Agency Administrator should clearly communicate to the Incident Commander his or her views on the following subjects:

- Legal and policy restraints and/or freedoms;
- Limitations on authority;
- Political and social concerns;
- Environmental issues; and
- Cost considerations.

All of these will affect the development of incident strategy and objectives. As time and agency policy dictate, these considerations should be documented and provided to the Incident Commander, preferably through a formal, written, delegation of authority.

The fourth step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander to determine an appropriate time for the official transfer of command.

The fifth step in the transfer of command is to notify staff and assigned personnel of a change in incident command.

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Notice of a change should be made to:

- Agency headquarters;
- General Staff members;
- Command Staff members; and
- All incident personnel.

The sixth and final step in the transfer of command is for the incoming Incident Commander to decide whether to give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident.

The incoming Incident Commander may give the previous Incident Commander another assignment on the incident. The advantages of this are:

- Retaining first-hand knowledge at the incident site.
- Allowing the initial Incident Commander to observe the progress of the incident and to gain experience.

Transfer of command is a common practice. It does not reflect on the competency of the current Incident Commander. Using these six steps will make the process work smoothly.

Incident Briefing Major Elements

The incident briefing must cover the following elements:

- Incident history.
- Priorities, objectives, and current plan.
- Resource assignments and incident organization.
- Resources ordered and needed.
- Facilities established.
- Status of communications.
- Any constraints or limitations.
- Incident potential.

The ICS Form 201 is especially designed to assist in incident briefings. It should be used whenever possible because it provides a written record of the incident as of the time prepared. The Incident Briefing Form is particularly valuable during the first operational period of an incident, and in many cases it will be the Incident Action Plan for the first Operational Period.

Changing the Initial Incident Action Plan (IAP)

It is possible that the incoming Incident Commander will need to modify incident objectives. Changes could be required for the following reasons:

- Change in agency administrator goals.
- Change in available resources, kinds or types.
- Lack of success or completion of tactical assignments.
- Improved intelligence.
- Cost factors.
- Political considerations.
- Environmental considerations.

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Guidelines for Making IAP Changes

Changes can cause disruptions and when possible should be implemented at the start of the next operational period. On the other hand, delaying changes may result in additional control problems, greater loss, and increased expense and risk.

Making a change does not imply that previous decisions and actions were wrong. Many things can influence the need for change. The Incident Commander must be assertive, but also aware of potential risk and safety considerations involved in changes. Four guidelines to changes are:

- Implement appropriate safety procedures for all changes.
- Make changes if you must.
- Make them sooner rather than later.
- Make sure the changes are communicated clearly throughout the organization.

Exercise: Developing an Organization

Planned Event Scenario:

Your work site has been scheduled for a visit from the Secretary of Agriculture, who will be accompanied by a counterpart from a foreign country (English speaking). The Secretaries will arrive at the airport at 0800 hours, travel to your work site and tour your facility. They must return to the airport for an 1100 hours departure.

You have been appointed as the Incident Commander for this planned event and established the following objectives:

1. Ensure efficient ground transportation for eight people to and from the airport.
2. Facilitate the tour of your facility.

You may assign up to 22 people to your staff and have been given a budget of \$3,000 for materials and services for this event. Security for the Secretaries is being provided by the USDA Secretary's security detail. You can assume there will be media interest in the event, however, this is a low-profile visit. The security analysis performed for the trip has not identified any unusual risks or hazards associated with the event. There are no other agencies involved in this event.

Remember: There is no absolute standard to follow when developing an ICS organization. Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the event or incident. The organizational structure is dependent on the size and complexity of the event or incident and staffing decisions made by the Incident Commander. Organizational structure should relate to the established incident objectives.

Based on the scenario, which of the Command Staff positions would you activate?

- Public Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer

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Based on the scenario, which of the General Staff positions would you activate?

- Operations Section Chief
- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Finance/Administration Section Chief

Which of the following tactical resources should the Operations Section Chief assign in order to begin addressing the 1st incident objective?

- Drivers (4)
- Navigators (4)
- Traffic controllers (2)
- Vehicles (4)

Which of the following tactical resources should the Operations Section Chief assign in order to begin addressing the 2nd incident objective?

- Photographers (2)
- Security Guards (2)
- Tour Guides (2)
- Translators (2)

Name and describe the type of supervisory positions the Operations Section Chief should activate in order to organize operations and address span of control.

Which of the following positions should the Planning Section Chief activate in order to support the event?

- Resources Unit Leader
- Situation Unit Leader
- Documentation Unit Leader
- Demobilization Unit Leader
- Technical Specialist – Hazmat

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Which positions should the Logistics Section Chief activate in order to support the event?

Position	Recommended	Not Recommended
Communication Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supply Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ground Support Unit Leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Indicate which positions, if any, the Finance/Administration Section Chief should activate and why they should be activated for the planned event.

Exercise Summary

You have now completed the exercise and the recommended ICS organization for the planned event is illustrated in the graphic.

It is important to remember that there is no absolute standard to follow.

Staffing considerations are always based on the needs of the event or incident. The number of personnel and the organizational structure are dependent on the size and complexity of the event or incident.

Lesson Summary

You have completed the **Incident Management** lesson. This lesson discussed the process of organizing and planning for incidents and planned events. It also described the process of transfer of command, and the major elements of the incident briefing.

The next lesson will provide a brief summary of the ICS 300 Course contents. After reviewing the summary information, you will then take the course posttest.