

ICS-200: Applying ICS to Healthcare Organizations

Lesson 5: ICS Management Process

Lesson Overview

The **ICS Management Process** lesson introduces you to the ICS management activities that occur during an operational period.

Lesson 5 Objectives

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

- Explain how ICS is implemented during the initial response phase.
- Describe the transfer of command process.
- Identify the ICS management activities that occur during an operational period.

ICS and the All-Hazards Emergency Management Program

In Lesson 2, you learned that an “all-hazards” emergency management program consists of various activities that relate to:

- **Mitigation (including Prevention)** - Eliminating or reducing the impact of hazards.
- **Preparedness** - Building the capability and capacity of an organization to respond and recover from hazards.
- **Response** - Controlling the on-going negative effects.
- **Recovery** - Restoring the organization to its pre-disaster condition.

The Incident Command System is a temporary, incident-focused organizational structure and management process that is guided by objectives. It is used to manage the response and recovery phases.

ICS Tools

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

- ICS Forms.
- Position Description and Responsibilities Document.
- Emergency Operations Plan.
- Organization 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?

Commonly Used ICS Forms

ICS uses a forms-driven management process. The primary forms used to develop an Incident Action Plan include the 201 (Incident Briefing), the 202 (Incident Objectives), the 203 (Organizational Assignment List), the 215 (Operational Planning Worksheet), and the 215A (Safety Analysis). A complete list of the commonly used ICS Forms appears below.

Form Number	Title	Who Completes
Form 201	Incident Briefing	Section Chief
Form 202	Response Objectives	Section Chief
Form 203	Organization Assignment List	Resources Unit
Form 204	Assignment List	Section Chief, Staff
Form 205	Incident Radio Communications Plan	Communications Unit
Form 206	Medical Plan*	Medical Unit
Form 208	Site Safety and Control Plan	Safety Officer, Staff
Form 209	Incident Status Summary	Resources Unit
Form 210	Status Change Card	Staff
Form 211	Check-In List	Staff
Form 213	General Message	Staff
Form 214	Unit Log	Staff
Form 215	Operational Planning Worksheet	Staff
Form 215a	Incident Action Plan Safety Analysis	Safety Officer, Staff
Form 221	Demobilization Checkout	Resources Unit

*Form 206 (Medical Plan) is for describing responder medical care, not victim care.

Note that these forms are standard ICS forms. They may include fields that are not applicable to healthcare.

Stages of Response and Recovery and ICS

Also in Lesson 2, you learned that there are seven distinct stages of incident response and recovery:

- Event Notification.
- Notifications.
- Decision to Activate and Mobilization.
- Incident Responders.
 - Initial Response.
 - Extended Response.
- Demobilization.
- Transition to Long-Term Recovery.
- Return-to-Readiness.

During the initial response period, pre-plans, such as the Emergency Operations Plan and Incident-specific guidance, are used to guide activities. This guidance helps the initial Incident Commander conduct a situation assessment, set objectives, and establish an initial ICS organization. This information would be recorded on an ICS Form 201 and serve as the Initial Incident Action Plan.

Job Action Sheets are an example of a pre-plan for each position in the ICS organization.

During the initial response period, one task the initial Incident Commander must accomplish is determining whether the incident will require additional operational periods. An operational period is usually considered as a shift, and is usually 8 or 12 hours in length. If additional operational periods are needed, this can be referred to as an extended response.

ICS Management Process

Within each operational period, there are six activities that take place within the ICS management process:

1. Situation Briefing and Shift Change.
2. Management Meeting.
3. Planning Meeting.
4. Operations Briefing.
5. Implementation.
6. Assessment of Situation and Progress.

These activities are cyclical. Information from the assessment of the situation and progress is used to develop the next Situation Briefing for the accompanying period/shift.

The transfer of the Incident Command responsibility is often a part of shift change and/or transitioning from an initial response to an extended response.

When Command is Transferred

It may take place for many reasons, including when:

- Shifts change.
- Change of command is necessary for effectiveness or efficiency.
- Incident complexity changes.

The process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another is called Transfer of Command.

A More Qualified Person Arrives

The arrival of a more qualified person does NOT necessarily mean a change in incident command. The more qualified individual may:

- Assume command according to organization guidelines.
- Maintain command as it is and monitor command activity and effectiveness.
- Request a more qualified Incident Commander from the organization with a higher level of responsibility.

Transfer of Command Procedures

One of the main features of ICS is a procedure to transfer command with minimal disruption to the incident. This procedure may be used any time personnel in supervisory positions change.

Whenever possible, Transfer of Command should:

- Take place face-to-face.
- Include a complete briefing.

The effective time and date of the transfer should be communicated to personnel.

Situation Briefing and Shift Change

A Situation Briefing that is conducted prior to a shift change should include:

- Situation status.
- Incident objectives and priorities.
- Current organization.
- Resource assignments.
- Resources ordered and en route.
- Incident facilities.
- Incident communications plan.
- Incident prognosis, concerns, and other issues.
- Introduction of Command and General Staff members.

The information shared in the Situation Briefing is captured on ICS Form 201 (Incident Briefing Form). It is critical that the information shared in this briefing be documented and saved for easy retrieval both during and after the incident.

The Management Meeting

Following the Situation Briefing and Shift Change, a **Management Meeting** involving the Agency Executive and the Incident Management Team (the Incident Commander and the Command and General staff) is held. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the overall policies, priorities, and control objectives. It enables the organization's leadership to stay involved with the incident management.

The timing or placement of the Management Meeting within the operational period's cycle of activities is at the discretion of the Agency Executive. The Management Meeting can also occur near the end of the operational period, after the Operations Section Chief has evaluated the progress made by assigned resources.

The result of the Management Meeting is a revised set of overall priorities, objectives, and policies, which are captured on the ICS Form 202 (Incident Objectives).

The Planning Meeting

Following the Management Meeting, the Incident Management Team meets to develop the Incident Action Plan (IAP) for the **next** operational period.

This meeting occurs in two parts. The first part is sometimes referred to as the **Tactics Meeting**. During this meeting, the Operations Section Chief, Incident Commander, and other Command and General staff meet to discuss strategies and tactics to accomplish the revised priorities and objectives established in the Management Meeting.

The ICS Form 215 (Operational Planning Worksheet) is used during the Tactics Meeting. In addition, the Safety Officer completes the ICS Form 215A (Safety Analysis) based on the selected strategies and tactics.

The second part of the Planning Meeting involves the identification of the right kind and type of resources needed to accomplish the objectives and how they should be organized. The ICS Forms 203 (Organizational Assignment List) and 204 (Division/Group Assignment List) are used to complete this work.

The Logistics and Finance/Administration Section Chiefs are heavily involved with the identification and procurement of the needed personnel, equipment, and supplies. Transportation and other support services are usually an important point of discussion.

Operations Briefing

After the Planning Meeting concludes and the Incident Action Plan (IAP) is complete, the Operations Briefing occurs. In this briefing, the Operations Section Chief present the IAP for the upcoming period to the various Division/Group Supervisors and Branch Directors.

In addition to the Operations Section Chief, other members of the Command and General Staffs, as well as specific support elements (i.e., Communications Unit) can provide important information needed for safe and effective performance during the operational period.

The ICS Forms 203 (Organizational Assignment List) and 204 (Division/Group Assignment List) are used to communicate the assignments and reporting relationships.

After the Operations Briefing, the Incident Action Plan enters the implementation phase.

Operations Briefing Agenda

The Operations Briefing is facilitated by the Planning Section Chief and follows a set agenda. A typical briefing includes the following:

- The **Planning Section Chief** reviews the agenda and facilitates the briefing.
- The **Incident Commander** presents incident objectives or confirms existing objectives.
Note: Objectives may be presented by the Planning Section Chief.
- The **Current Operations Section Chief** provides current assessment and accomplishments.
- The **on-coming Operations Section Chief** covers the work assignments and staffing of divisions and groups for the upcoming operational period.
- The **Safety Officer** reviews specific risks to operational resources and the identified safety/mitigation measures.
- **Specific Section Chief/Unit Leaders** present information related to ensuring safe and efficient operations.
- The **Incident Commander** reiterates his or her operational concerns and directs resources to deploy.
- The **Planning Section Chief** announces the time of the next Operations Briefing and then adjourns the meeting.

Modular Organization

The ICS organization adheres to a "form follows function" philosophy. The size of the current organization and that of the next operational period is determined through the incident planning process.

Because the ICS is a modular concept, managing span of control is accomplished by organizing resources into Teams, Divisions, Groups, Branches, or Sections when the supervisor-to-subordinate ratio exceeds seven, or by reorganizing or demobilizing Sections, Branches, Divisions, Groups, or Teams when the ratio falls below three.

Activation of Organizational Elements

Many incidents will never require the activation of the entire Command or General Staff or entire list of organizational elements within each Section. Other incidents will require some or all members of the Command Staff and all sub-elements of each General Staff Section.

The decision to activate an element (Section, Branch, Unit, Division, or Group) must be based on incident objectives and resource needs.

An important concept is that many organizational elements may be activated in various sections **without** activating the Section Chief.

For example, the Situation Unit can be activated without a Planning Section Chief assigned. In this case, the supervision of the Situation Unit will rest with the Incident Commander.

Avoid Combining Positions

It is tempting to combine ICS positions to gain staffing efficiency. Rather than combining positions, you may assign the same individual to supervise multiple units.

When assigning personnel to multiple positions, do **not** use nonstandard titles. Creating new titles may be unrecognizable to assisting or cooperating personnel and may cause confusion.

Resource Management

Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of incident management. The incident resource management process consists of the following:

- Establishment of resource needs (kind/type/quantity).
- Resource ordering (actually getting what you need).
- Check-in process and tracking (knowing what resources you have and where they are).
- Resource utilization and evaluation (using the resources effectively).
- Resource demobilization (releasing resources that are no longer needed).

This section of the lesson reviews key resource management principles.

Anticipating Incident Resource Needs

Experience and training will help you to predict workloads and corresponding staffing needs. As the graphic below illustrates, an incident may build faster than resources can arrive. Eventually, a sufficient number of resources arrive and begin to control the incident. As the incident declines, resources then exceed incident needs.

Predicting Incident Workload

Incident workload patterns are often predictable throughout the incident life cycle. Several examples are provided below:

- **Operations Section:** The workload on Operations is immediate and often massive. On a rapidly escalating incident, the Operations Section Chief must determine appropriate tactics; organize, assign, and supervise resources; and at the same time participate in the planning process.
- **Planning Section:** The Resources and Situation Units will be very busy in the initial phases of the incident. In the later stages, the Documentation and Demobilization Units workload will increase.
- **Logistics Section:** The Supply and Communications Units will be very active in the initial and final stages of the incident.

Analyzing Incident Complexity

It is important to strike the right balance when determining resource needs. Having too few resources can lead to loss of life and property, while having too many resources can result in unqualified personnel deployed without proper supervision, and/or extensive financial costs. A **complexity analysis** can help:

- Identify resource requirements.
- Determine if the existing management structure is appropriate.

Incident Complexity and Resource Needs

As illustrated below, when incident complexity increases, your resource needs and ICS structure grow accordingly.

Resource Kinds and Types

To ensure that responders get the right personnel and equipment, ICS resources are categorized by:

- **Kinds of Resources:** Describe what the resource is (for example: registered nurse, emergency physician, engineer, security officer, ambulances).
- **Types of Resources:** Describe the size, capability, and staffing qualifications of a specific kind of resource.

Standard Resource Terminology

As covered in ICS-100, the following terms apply to resources:

- **Task Forces:** A combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Task Force Leader. (Example: three registered nurses, two doctors, and one hospital security guard)
- **Strike Teams:** A set number of resources of the same kind and type with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader. (Example: five pediatricians with the same capabilities).
- **Single Resource:** An individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an incident. (Example: an ultrasound machine and an ultrasound technician)

Communication Responsibilities

To ensure sharing of critical information, all responders must:

- Brief others as needed.
- Debrief their actions.
- Communicate hazards to others.
- Acknowledge messages.
- Ask if they do not know.

While not always possible, the most effective form of communication is face-to-face.

Briefing Elements

Provide complete briefings that include clearly stated objectives and the following elements:

- Task: What is to be done.
- Purpose: Why it is to be done.
- End State: How should it look when done.

Assessment of Situation and Progress

Near the end of the operational period, Division/Group Supervisors and/or Branch Directors report their progress to the Operations Section Chief. This meeting is used to identify problems, resource needs, and recommendations for changes to the Incident Action Plan.

The information from this meeting is used in the Situation Briefing at Shift Change, as well as in the next operational period's Management Meeting and Planning Meeting.

Post-Incident Evaluation and Corrective Actions

Assessment is an important leadership responsibility, and is conducted after a major activity (such as an exercise or actual event) in order to allow employees and leaders to discover what happened and why. Assessment methods include:

- Debriefing.
- Post-incident critique.
- After action review meeting.
- After Action Report (AAR).
- Corrective Action Plans

Lesson Review

You have completed the **ICS Management Process** lesson. You should now be able to:

- Explain how ICS is implemented during the initial response phase.
- Describe the transfer of command process.
- Identify the ICS management activities that occur during an operational period.