

CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One stresses the importance of pre-event planning, organization, and leadership. It suggests a planning team using the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage the event planning process effectively. In a large-scale event involving numerous agencies, people can become confused as to who is in charge, what role everyone plays, and what responsibilities everyone has. ICS is an excellent tool that can resolve these issues. This chapter discusses ICS, how it can be applied to special events, and the concept of Unified Command.

Unfortunately, even the best-planned special events may not run entirely smoothly. During any special event, you must be prepared to respond to one or more incidents that may occur during the event. The way these incidents are managed has a great deal to do with the ultimate success of the special event. Everyone must know his or her role and tasks, and where to seek information. This chapter also discusses the use of ICS during these situations.

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity, in order to reduce the loss of life and property and harm to the environment. NIMS works hand in hand with the National Response Framework (NRF). NIMS provides the template for the management of incidents, while the NRF provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management.

NIMS integrates existing best practices into a consistent, nationwide, systematic approach to incident management that is applicable at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector, and across functional disciplines in an all-hazards context. Five major components make up this systems approach: Preparedness, Communications and Information Management, Resource Management, Command and Management, and Ongoing Management and Maintenance.

The components of NIMS were not designed to stand alone, but to work together in a flexible, systematic manner to provide the national framework for incident management.

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI), located at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, MD, offers a broad range of NIMS-related training. Additional information about NIMS and ICS training can be found at <http://training.fema.gov>.

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PREPAREDNESS: OVERVIEW

NIMS provides the mechanisms for emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations to work collectively by offering a consistent and common approach to preparedness.

Preparedness is achieved and maintained through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action. Ongoing preparedness efforts among all those involved in emergency management and incident response activities ensure coordination during times of crisis. Moreover, preparedness facilitates efficient and effective emergency management and incident response activities.



This component describes specific measures and capabilities that emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations should develop and incorporate into their overall preparedness programs to enhance the operational preparedness necessary for all-hazards emergency management and incident response activities. In developing, refining, and expanding preparedness programs and activities within their jurisdictions and/or organizations, emergency management/response personnel should leverage existing preparedness efforts and collaborative relationships to the greatest extent possible. Personal preparedness, while an important element of homeland security, is distinct from the operational preparedness of our Nation's emergency management and incident response capabilities and is beyond the scope of NIMS.

Communications and Information Management: Overview

Effective emergency management and incident response activities rely on flexible communications and information systems that provide a common operating picture to emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations. Establishing and maintaining a common operating picture and ensuring accessibility and interoperability are the principal goals of the Communications and Information Management component of NIMS. Properly planned, established, and applied communications enable the dissemination of information among command and support elements and, as appropriate, cooperating agencies and organizations.

Incident communications are facilitated through the development and use of common communications plans and interoperable communications equipment, processes, standards, and architectures. During an incident, this integrated approach links the operational and support units of the various organizations to maintain communications connectivity and situational awareness. Communications and information management planning should address the incident-related policies, equipment, systems, standards, and training necessary to achieve integrated communications.

Resource Management: Overview

Emergency management and incident response activities require carefully managed resources (personnel, teams, facilities, equipment, and/or supplies) to meet incident needs. Utilization of the standardized resource management concepts such as typing, inventorying, organizing, and tracking will facilitate the dispatch, deployment, and recovery of resources before, during, and after an incident.

Resource management should be flexible and scalable in order to support any incident and be adaptable to changes. Efficient and effective deployment of resources requires that resource management concepts and principles be used in all phases of emergency management and incident response.

The resource management process can be separated into two parts: resource management as an element of preparedness and resource management during an incident. The preparedness activities (resource typing, credentialing, and inventorying) are conducted on a continual basis to help ensure that resources are ready to be mobilized when called to an incident. Resource management during an incident is a finite process, as shown in the below figure, with a distinct beginning and ending specific to the needs of the particular incident..

Command and Management: Overview

The NIMS components of Preparedness, Communications and Information Management, and Resource Management provide a framework for effective management during incident response.

Command and Management Overview: Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that:

- Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.
- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private.
- Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources.
- ICS is flexible and can be used for incidents of any type, scope, and complexity. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents.

ICS is used by all levels of government—Federal, State, tribal, and local—as well as by many nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. ICS is also applicable across disciplines. It is typically structured to facilitate activities in five major functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. All of the functional areas may or may not be used based on the incident needs. Intelligence/Investigations is an optional sixth functional area that is activated on a case-by-case basis.

As a system, ICS is extremely useful; not only does it provide an organizational structure for incident management, but it also guides the process for planning, building, and adapting that structure. Using ICS for every incident or planned event helps hone and maintain skills needed for the large-scale incidents.

ICS Management Principle	Description
<p>Common Terminology</p>	<p>ICS establishes common terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of incident management functions and hazard scenarios. This common terminology covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Functions: Major functions and functional units with incident management responsibilities are named and defined. Terminology for the organizational elements is standard and consistent. • Resource Descriptions: Major resources—including personnel, facilities, and major equipment and supply items—that support incident management activities are given common names and are “typed” with respect to their capabilities, to help avoid confusion and to enhance interoperability. • Incident Facilities: Common terminology is used to designate the facilities in the vicinity of the incident area that will be used during the course of the incident. <p>Incident response communications (during exercises and actual incidents) should feature plain language commands so they will be able to function in a multijurisdiction environment. Field manuals and training should be revised to reflect the plain language standard.</p>
<p>Modular Organization</p>	<p>The ICS organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident. When needed, separate functional elements can be established, each of which may be further subdivided to enhance internal organizational management and external coordination.</p> <p>Responsibility for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization ultimately rests with Incident Command, which bases the ICS organization on the requirements of the situation. As incident complexity increases, the organization expands from the top down as functional responsibilities are delegated. Concurrently with structural expansion, the number of management and supervisory positions expands to address the requirements of the incident adequately.</p>

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ICS Management Principle	Description
<p>Management by Objectives</p>	<p>Management by objectives is communicated throughout the entire ICS organization and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing overarching incident objectives. • Developing strategies based on overarching incident objectives. • Developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols. • Establishing specific, measurable tactics or tasks for various incident management functional activities, and directing efforts to accomplish them, in support of defined strategies. • Documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective actions.
<p>Incident Action Planning</p>	<p>Centralized, coordinated incident action planning should guide all response activities. An Incident Action Plan (IAP) provides a concise, coherent means of capturing and communicating the overall incident priorities, objectives, and strategies in the contexts of both operational and support activities. Every incident must have an action plan. However, not all incidents require written plans.</p> <p>The need for written plans and attachments is based on the requirements of the incident and the decision of the Incident Commander or Unified Command. Most initial response operations are not captured with a formal IAP. However, if an incident is likely to extend beyond one operational period, become more complex, or involve multiple jurisdictions and/or agencies, preparing a written IAP will become increasingly important to maintain effective, efficient, and safe operations.</p>
<p>Manageable Span of Control</p>	<p>Span of control is key to effective and efficient incident management. Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.</p> <p>In ICS, the span of control of any individual with incident management supervisory responsibility should range from 3 to 7 subordinates, with 5 being optimal. During a large-scale law enforcement operation, 8 to 10 subordinates may be optimal. The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span-of-control considerations.</p>

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ICS Management Principle	Description
<p>Incident Facilities and Locations</p>	<p>Various types of operational support facilities are established in the vicinity of an incident, depending on its size and complexity, to accomplish a variety of purposes.</p> <p>The Incident Command will direct the identification and location of facilities based on the requirements of the situation. Typical designated facilities include Incident Command Posts, Bases, Camps, Staging Areas, mass casualty triage areas, point-of-distribution sites, and others as required.</p>
<p>Comprehensive Resource Management</p>	<p>Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of incident management and emergency response. Resources to be identified in this way include personnel, teams, equipment, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation.</p>
<p>Integrated Communications</p>	<p>Incident communications are facilitated through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes and architectures. The ICS 205 form is available to assist in developing a common communications plan. This integrated approach links the operational and support units of the various agencies involved and is necessary to maintain communications connectivity and discipline and to enable common situational awareness and interaction.</p> <p>Preparedness planning should address the equipment, systems, and protocols necessary to achieve integrated voice and data communications.</p>
<p>Establishment and Transfer of Command</p>	<p>The command function must be clearly established from the beginning of incident operations. The agency with primary jurisdictional authority over the incident designates the individual at the scene responsible for establishing command. When command is transferred, the process must include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.</p>
<p>Chain of Command and Unity of Command</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chain of Command: Chain of command refers to the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. • Unity of Command: Unity of command means that all individuals have a designated supervisor to whom they report at the scene of the incident. These principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate the confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives. Incident managers at all levels must be able to direct the actions of all personnel under their supervision.

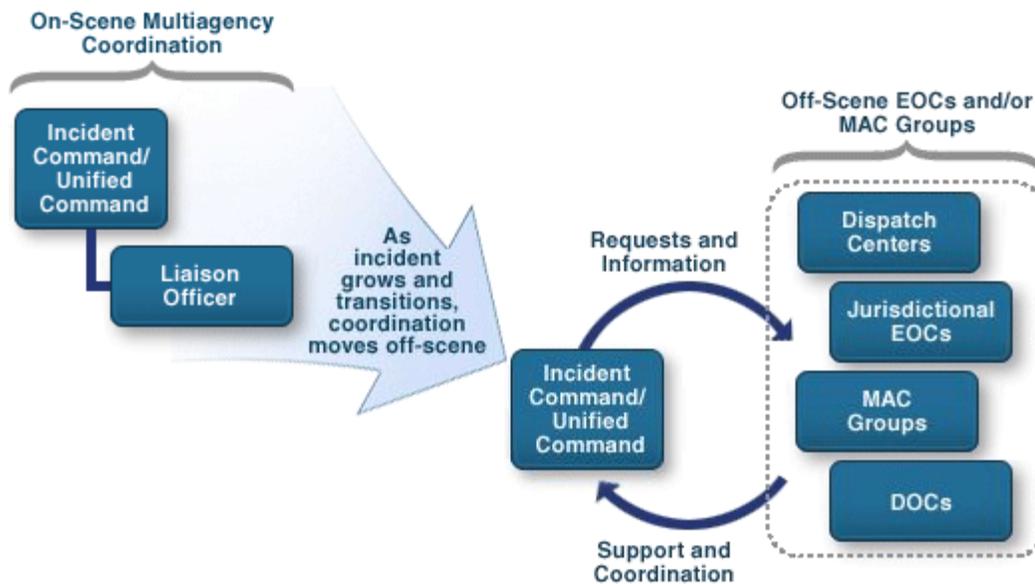
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Job Aids Manual

ICS Management Principle	Description
Unified Command	In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement, Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.
Accountability	<p>Accountability: Effective accountability of resources at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas during incident operations is essential. Adherence to the following ICS principles and processes helps to ensure accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Check-In/Check-Out Procedures • Incident Action Planning • Unity of Command • Personal Responsibility • Span of Control • Resource Tracking
Dispatch/Deployment	<p>Resources should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority through established resource management systems.</p> <p>Resources not requested must refrain from spontaneous deployment to avoid overburdening the recipient and compounding accountability challenges.</p>
Information and Intelligence Management	The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence

Command and Management Overview: Multiagency Coordination Systems

Multiagency coordination is a **process** that allows all levels of government and all disciplines to work together more efficiently and effectively. Multiagency coordination occurs across the different disciplines involved in incident management, across jurisdictional lines, or across levels of government. Multiagency coordination can and does occur on a regular basis whenever personnel from different agencies interact in such activities as preparedness, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Often, cooperating agencies develop a Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) to better define how they will work together and to work together more efficiently; however, multiagency coordination can take place without established protocols. MACS may be put in motion regardless of the location, personnel titles, or organizational structure. Initially the Incident Command/Unified Command and the Liaison Officer may be able to provide all needed multiagency coordination at the scene. However, as the incident grows in size and complexity, off-site support and coordination may be required.



Integral elements of MACS are dispatch procedures and protocols, the incident command structure, and the coordination and support activities taking place within an activated Emergency Operations Center. Fundamentally, MACS provide support, coordination, and assistance with policy-level decisions to the ICS structure managing an incident.

Command and Management Overview: Public Information

Public Information consists of the processes, procedures, and systems to communicate timely, accurate, and accessible information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation to the public, responders, and additional stakeholders (both directly affected and indirectly affected). Public information must be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations; among Federal, State, tribal, and local governments; and with NGOs and the private sector.

Well-developed public information, education strategies, and communications plans help to ensure that lifesaving measures, evacuation routes, threat and alert systems, and other public safety information are coordinated and communicated to numerous audiences in a timely, consistent manner.

A Joint Information System (JIS) provides the mechanism to organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. A JIS includes the plans, protocols, procedures, and structures used to provide public information. Federal, State, tribal, territorial, regional, or local Public Information Officers and established Joint Information Centers (JICs) are critical supporting elements of the JIS.

A Joint Information Center (JIC) is a central location that facilitates operation of the Joint Information System. The JIC is a location where personnel with public information responsibilities perform critical emergency information functions, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. JICs may be established at various levels of government or at incident sites, or can be components of Multiagency Coordination Systems. A single JIC location is preferable, but the system is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate virtual or multiple JIC locations, as required.

INCIDENTS OCCURRING DURING A SPECIAL EVENT

As discussed above, certain incidents occurring during a special event may dictate the need for a specific Incident Commander to manage that particular incident (e.g., isolated structure fire, vehicle crash, HazMat incident, structure collapse, multiple casualty incident, etc.).

When an incident occurs within a special event, immediate action must be taken to control and manage the incident. As the incident grows, the issues that must be considered will grow as well. The Incident Commander of the special event may assign command of the emergency incident to a ranking responder. This responder must take initial steps to bring order to the incident, just as in situations that require more traditional applications of ICS.

The Incident Commander of the special event may authorize the responder to implement his or her own command structure and/or call upon the resources of the event command structure. This responder must:

- Assess the situation.
- Determine whether human life is at immediate risk.
- Establish the immediate priorities and objectives.
- Determine whether there are adequate and appropriate resources on-scene or ordered.
- Establish an appropriately located on-scene Command Post (CP), if needed.
- Establish an appropriate initial command structure, if needed.
- Develop an action plan.
- Ensure that adequate safety measures are in place.
- Coordinate activity for all Command and General Staff.
- Consider whether the span of control is approaching, or will soon approach, practical limits, taking into account the safety of all personnel.
- Determine whether there are any environmental concerns that must be considered.
- Monitor work progress and coordinate with key people.
- Review and modify objectives and adjust the action plan as necessary.
- Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources.
- Keep the overall event Incident Commander informed of incident status.
- Authorize release of information to the news media.
- Order the demobilization of the incident, when appropriate.