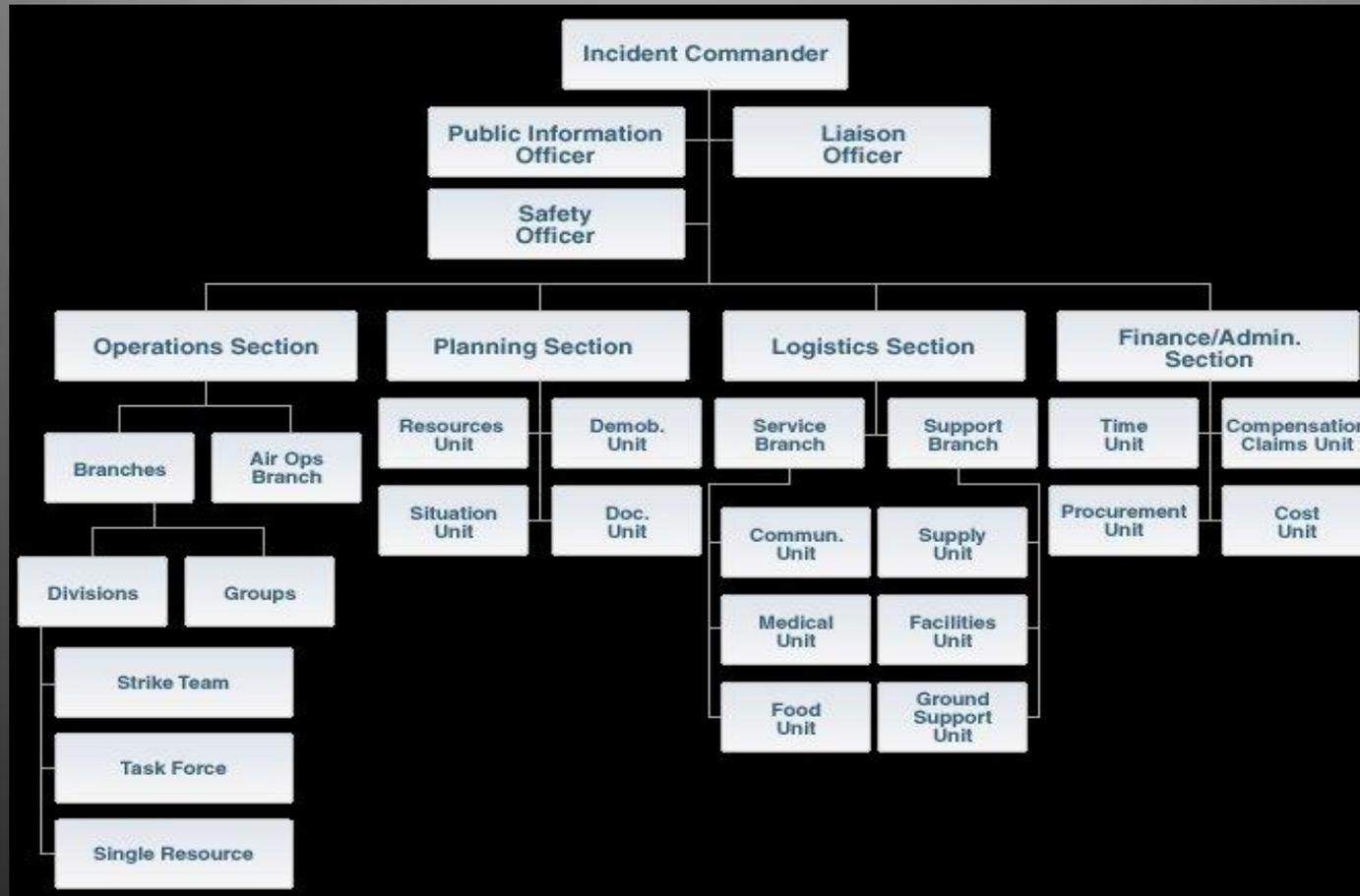


# AUXCOMM/ AREA COMMAND

Hank Koebler

N3ORX/NNN0TCG

# Major ICS Components



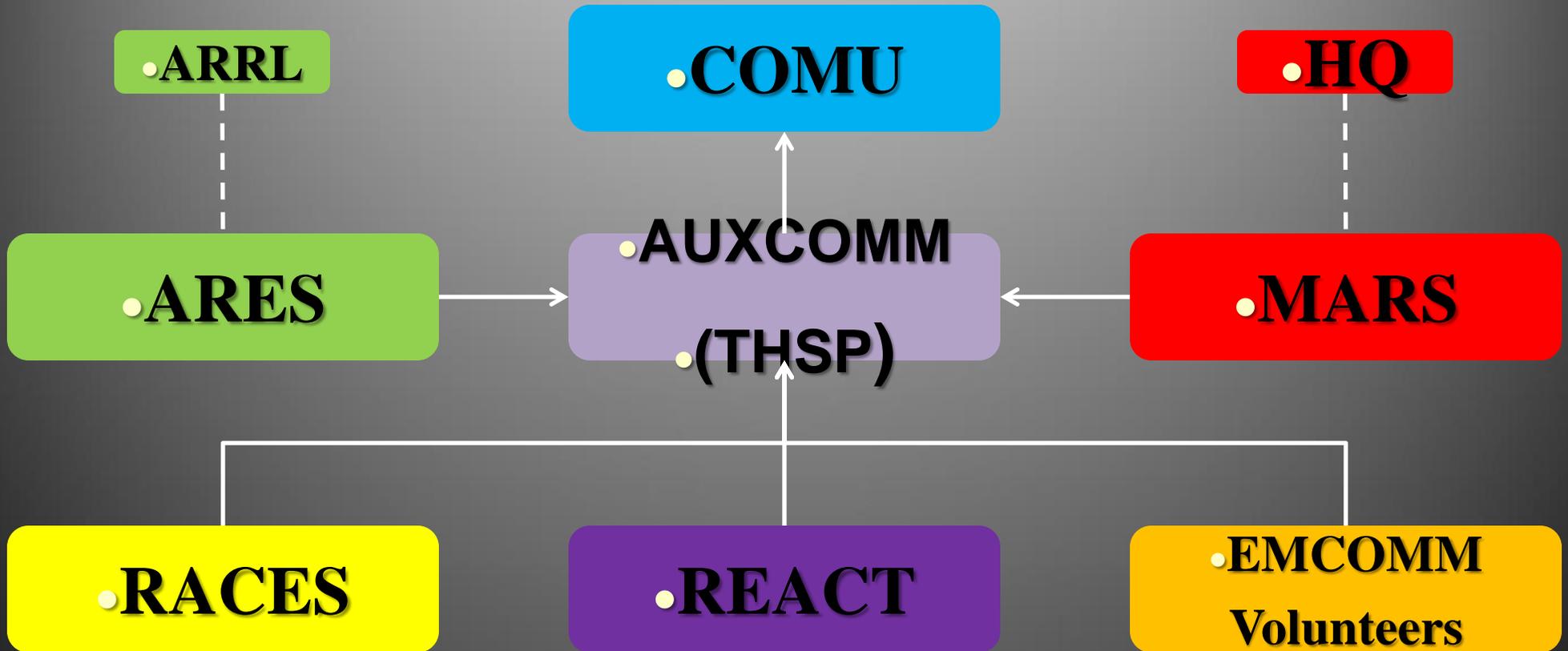
# Communications Unit



# AUXCOMM

- Not a club or organization, but a part of NIMS/ICS
- THSP within the COMU
- Report to AUXCOMM Manager who in turn reports to COML
- Volunteer communicators who may or may not be affiliated with a parent organization.
- Provides a way for EM/PS organization to formally include volunteer communicators
- NIMS/ICS recognition

# AUXCOMM Components



# AUXCOMM Components

• **COMU**



• **ARES**

• **MARS**

• **AUXCOMM**

• **RACES**

• **REACT**

• **EMCOMM**  
**Volunteers**

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# **Area Command**

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**Subjects covered include:**

- **Description of Area Command.**
- **Differences between Area Command, Multi-agency Coordination, and EOCs.**
- **Establishing Area Command.**
- **General responsibilities.**
- **Position Responsibilities and checklists.**

# Definition of Area Command

- **Oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization;**

**or**

- **To oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams assigned to it.**

## Incident Command System

The management system used to direct all operations at the incident scene. The Incident Commander (IC) is located on scene at an Incident Command Post (ICP) at the incident scene.

## Unified Command

An application of ICS used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction. Agencies work together through their designated Incident Commanders at a single ICP to establish a common set of objectives and strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan.

## Area Command (Unified Area Command)

Established as necessary to provide *command authority* and coordination for two or more incidents in close proximity. Area Command works directly with Incident Commanders. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional. Area Command may be established at an EOC facility or at some other location other than an incident ICP.

## Multi-agency Coordination Systems (MACS)

An activity or a formal system used to *coordinate resources and support between agencies or jurisdictions*. A MAC Group functions within the MACS. MACS interact with agencies or jurisdictions not with incidents. MACS are useful for regional situations. A MACS can be established at a jurisdictional EOC or at a separate facility.

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## Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)

Also called Expanded Dispatch, Emergency Command and Control Centers, etc. EOC's are used in varying ways at all levels of government and within private industry to provide coordination, direction and control during emergencies. EOC facilities can be used to house Area Command and MACS activities as determined by agency or jurisdiction policy.



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# Differences Between MAC Groups and Area Command

## MAC Group

- Expansion of the off-site coordination and support system.
- Members are agency administrators or designees from the agencies involved or heavily committed to the incident
- Organization generally consists of the MAC Group (agency administrations), MAC Group Coordinator, and an intelligence and information support staff.
- Is the agency administrator or designee.
- Allocate and reallocate critical resources through the dispatch system by setting incident priorities.
- Make coordinated agency administrator level decisions on issues that affect multiple agencies.

## Area Command

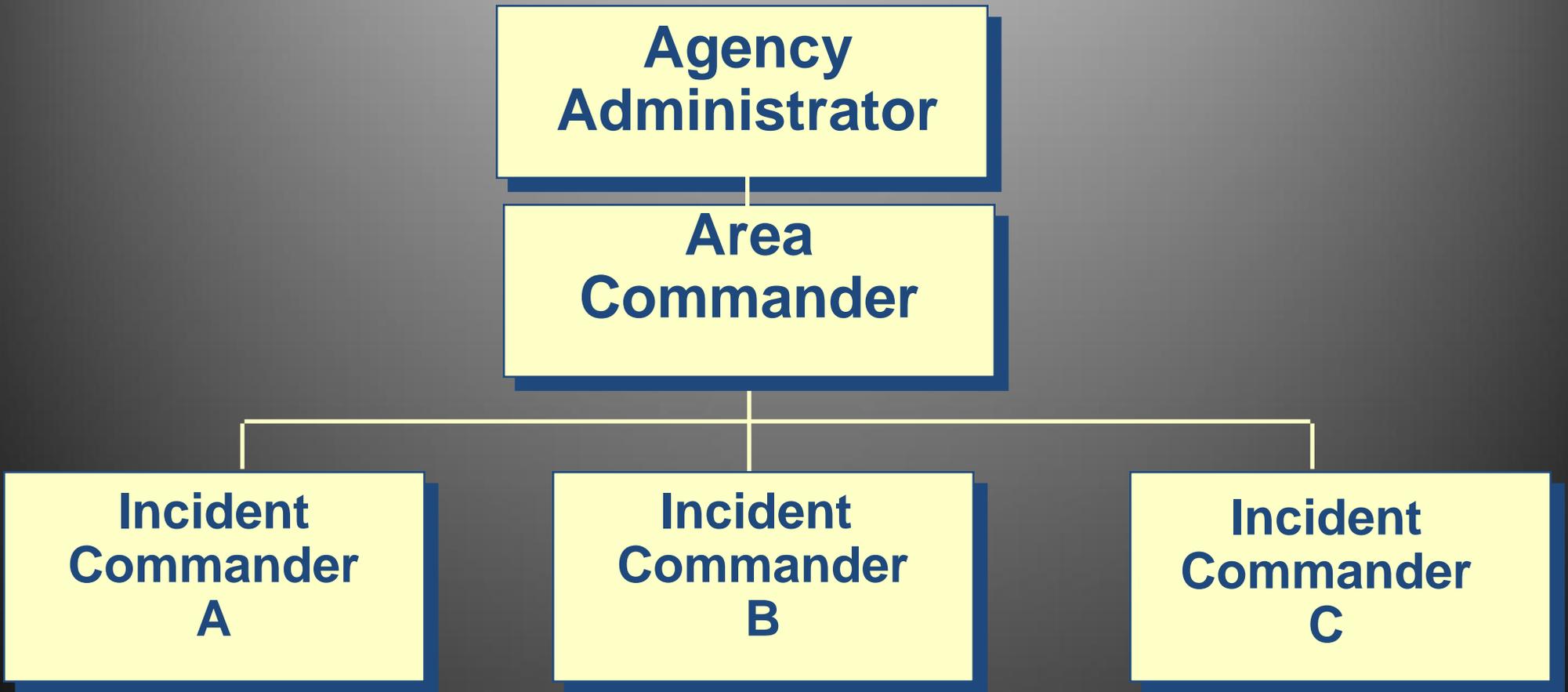
- Expansion of the on-site command function of the Incident Command System.
- Members are the most highly skilled incident management personnel.
- Organization generally consists of an Area Commander, Area Command Planning Chief, and Area Command Logistics Chief.
- Is delegated authority for specific incident(s) from the agency administrator.
- Assign and reassign critical resources allocated to them by MAC or the normal dispatch system organization.
- Ensure that incident objectives and strategies are complementary between Incident Management Teams under their supervision.

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# Area Command Responsibilities

- **Set overall agency incident-related priorities.**
- **Allocate critical resources based on priorities.**
- **Ensure that incidents are properly managed.**
- **Ensure that incident(s) objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy.**

# Chain of Command and Reporting Relationships



# Reasons to Use Area Command

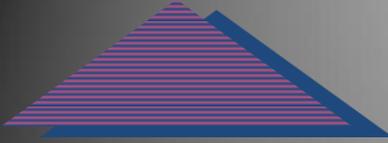
- Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each IC will be accomplished at the Area Command level allowing incident management teams to focus attention on assigned incidents.
- Area Command sets priorities and allocates critical resources.
- Area Command helps the Agency executive by ensuring that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being made known to the respective Incident Commanders.
- Area Command also reduces the workload of the Agency Executive, especially if there are multiple incidents going on at the same time.



# When Should Area Command be Established?

## Early and When:

- Several active incidents are in close proximity.
- Critical human or property values are at risk due to incidents.
- Incidents will continue into the next operational period.
- Incidents are using similar and limited critical resources.
- Difficulties are encountered with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination.

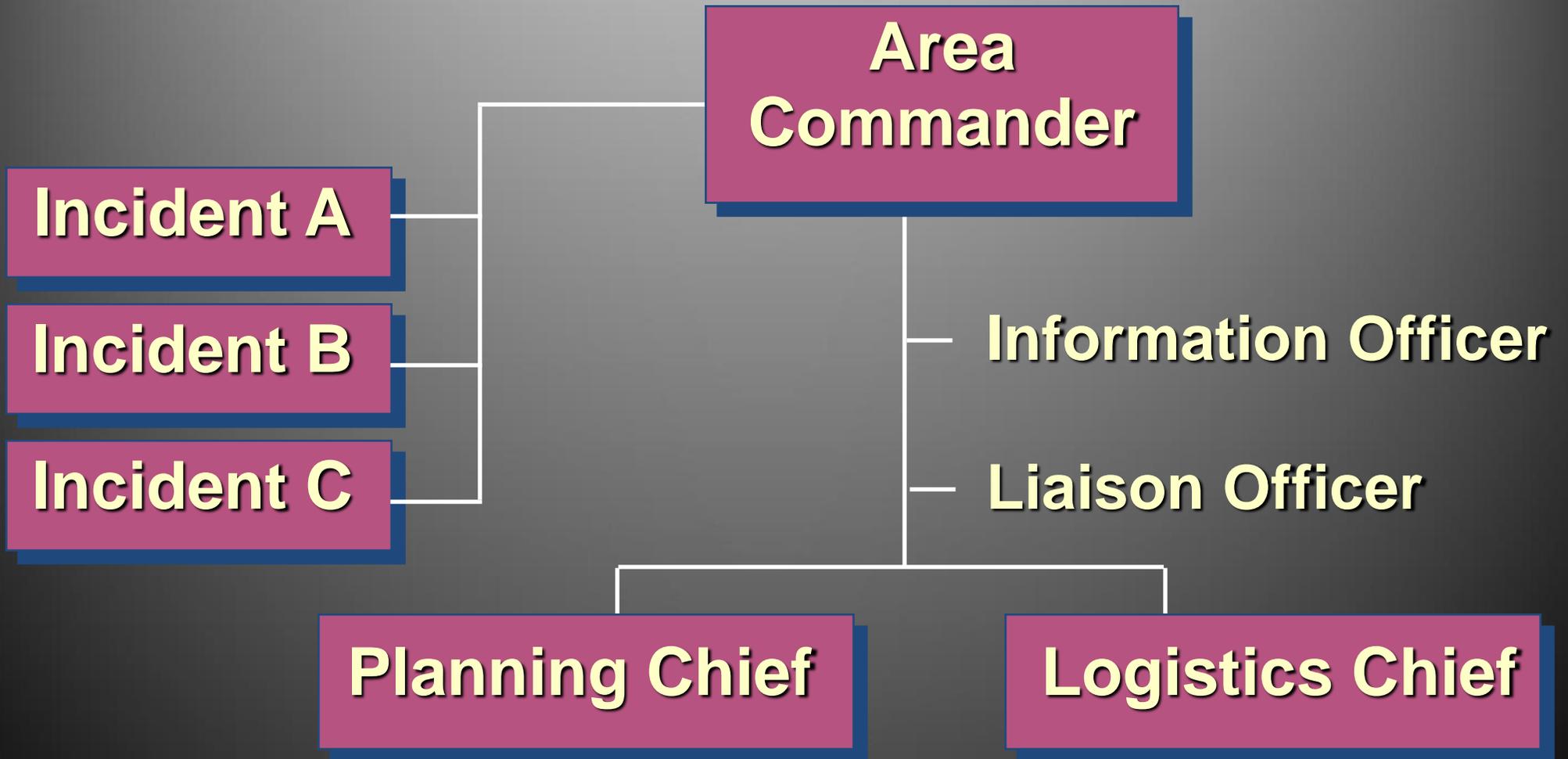


# **Area Command:**

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- **Is established by Agency Executive.**
- **Is given written delegated authority.**
- **Has best qualified, experienced personnel.**
- **Is patterned after ICS Command/General Staff.**
- **Operates under same principles as ICS.**
- **Organization should be kept small.**

# Area Command Organization



# **Example of Technical Specialists at an Area Command**

- **Aviation Specialist**
- **Hazardous Materials Specialist**
- **Environmental Specialist**
- **Communications Specialist**

# Criteria for Establishing an Area Command Facility

- Close to incidents (but not an ICP).
- Sufficient Size (for staff, displays, and conferences).
- Capable of continuous operation.
- Adequate communications facilities (telephones, FAX, computer connections).

# **Criteria for Establishing an Area Command Facility (cont.)**

- **Availability of backup power.**
- **Capable of supporting radio communications to incidents and agency offices.**
- **Adequate and secure parking.**
- **Near sources of food and lodging.**

# **Communications Considerations**

- **Adequate telephone trunks**
- **More telephone service can be added**
- **Rooftop antennas can be installed**
- **Line of sight to incidents or repeaters**

# **Primary Functions of an Area Command**

- **Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.**
- **Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints.**
- **Establish critical resource use priorities between various incidents.**



# Primary Functions of an Area Command

## (cont.)

- Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate.
- Maintain contact with officials in charge, other agencies and groups.
- Coordinate the demobilization or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist)

- ✓ **General situation**
- ✓ **Incidents assigned**
- ✓ **Jurisdictional delegation of authority**
- ✓ **Assumption of command timing and notifications procedure**
- ✓ **Names and qualifications of assigned Incident Commanders**

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist)

(cont.)

- ✓ Incidents operating under Unified Command
- ✓ Limitations on the Area Commander's authority over Incident Commanders (should be in the delegation of authority)
- ✓ Incident Action Plans available
- ✓ Policies, political factors, or other constraints
- ✓ Agency advisor assigned
- ✓ Area Command facility designated

# Providing Management Authority Over Incidents (Checklist)

(cont.)

- ✓ Status of communications systems to incidents and agency/jurisdictional headquarters
- ✓ Critical resource designations
- ✓ Policy and expectations for interaction with the media
- ✓ Area Command reporting responsibility to agency
- ✓ Schedules for required briefings, and contacts



# **Area Commander Responsibility**

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- **Set overall objectives**
- **Establish priorities**
- **Allocate/reallocate critical resources**

# Area Command Considerations

- **Area Command is usually established to support incidents which are already underway.**
- **Objectives, strategies, and Incident Action Plans should already be in place.**
- **Area Commander must rapidly assess each incident and ensure the incident action planning is addressing the priorities and direction set by the Agency Executive.**

# Area Command Considerations

(cont.)

- **Area Commander should establish, in writing, priorities related to incidents. This information should be part of the delegation of authority from the Agency Executive.**
- **Area Commander should develop procedures to be followed.**

# Area Command Procedures Should Include:

- Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities
- Priorities for assignments of critical resources
- Schedules of meetings and briefings
- Reports and Incident Action Plans
- Points of contact with Agency Executives
- Media relations and contact procedures
- Unusual situation or emergency procedures reporting
- Demobilization procedures

# **Agenda for Area Command Meeting with Incident Commanders**

- **Obtain concise individual incident briefings.**
- **Explain the role and responsibilities of an Area Commander.**
- **Review policy and direction received from Agency Executive.**
- **Resolve any conflicts.**
- **Review appropriate procedures as outlined above.**
- **Open for questions.**
- **Collect available Incident Action Plans and other essential documentation.**

# **Establish Priorities Among Various Incidents Based on Incident Needs and Agency Policy and Direction**

**Three priorities that Area Command may need to establish:**

- **Priorities among incidents (often related to the life and property values at risk)**
- **Priorities related to allocating critically needed resources**
- **Priorities related to demobilization**

# **The Management Team Must be Appropriate for the Incidents**

- **Recommend/make appropriate important personnel changes and moves only as necessary.**
- **Ensure that appropriate incident organization activation's have been made.**
- **Determine if temporary flight restrictions are adequate or need revision.**

# **Coordinating Services Done by Area Command**

- **Between Agency/Jurisdictional Executives and Incident Commanders**
- **Between Area Command, Incidents, and assisting and cooperating agencies**
- **Between the media and the incidents**

# **Coordinate the Demobilization of Assigned Incidents**

- **Establish procedures with incidents and agency dispatch centers on demobilization.**
- **Determine demobilization priorities and procedure for handling critical resources.**
- **Provide incidents with a list of critical resources and instructions for clearing releases with Area Command.**
- **Incidents must provide Area Command with copies of demobilization schedules.**

# Area Command

- Questions?