



# Incident Command System

## Introduction and Review

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# What is ICS

- ICS is the incident management model that has been adopted as the standard by the U.S. government.
- ICS is the organizational component of the National Incident Management System, NIMS.
- NIMS provides a consistent, nationwide template to enable government and private-sector organizations to work together during domestic incidents.
- ICS is a major component of NIMS, but NIMS is a national plan that includes other facets such as training and mutual aid agreements.

# Background of NIMS and ICS

- NIMS and ICS were developed by the Department of Homeland Security after 9/11 to provide a common organizational structure for a wide range of incidents and groups. Interoperability is the goal.
- ICS is a proven system that was originally developed in the 1970s in California by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. Over time, it evolved and was proven effective, so it was selected by Homeland Security as the basis for the ICS organization.

# ICS Mandate

- **ICS is not just a good idea: It is the law**
- Federal rules (and funding stipulations) require ICS training and use by emergency agencies.
- ICS is gradually being adopted by non-government agencies such as ham radio ARES groups, American Red Cross, etc.
- Knowledge of ICS is essential to fit into an incident response team

# Features of ICS

- ICS is a mature and proven system that has been used for many real-world incidents. **ICS works.**
- It is standardized across all agencies and jurisdictions in the USA. A person trained on ICS in Tennessee can fit into an organization in New York or Texas.
- It is flexible and expandable. An ICS organization can be as small as one person, or it can be large enough to handle Katrina or the BP oil spill.
- It is designed to facilitate cooperation between agencies, and it can span multiple geographic regions.

# Universal Applicability

- ICS is used for emergency (unplanned) incidents and also planned events such as football games, parades, bike rides and VIP visits.
- Once you learn ICS, you will think of all types of situations where you can use it. For example, a ham radio public service event or a fundraiser for an organization.
- Knowing ICS will make you a better manager.

# Basic Attributes of ICS

- **Standardization** of organizational structure and terminology promotes interoperability between agencies and regions.
- **Delegation of authority** – One person cannot manage all aspects of a large incident, so ICS establishes the structure by which delegation of authority occurs.
- **Plain language** to facilitate communication – no “10” or “Q” codes. Language must be interoperable.

# ICS Attributes (continued)

- **Chain of command** specifies an orderly line of authority from the incident commander down to the individual worker. There is no ambiguity as to the line of authority.
- **Unity of command** means each individual has only one supervisor. You know who has the authority to give you directions.
- **Span of Control** – NIMS specifies that each supervisor should have between 3 and 7 people reporting to him/her. The ideal number being supervised is 5.

# ICS Attributes (continued)

- **Expandability** – Levels and sections are added to the organization as needed, and they are removed when no longer needed. An ICS organization can be as small as one person, and it can be large enough to handle Katrina and Puerto Rico.
- **Contraction** – As an incident comes under control and fewer resources are needed, the size of the ICS organization contracts.

# ICS Attributes (continued)

- **Standardized reports and briefings** – Information and record keeping reports and logs are standardized.
  - 201 – Incident briefing
  - 202 – Incident objectives
  - 207 – Incident organization chart
  - 214 – Activity log <- If you're not on a 214, you weren't there.
  - 217 – Communication resource inventory
  - 205 – Communications plan <- What freq to use.
  - 309 – Message traffic log <- Summary of every message

# Operating in an ICS Organization

- If you are deployed in an ICS organization, you take off your other hats at the door. People are deployed and utilized according to his or her skill set, not the organization they represent.
- You must be willing to be assigned in the ICS organization and take instructions through the ICS chain of command, not some other group.
- Relationships are important: Develop relationships before an incident. Teammates need to know each other before the big game.

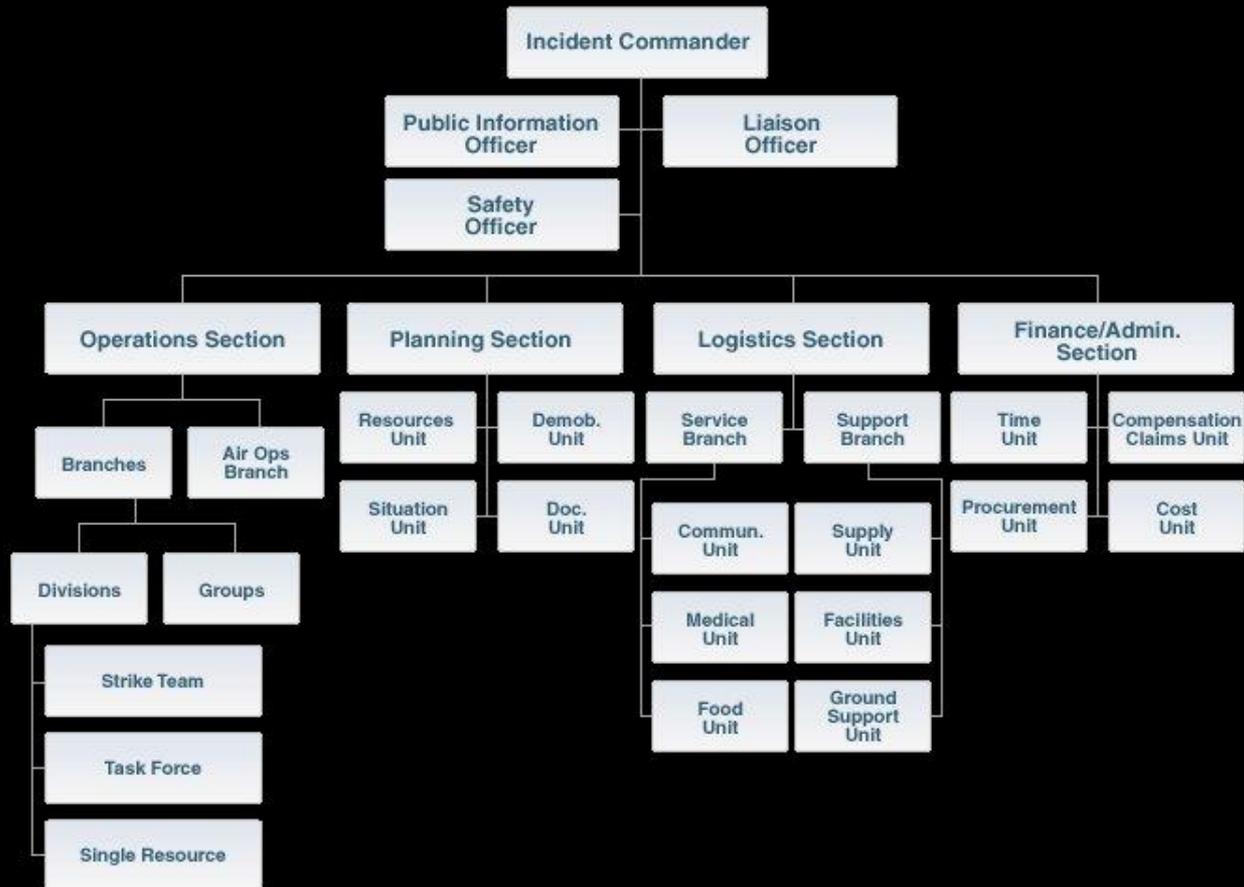
# Serving in Emergencies

- Priorities: (1) save lives, (2) stabilize incident, and (3) protect property
- You may end up taking more responsibility or doing different things than you expect
- Have an attitude of service not bossiness
- Dress, speak and act professionally. Your actions reflect on the entire ham and volunteer community.
- Be flexible and cooperative. Do what needs to be done.
- Be prepared for contingencies
- Expect the unexpected... but don't count on it

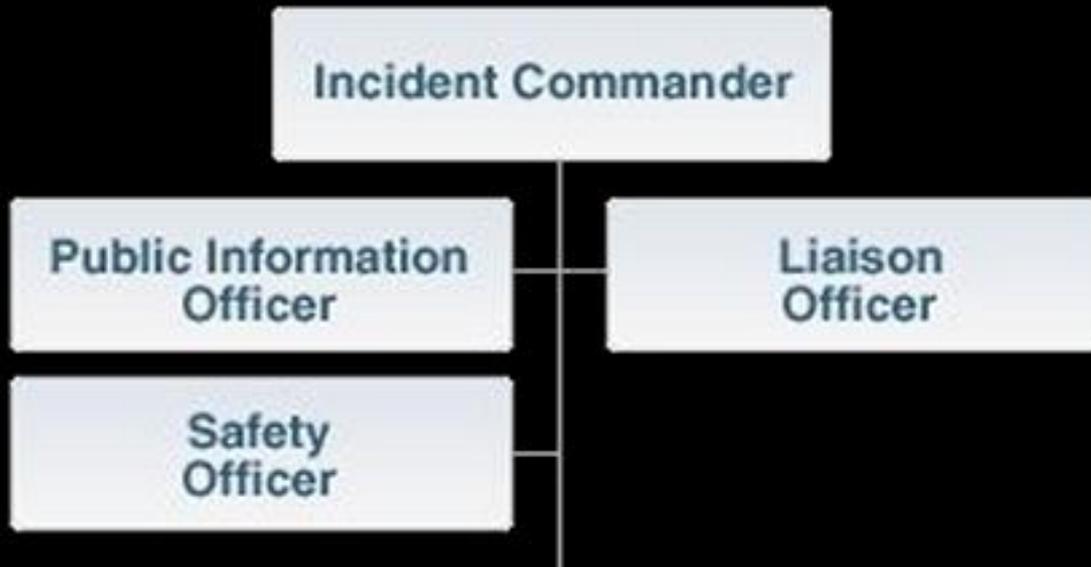
# Train and Work as a Team

- Operating in an emergency ICS organization is different than working in a public service event like a bike ride or a parade. There is much more confusion, tension and stress.
- Be serious and professional: people are depending on your performance.
- Be calm and focused. This will rub off on others.
- Working with a team of people you know makes the job easier.
- Train, deploy and work as a team. Learn what special skills each team member can contribute.

# Major ICS Components



# The Command Staff



# Command Staff

- Incident Commander <- Overall responsibility
- Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Safety Officer <- Can stop any operation
- Liaison Officer <- Interface to other groups
- The command staff works with the incident commander, and they are usually located at the command post.
- All command staff officers can have deputies

# Command Staff

- The command staff reports directly to the incident commander.
- All command staff positions other than incident commander are optional.
- One person can fill more than one position. For example, the incident commander could also be the public information officer.
- The incident commander can create special positions: for example, hazmat, medical, or legal advisors.

# Incident Commander

- The Incident Commander is the only required position
- The IC has overall responsibility for managing the incident. Initial IC has command until relieved.
- The new IC must be briefed by the previous IC during a transfer of control
- Duties:
  - Establishing the command post (CP)
  - Appointing the command and general staff
  - Setting overall priorities, objectives, and strategies
  - Coordinating and supervising command and general staff meetings and activities.

# Unified Command

- If multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions are involved, a *Unified Command* may be used rather than an individual IC.
- With a Unified Command, an Incident Command Team serves as a collective incident command.
- Unified Command is appropriate when incidents span jurisdictions or when high-level officers from multiple agencies are involved.
- Don't confuse with Unity of Command (one boss)

# Public Information Officer (PIO)

- The PIO is the official interface between the incident management and the public (press).
- The PIO and the Incident Commander decide what information should be released and when it should be released.
- *All* requests for information should be directed to the PIO.
- The Incident Commander may also take the role of PIO.

# Safety Officer

- Advises the Incident Commander about safe operation of the responders. Safety is always the top priority.
- Provides a safety briefing during the incident planning
- Ensures safety procedures and briefings are implemented and followed.
- Typically does field inspections
- The Safety Officer can exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- **All** members of the team are responsible for safety. If you see a danger, take the appropriate action.

# Liaison Officer

- Acts as the point of contact for agency representatives
- Maintains a list of cooperating agencies along with their representatives and contact information.
- Is responsible for passing appropriate information to agencies so they know what's going on.
- Receives reports and requests from agencies and passes them on to the Incident Commander.

# Special Command Staff Positions

- If deemed necessary by the Incident Commander, additional positions may be added to the command staff.
  - Hazmat expert
  - Marine or environmental specialist
  - Medical advisor
  - Weather advisor
  - Legal advisor

# General Staff



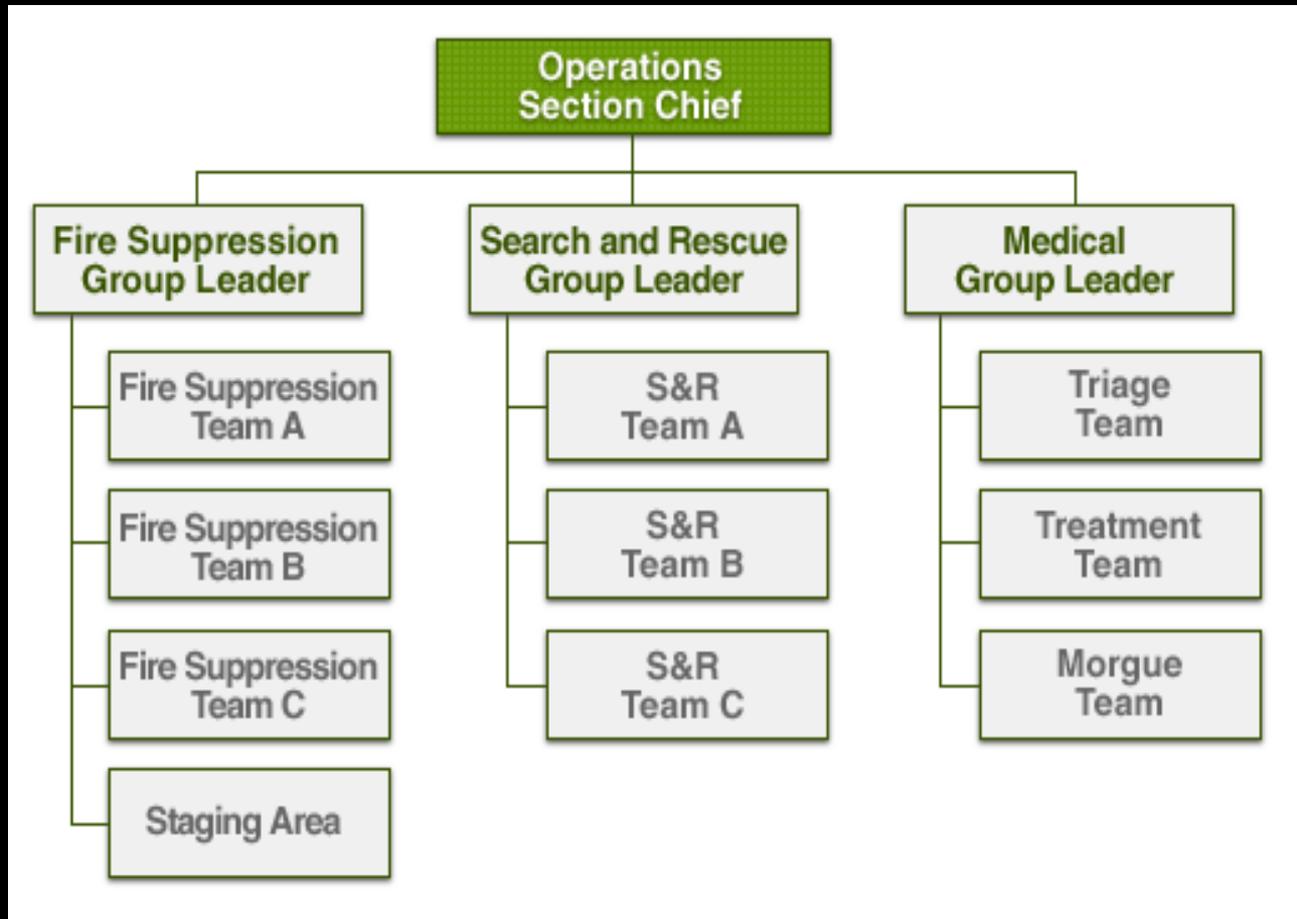
# General Staff

- The General Staff is responsible for the functional aspects of the ICS. They are the “line officers” who direct the planning, tactics and action.
- Section chiefs report to the incident commander.
- Section chiefs may have deputies.
- Not all sections are present (often Finance/Administration is omitted)
- The general staff participates in the Incident Action Plan preparation and the IAP presentation briefing.

# Operations Section



# Operations Section Groups



# Operations Section Responsibilities

- Responsible for managing tactical operations and responders deployed in the field
- Develops the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan in coordination with the incident commander
- Note, the incident commander sets overall priorities and strategies; the Operations Section Chief is responsible for the tactical decisions to achieve those objectives.
- Operations can have Branches, Divisions, Groups, Task forces, and Strike teams.
- Evaluate capabilities and leadership abilities

# Planning Section



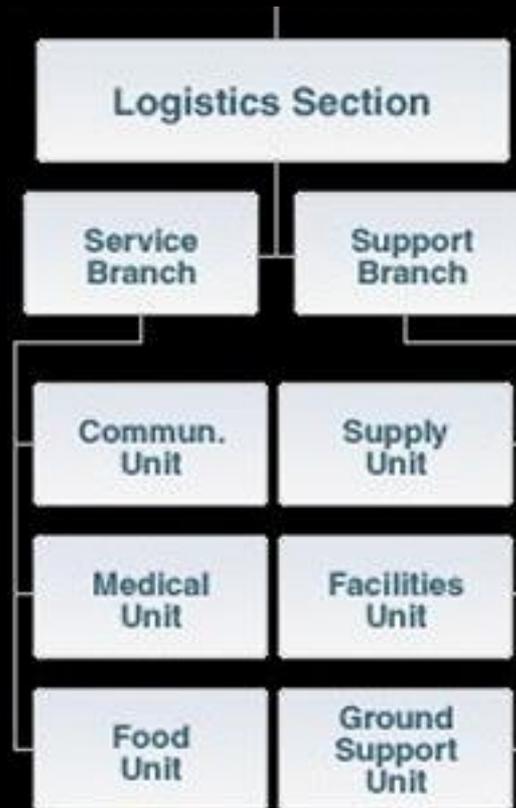
# Planning Section Responsibilities

- The Planning Section is responsible for providing planning services for the incident.
- Collect and evaluate information about the incident – coverage area, hazards, weather conditions, etc.
- Develop an Incident Action Plan that is presented to the Incident Commander.
- Assess personnel skills and make assignments
- Facilitate the Operational Period Briefing
- Monitor ongoing operations and present reports and suggested plan changes to the Incident Commander.

# Planning Section Units

- Situation Unit
  - Collect and process information about current situation.
  - Develop maps and projections
- Resource Unit
  - Check-in activity and maintain status of personnel and equipment assigned to incident. Redeploy as needed.
- Documentation Unit
  - Stores all incident related documentation; provides copying service.
- Demobilization Unit
  - Ensures orderly, safe and cost effective release of personnel and equipment that is no longer needed.

# Logistics Section



# Logistics Section Responsibilities

- Provide facilities, transportation, communication, supplies, equipment, food
- Manage base camp where resources are gathered
- Service Branch: Communications, Medical, Food
- Support Branch: Supply, Facilities, Ground support

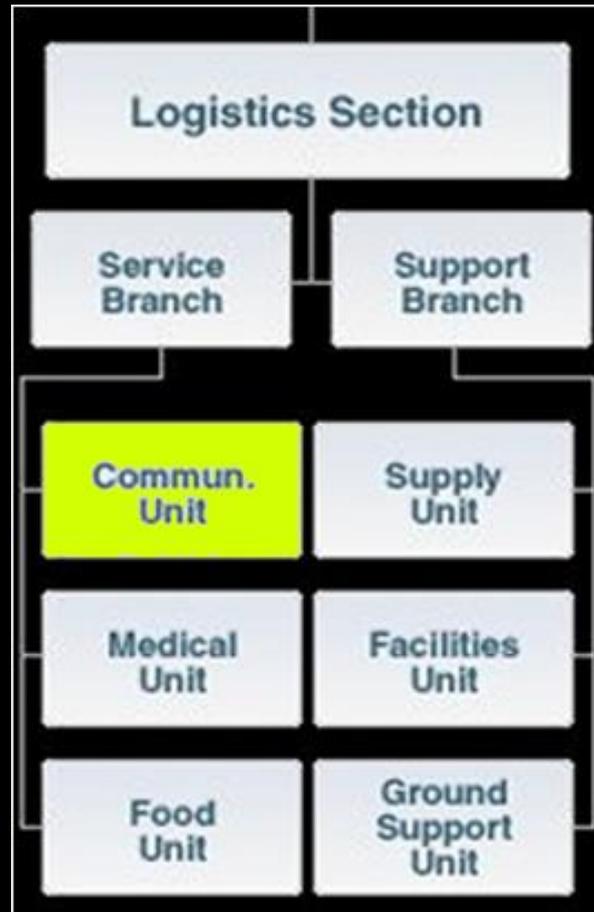
# Logistics Service Branch

- **Communications Unit**
  - Set up Communications Center
  - Send, receive, and deliver messages
  - Provide network, computer and other tech support
- Medical Unit
  - Provide medical care *for responders*
- Food Unit
  - Provide food for responders

# Logistics Support Branch

- Supply Unit
  - Orders personnel, equipment and supplies
  - Receives, stores, inventories and dispatches supplies
- Facilities Unit
  - Activation, running management, security and demobilization of facilities such as the ICP and base camp
- Ground Support Unit
  - Transportation of personnel, equipment, supplies
  - Service maintenance and repair of equipment

# Communications Unit



# Communications Unit

- The Communications Unit is located in the Services Branch of the Logistics Section. There is discussion about making the communications unit a new general staff section.
- The Communications Unit Leader (COML) is responsible for the Communications Unit.
- Sets up the Incident Communications Center.
- Set up the communications plan including allocating frequencies and channels. Presented in 205 form.
- Communications technicians (COMT) install radios, antennas, repeaters, gateways, and program radios.
- Technical specialists (THSP) may be responsible for gateways, computers, and Winlink computer systems.

# Incident Communications Center

- The **Incident Communications Center (ICC)** is the communications center for the incident. Often it is located at the Incident Command Post.
- The **Incident Communications Manager (INCM)** organizes and supervises the Incident Communications Center
- The COML and INCM establish and equip the ICC
- The COML and INCM assign and supervise radio operators
- Maintain proper communications logs
- Radio Operators (RADO) report to the Incident Communications Manager unless they are assigned to a task force for deployment by the Operations Section.

# Finance and Administration



# Interoperability

- The ability of two or more people to communicate and work together for a common goal.
- Interoperability has many dimensions:
  - Organization
  - Language and terminology
  - Technical
  - Time
  - Governance
  - Training and Exercises
- **Relationships are the key to interoperability**

# Interoperability (continued)

- **Technical Interoperability**
  - Communication equipment must be compatible:
  - VHF/UHF/HF/700/800/P25, Frequency bands, analog/digital, encryption, etc.
  - Protocols: voice, MT-63, Olivia, RTTY, Pactor, Winmor, Packet, etc.
- **Winlink provides Technical and Time interoperability**

# Preparing for Incidents

- Develop teams, establish leaders and practice together
- Establish relationships with each other and agencies
- Know how to make contact when an incident occurs
- Acquire and store required materials
- Take credentials with you on deployment
- Learn where the equipment is and how to use it
- Train, train and train
- Practice in realistic deployments
- Put together personal deployment kit
- Don't forget ICS forms such as 214

# Incident Management Phases

- Understand the situation before taking action
- Establish incident objectives and strategy
- Develop the incident action plan
- Determine what people and resources are needed
- Prepare and disseminate the plan
- Execute the plan
- Revise the plan as the situation changes
- Demobilize, recover equipment, after-action reports
- Evaluate performance and improve readiness

# Conclusion

- ICS provides a common structure for all incidents
- ICS is standardized and used across the USA
- ICS greatly facilitates interoperability
- ICS can handle small to enormous incidents
- ICS can be applied to *any* incident or event
- ICS has been proven over and over. It works.
- Knowledge of ICS is essential for fitting into an incident response team