

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

OVERVIEW OF THE BASICS

This is intended to provide those without any formal training in ICS to be able to work within an incident response, and recovery where incident command is being utilized.

GLOSSARY

Incident Command System: a management system for single and/or multiple emergency agency response and recovery for natural or human caused disasters. A system of common terms, and defined areas of responsibilities and functions to respond to and recover from emergencies; saving lives and protecting property.

Unified Command: a multiple response agency function of command for a centralized decision making with a consensus decision reached via participating agency input.

Incident Commander: the person in charge of the response and recovery; this individual is the central command and control function in establishing response priorities and goals, referred to as IC.

Span of control: the ability for an individual to effectively supervise staff, for ICS not recommended to exceed 5.

Safety Officer: Part of the Incident Command staff that ensures the health and safety of the responders; has authority to cease tactical operations if not safe; can be the IC.

Liasion Officer: Part of the Incident Command staff that performs interagency coordination and communication; can be the IC.

Information Officer: Part of the Command staff that is responsible for the distribution of official public information; can be the IC.

Planning Section: Part of the general staff responsible for planning and forecasting all aspects of the next period(s) of operation; conducts the planning meetings

Operations Section: part of the general staff, responsible for the tactical, special operational aspects to reduce, eliminate, the threat, stabilize the situation, save lives and protect property. Pointed end of stick.

Logistics Section: Part of the general staff responsible for the acquisition, inventory, staging, delivery, receipt, and readiness of all labor, equipment, and supplies.

Finance/Administration Section: Part of the general staff responsible for the incident administration section record keeping, files, paperwork, invoices, time recording.

Period of Operations: The assigned shift, usually not to exceed 12 hours in 24 hour operations, day and night of operation only.

UTILIZATION OF ICS

Incident Command has become a standard management system for the organization of single or multiple agencies in disaster response and recovery.

Incident Command can be applied to very small incidents, example: single vehicle accident to extremely large incidents, example: wild land fires and hurricanes.

Incident Command is also a management system that can expand or contract to meet the response and recovery needs of the incident to save lives and property.

The basic concept of ICS is that single or multiple agencies have a common ICS language and functional area of specific responsibilities.

A contracted small incident probably will have a single person in charge and functioning as the incident commander. This individual will most likely also handle the command functions of safety, liaison, and public information. In addition, with the small incident, the IC will also perform all the functions in the planning, logistics, operations and finance/administration. A small incident is probably able to be handled in this fashion.

However, as the duration, complexity, and threatening impacts on lives and property of the incident increase, expansion of ICS is warranted. This is often referred to as "filling the boxes" or, in other words, assigning other staff to perform the some responsibilities. Example: assigning logistics to a subordinate staff. Also assigning a specific PIO to interact with media in releasing/updating official information. The IC can, at any point in time, decide and announce that a particular function is being offloaded and delegated to another individual.

Example: This also means that at any one slice of time, a realistic scenario is an IC handling operations and planning, while having assigned, logistics, and finance/administration.

The bottom line is that someone or multiple people are clearly assigned the four section functions in a formal manner. This can be accomplished in a combination of multiple individuals. Various branches, divisions, groups, task forces and strike teams are further divisions of labor that can exist from the basic four sections.

FIGURE 1 – ICS BOXES

BASIC ICS STRUCTURE

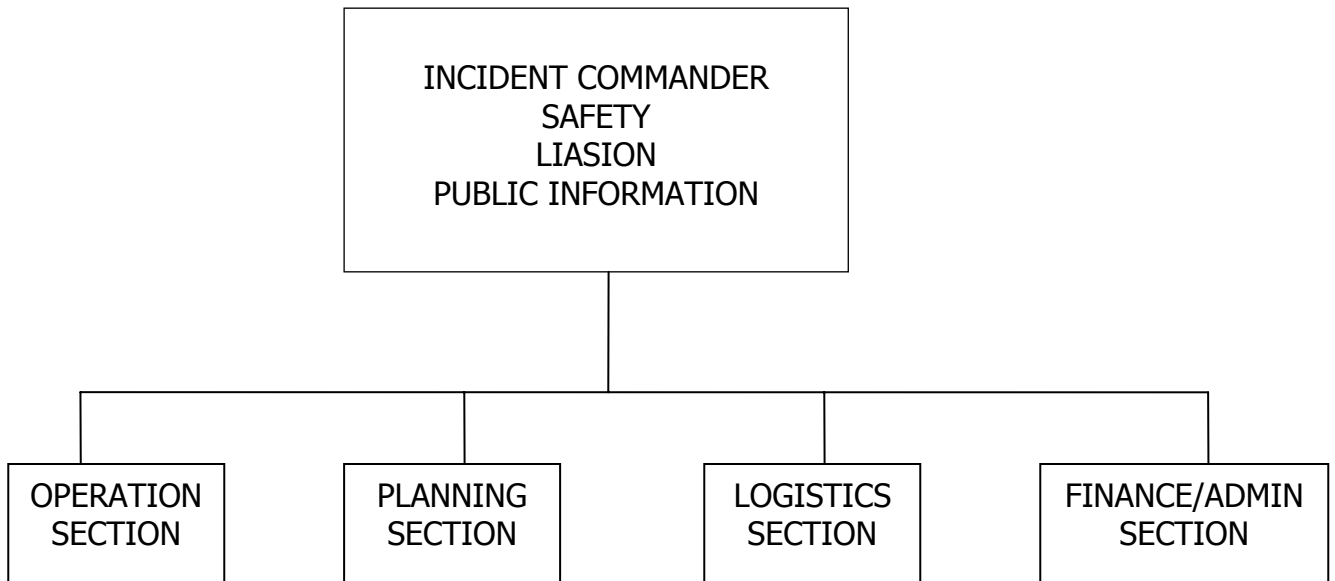


FIGURE 2

"FILLING THE BOXES"

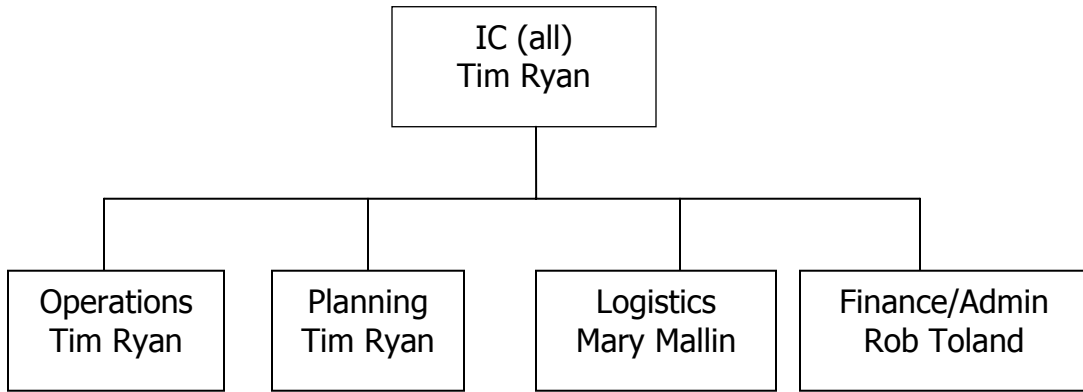


FIGURE 3

"FILLING THE BOXES"

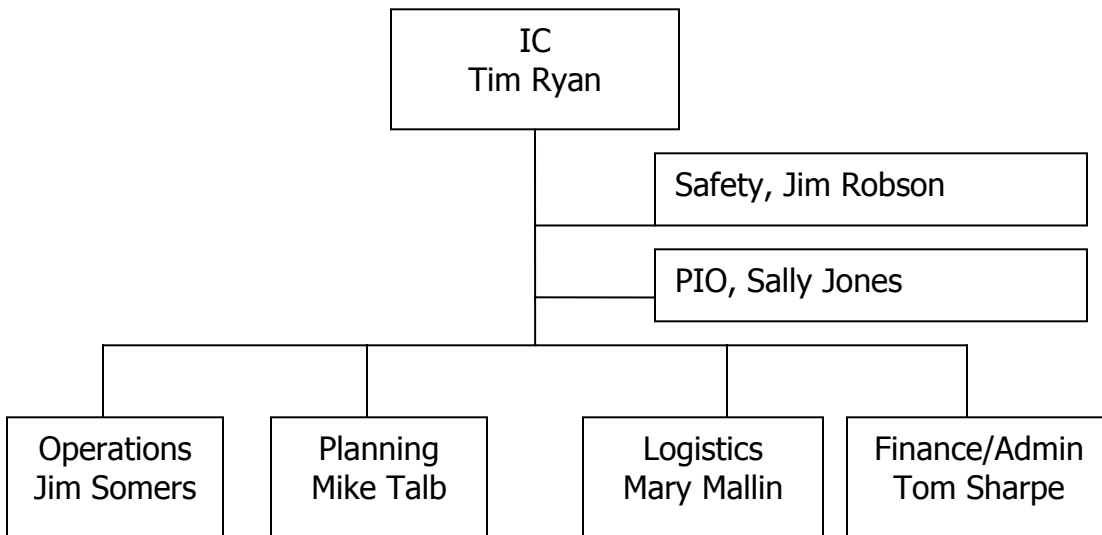
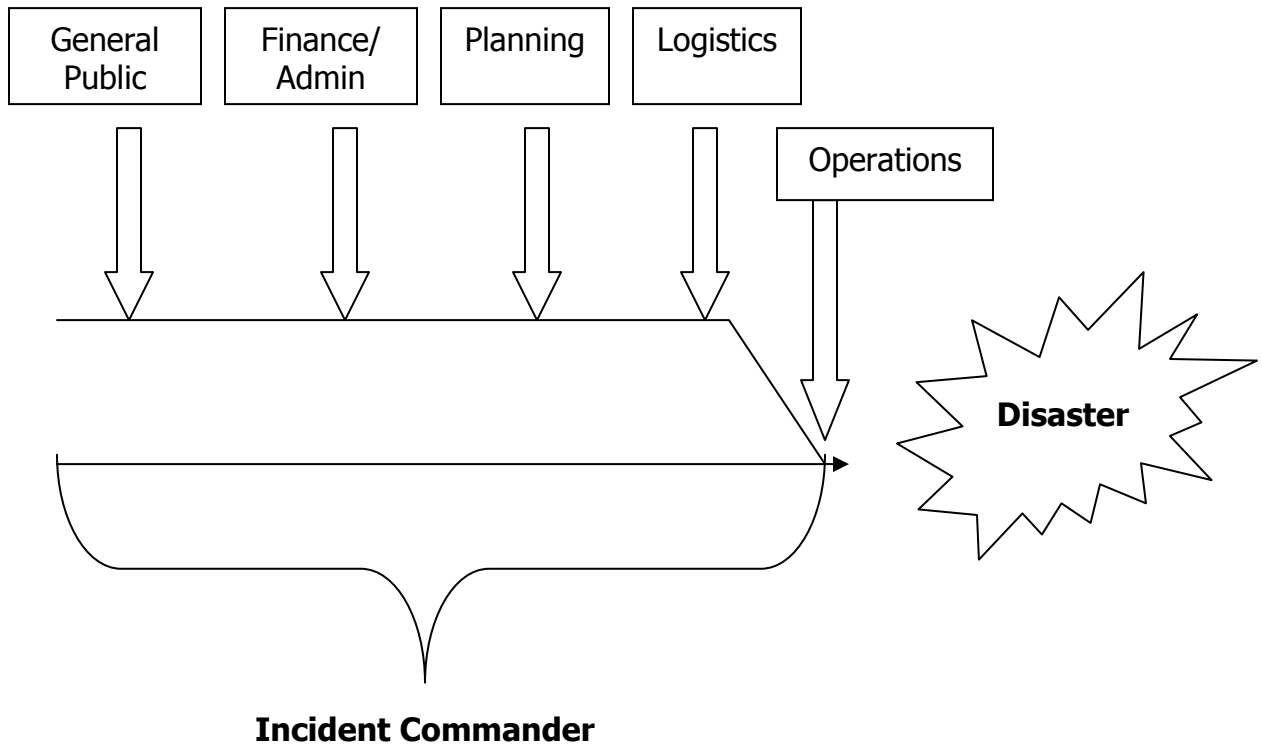


FIGURE 4

"POINTED END OF THE STICK"



- Operation performs the on scene tactical activities to stabilize the incident save lives and protect property (applies the resources)
- Logistics performs the acquisition of labor, supplies, materials, and special technology required (asked for) by IC (obtains resources)
- Planning performs the meetings to develop and implement an Incident Action Plan (schedules the resources)
- Finance/Administration performs the payment, record keeping, purchase and throughput (keep administration track/use of resources)
- Incident Commander performs the overall command and control of the on scene stabilization of the incident establishes period of operation goals and objectives (requests resources)

WHO UTILIZES THE ICS?

Incident Command System is a required method of conducting disaster management for all NYS agencies (Gov. Pataki Executive Order #26). Incident Command System is the foundation for the Federal Department of Homeland Security National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Incident Command System is the foundation of NIMS which is included in the federal National Response Plan.

Incident Command System is an OSHA required procedure for disaster first responders.

Incident Command System is a growing disaster response procedure for fire, police, and EMS.

Incident Command System for all levels of government is a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission.

Incident Command System can be applied to all natural and human caused disasters.

Incident Command System can be applied to small or large public gatherings, events, examples: county fairs, concerts, and political conventions, pre event management.

Incident Command System can be applied to the single vehicle accident to a multi car train derailment.

Incident Command System is here to stay.

NEED FOR A COMMON INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (MODULE 17 ICS FOR EXECUTIVES)

The complexity of incident management, coupled with the growing need for multi-agency and multifunctional involvement on incidents, has increased the need for a single standard incident management system that can be used by all emergency response disciplines.

Factors affecting emergency management and which influence the need for a more efficient and cost-effective incident management system are listed below. Not all of these will apply to every incident

- Population growth and spread of urban areas
- Language and cultural differences
- More multi-jurisdictional incidents
- Legal changes mandating standard incident management systems and multi-agency involvement at certain incidents
- Shortage of resources at all levels, requiring greater use of mutual aid
- Increase in the number, diversity, and use of radio frequencies
- More complex and interrelated incident situations

- Greater life and property loss risk from natural and human caused technological disasters
- Sophisticated media coverage demanding immediate answers and emphasizing response effectiveness
- More frequent cost-sharing decisions on incidents

HISTORY OF ICS DEVELOPMENT

ICS resulted from the obvious need for a new approach to the problem of managing rapidly moving wildfires in the early 1970's. At that time, emergency managers faced a number of problems.

- Too many people reporting to one supervisor
- Different emergency response organizational structures
- Lack of reliable incident information
- Inadequate and incompatible communications
- Lack of a structure for coordinated planning between agencies
- Unclear lines of authority
- Terminology differences between agencies
- Unclear or unspecified incident objectives