Demystifying the Incident Command System (ICS)

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Disclaimer

I may speak in acronyms.

FEMA Acronyms, Abbreviations and Terms
A Capability Assurance Job and Field Aid
July 2023
FEMA
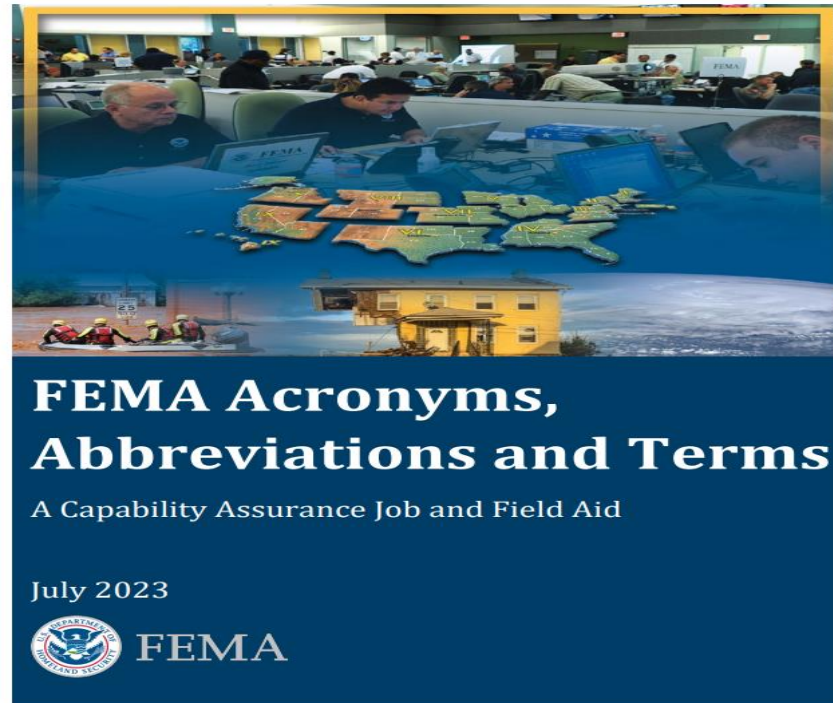
Objectives

- Remove some of the fear from ICS.

- Demystify the four NIMS command and coordination systems:

- ICS, EOC, MAC Group, and JIS

- Demystify the ICS positions, roles and responsibilities.

- Demystify NIMS and the Management Characteristics.

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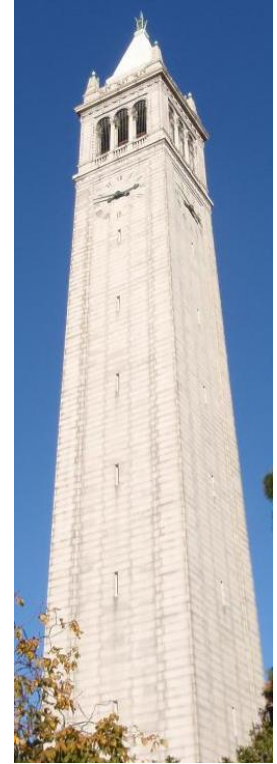
Why does this matter to you, as a Volunteer?

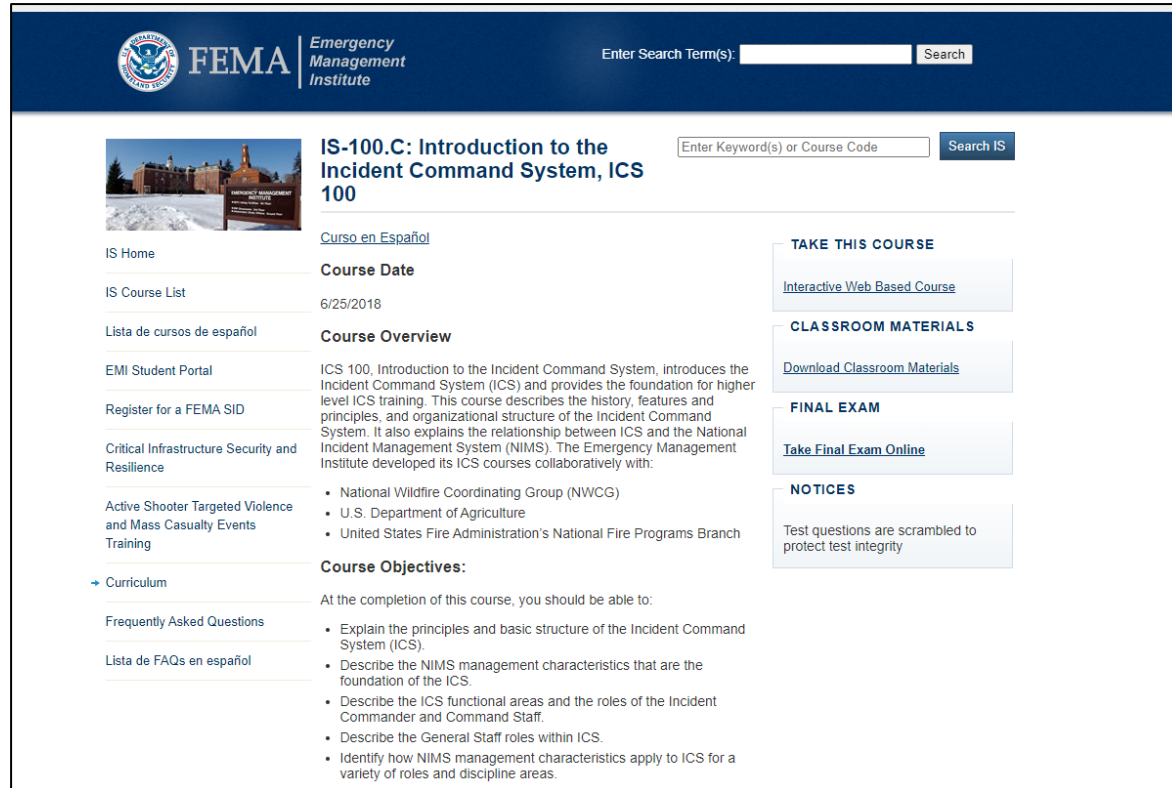- The presumption of knowledge from other responders.

- Increase in effectiveness and efficiency.

- Accountability

- Safety

How have you taken your ICS training

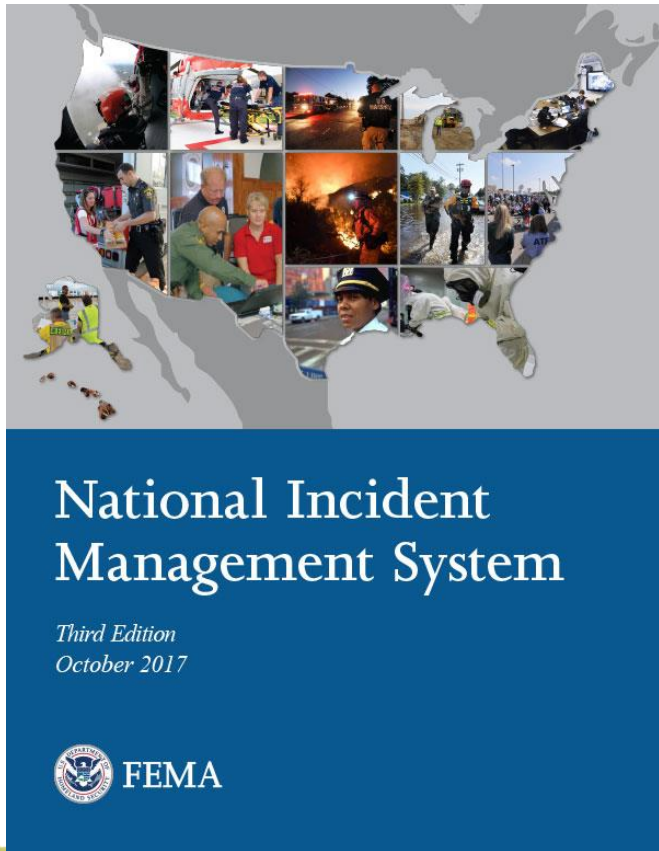# How have you taken your ICS training

National Incident Management System

National Incident Management System

Third Edition
October 2017

FEMA

- What? . . . NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template . . .

- Who? . . . to enable Federal, State, Territorial, tribal, and local governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together . . .

- How? . . . to prepare for, prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity . . .

- Why? . . . to reduce the loss of life and property, and harm to the environment.

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What is Incident Command System (ICS)?

The Incident Command System:

- Is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management concept.

- Allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

ICS Purposes

Using management best practices, ICS helps to ensure:

- The safety of responders and others.

- The achievement of tactical objectives.

- The efficient use of resources.

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ICS Benefits

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind, size, or complexity.

- Allows personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.

- Provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff.

- Is cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

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ICS Structure

C FLOP

ICS - Who Does What?

Has overall responsibility for the incident. Sets objectives.

Incident Commander

Operations Section

Planning Section

Logistics Section

Finance/Admin Section

Develops tactical organization and directs all resources to carry out the Incident Action Plan.

Develops Incident Action Plan to accomplish the objectives.

Provides resources and services needed to support the incident.

Monitors incident-related costs. Provides overall fiscal guidance.

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ICS Experience

ICS Structure

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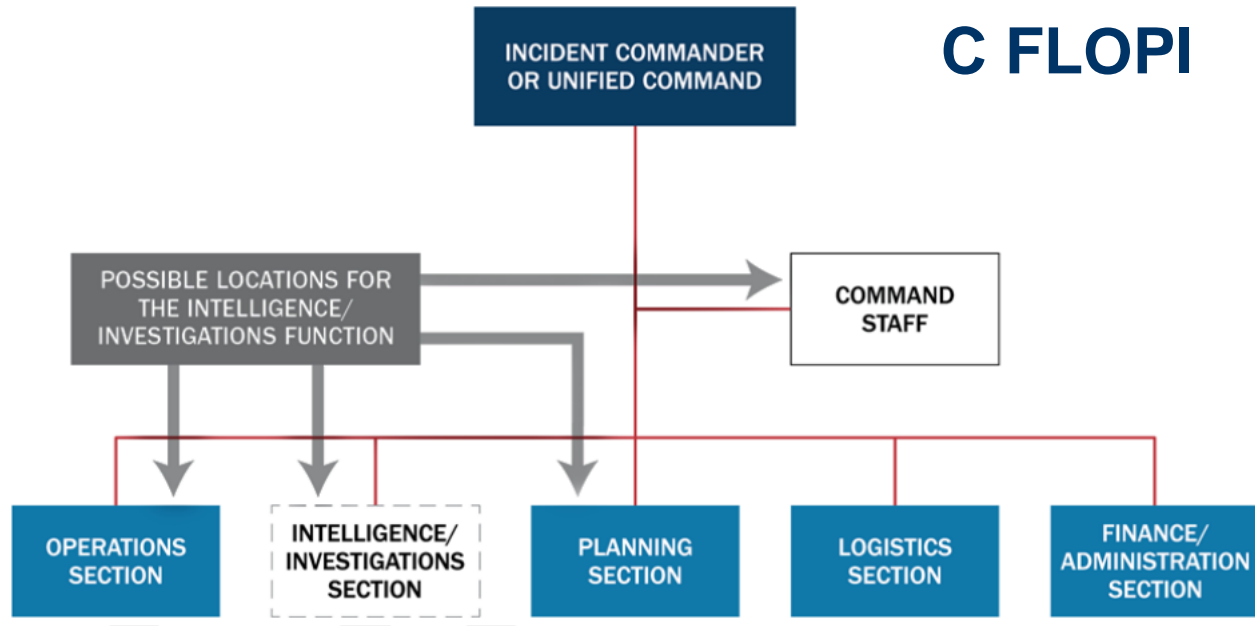
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nims_intel_invest_function_
guidance_draft_20240925.pdf

Command Staff

The incident may designate Command Staff members who will:

- Provide information, liaison, and safety services for the Incident Command.

- Report directly to the Incident Commander.
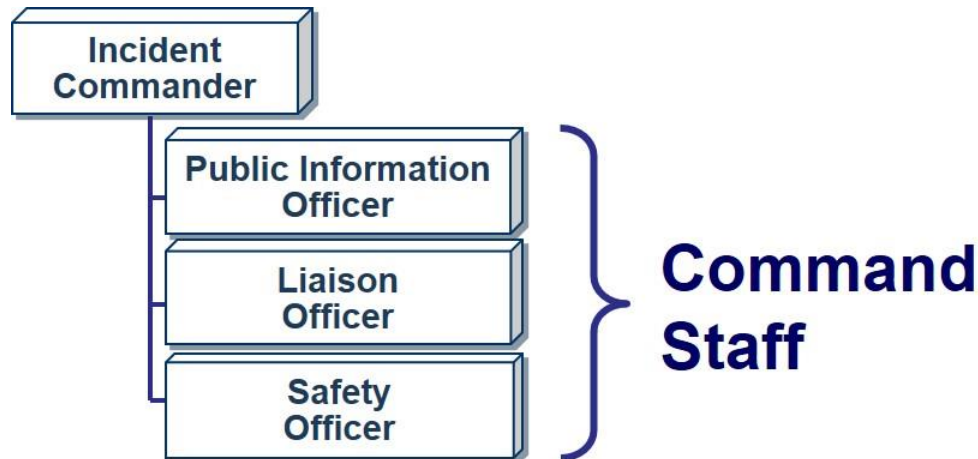
General Staff

As the incident expands in complexity, the Incident Commander may add General Staff Sections to maintain span of control.
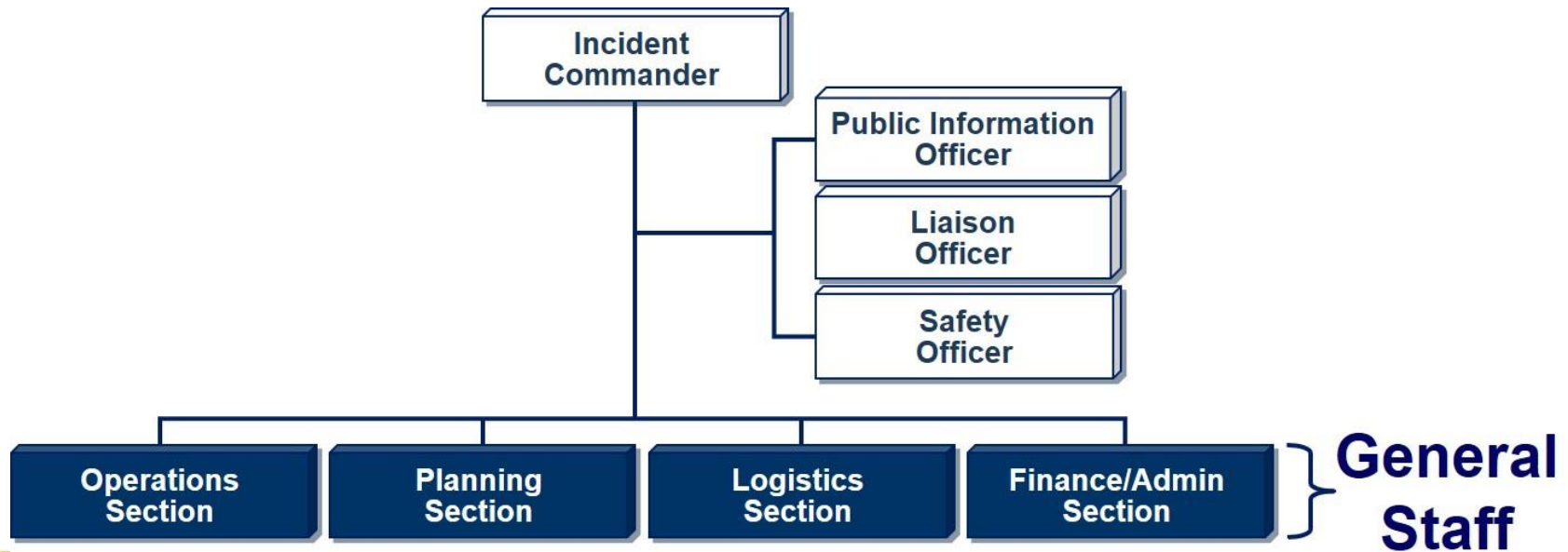
Emergency Operations Centers

EOCs are physical or virtual locations where staff, stakeholders, and partners gather to provide support for an incident.

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EOC Functions

- Collecting, analyzing, and sharing information.

- Supporting resource needs and requests, including allocation and tracking.

- Coordinating plans and determining current and future needs.

- Coordinating plans to support the Incident Command.

- In some cases, providing coordination and policy direction.

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EOC Organizational Structure

- While EOCs have common functions, their structure will vary between jurisdictions.

- Three common EOC organizational models:

  - ICS or ICS-Like

  - Incident Support Model

  - Departmental.

- Jurisdictions or organizations may choose to use one of these structures, a combination of elements from different structures, or an entirely different structure.

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EOC Benefits

- Helps establish a shared situational picture.

- Simplifies information verification.

- Facilitates long-term operations.

- Increases continuity.

- Provides ready access to all available information.

- Aids resource identification and use.

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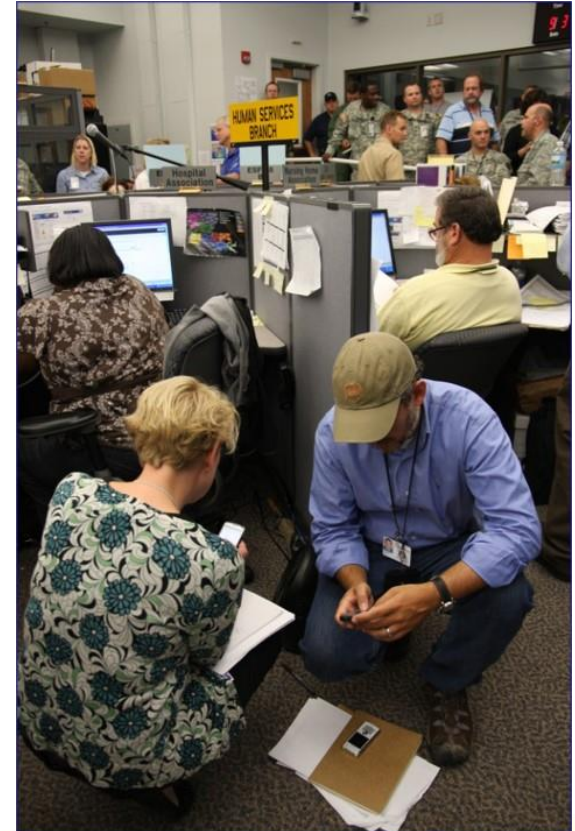
Multiagency Coordination Groups

During incidents, MAC Groups:

- Act as a policy-level body.

- Support resource prioritization and allocation.

- Make cooperative multi-agency decisions.

- Enable decision making among elected and appointed officials with those managing the incident (IC/UC)

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The MAC Group

- Is often comprised of:

    - Elected officials

    - Senior decision-makers

    - Senior public safety officials

    - High-level, subject-matter experts

Operational Priorities

MAC Groups apply priorities at policy level:

- Save

- Prote

- Stabil

- Provic

- Resto

- Resto

- Coorc
  stake

- Represent Political, Financial and Legal
  Concerns.

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Joint Information System

JIS activities

- Coordinate

- Develop pu   rategies.

- Advise the   lic affairs issues.

- Control rum   ion.

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Managing Public Information

The Public Information Officer (PIO):
- Manages media and public inquiries.
- May be separate PIOs for:
    - Incident Command
    - EOC
    - Senior Official / MAC Group

PIOs coordinate and disseminate incident information through the JIC:
- Critical emergency information
- Crisis communications
- Public affairs functions

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NIMS Management Characteristics

14 foundational characteristics of incident Command and Coordination under NIMS:

Common Terminology

Management by Objectives

Manageable Span of Control

Comprehensive Resource Management

Establishment and Transfer of Command

Chain of Command and Unity of Command

Dispatch/Deployment

Modular Organization

Incident Action Planning

Incident Facilities and Locations

Integrated Communications

Unified Command

Accountability

Information and Intelligence Management

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Common Terminology

ICS requires the use of common terminology to define:

- Organizational functions.

- Incident facilities.

- Resource descriptions.

- Position titles.

Use plain language and clear text, not codes.

This is Unit 1, we have a 10-37 Code 2.

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Management by Objectives

- ICS is managed by objectives.

- Objectives are communicated throughout the entire ICS organization.

- Available resources must support incident objectives.

- Let's everyone know the goal and when you are done.

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Incident Action Planning

IC creates an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

- Specifies the incident objectives.

- States the activities to be completed.

- Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period

- May be oral or written—except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP.

- Takes into account legal and policy considerations and direction.
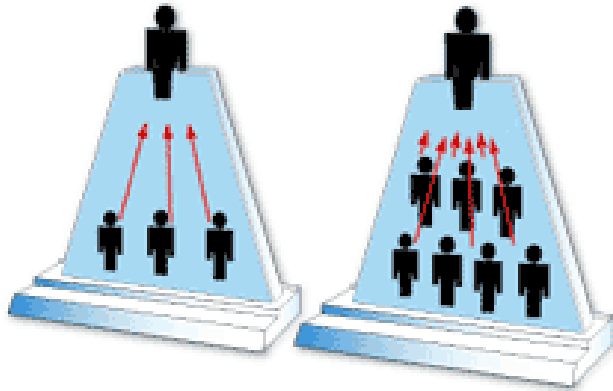
Modular Organization

- Develops in a top-down, modular fashion.

- Is based on the hazard, size and complexity of the incident.

- Incident objectives determine the organizational size.

- Only functions/positions that are necessary will be filled.

- Each element must have a person in charge.
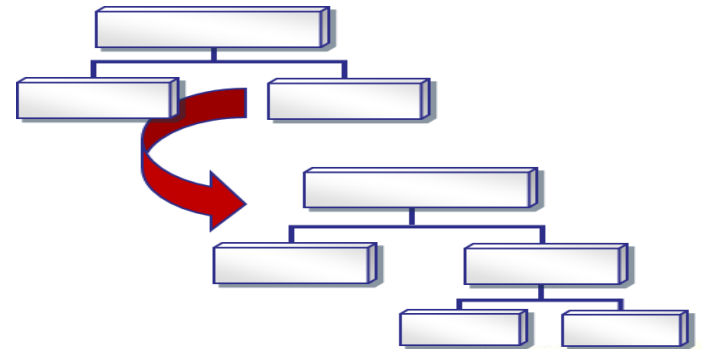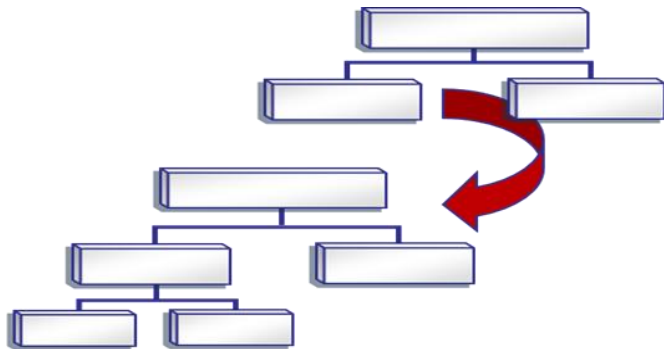
Manageable Span of Control

- Optimal span of control Guideline is 1:5 but actual ratio varies

- Incident personnel use their best judgment to determine effective span of control

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Comprehensive Resource Management

Resources include personnel, equipment, teams, supplies and facilities.

Resource management includes processes for:

- Maintaining accurate, updated resource inventories.

- Resource activities to prepare for and respond to an incident.

- Reimbursement for resources used.

Integrated Communications

Incident communications are facilitated through:

- Common communications plan.

- Interoperable communications processes and systems.

- Planning, to achieve integrated voice and data communications.

Before an incident, it is critical to develop an integrated voice and data communications system (equipment, systems, and protocols).

Establishment and Transfer of Command

The jurisdiction or organization with primary responsibility for the incident designates the individual at the scene responsible for establishing command and protocol for transferring command.

Chain of Command & Unity of Command

- Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization.

- Unity of command means that every individual has a designated supervisor to whom he or she reports at the scene of the incident.

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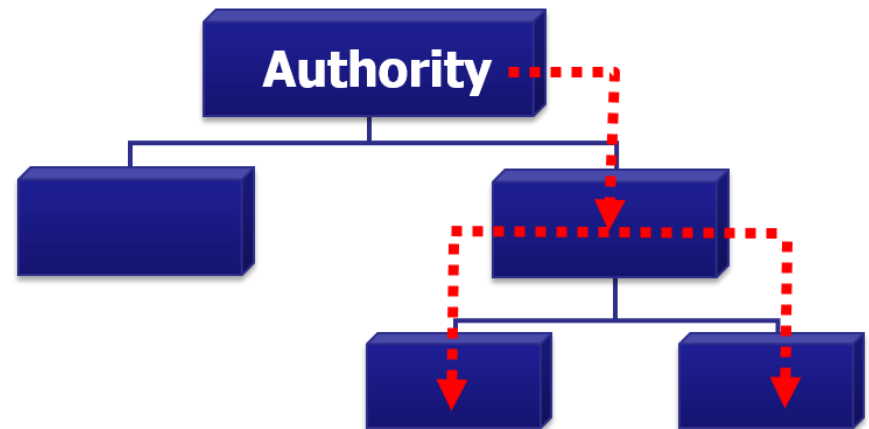
Unified Command

- Established when no one jurisdiction, agency, or organization has primary authority and/or the resources to manage an incident on its own.

- Manages the incident by jointly approved objectives.

Dispatch/Deployment & Accountability

At any incident, resources should:

- Deploy only when appropriate authorities request.

- Dispatch through established resource management systems.

- DO NOT spontaneous deploy if not requested by authorities.

- Be accountable, check in and out, use tracking systems.

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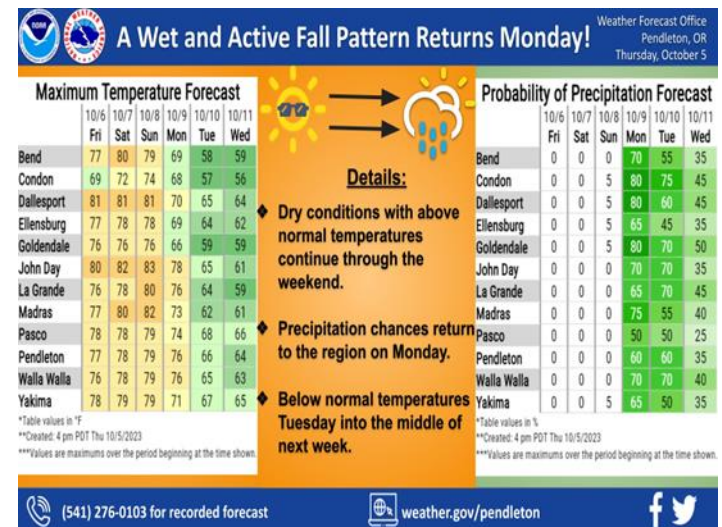# Incident Facilities and Locations
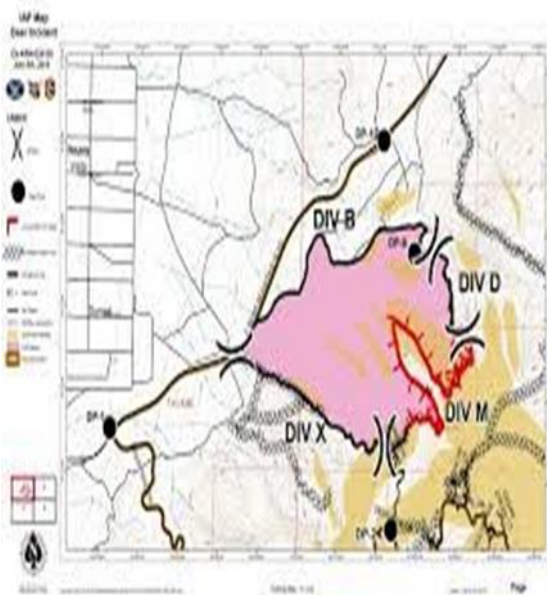
- Depending on the incident size and complexity, Command establishes support facilities for a variety of purposes and directs their identification and location based on the incident.

- Typical facilities include the Incident Command Post (ICP), incident base, staging areas, camps, mass casualty triage areas, points-of-distribution, and emergency shelters.

Information and Intelligence Management

- The incident management organization establishes a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

- Process includes identifying EEI to ensure personnel gather the most accurate and appropriate data, translate it into useful information, and communicate it with appropriate personnel.

Additional Resources

- NIMS Doctrine and Supporting Guides and Tools https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims/components

- ICS Resource Center - https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/

- Additional NIMS Training – https://training.fema.gov https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=1055

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Thank You

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References

Some of the slide and concept are used, are from FEMA's G191 and G402.