

CHAPTER II Operations

Rev. 10/14

SUBJECT 2 Command System

TOPIC 1 Incident Command System

A. PURPOSE

1. To describe the Incident Command System organization and components.

B. POLICY

1. The Incident Command System, as described in this chapter, shall be used at the scene of ALL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS.
2. The Incident Commander shall use system components to build an organizational structure capable of controlling and coordinating incident activities.
3. The span of control for any supervisor at an emergency scene should be three (3) to seven (7) subordinates, with a span of control of five (5) being the norm.

C. OBJECTIVE

1. To provide a Command system capable of commanding any number of Fire Companies or other emergency response units operating at an emergency incident.

D. SAFETY

1. Unit accountability, as provided by the Incident Command System, affords a measure of safety.
2. The Safety Officer position within the Command Staff shall be filled at the scene of all one-alarm or greater fires, hazardous material responses, river emergencies, entrapments and technical rescues.
3. A Safety Officer shall be appointed at any other time the incident presents a high degree of hazard to operating personnel or deemed necessary by the Incident Commander.

E. MODULAR ORGANIZATION

Rev. 10/14

1. The Incident Command System organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based upon the type, and size incident. The organization's staff builds, from the top down, with responsibility placed initially on the Incident Commander. As the need exist, four separate Sections can be developed; each with several subordinate units which may be established. The specific organization structure established for any given incident will be based upon management needs of the incident. If one individual can simultaneously manage all major functional areas, no further organization is required. If one or more of the areas require independent management, an individual is named to be responsible for that area.

F. MANAGEABLE SPAN OF CONTROL

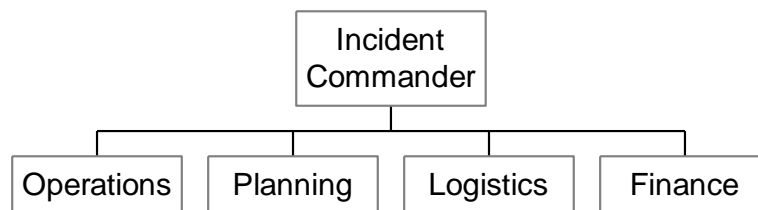
1. Safety factors, as well as, sound management planning will both influence and dictate span-of-control considerations. In general, within the Incident Command System, the span-of-control of any individual with emergency management responsibility should range from three (3) to seven (7), with a span-of-control of five (5) being established as a general rule of thumb. Of course, there will always be exceptions, but these exceptions will usually occur at the task level. For example, at a Hazardous Materials incident there may be a need to evacuate a densely populated area, many police or fire personnel could work under a single supervisor systematically notifying residents of the danger. But even here, setting up areas of responsibilities and subdividing would be preferred.
2. The kind of incident, the nature of the task, hazard and safety factors, and distances between elements will influence span-of-control considerations. An important consideration in span-of-control is to anticipate change and prepare for it. This is especially true during rapid buildup of the organization when good management is made difficult because of too many reporting elements.

G. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Rev. 10/14

1. The Incident Command System has five major functional areas, which are further subdivided by subordinate units working for Section Chiefs.
2. The Command system is organized, as illustrated below:

Incident Command System



3. Because of its modular structure, the Incident Command System is equally applicable to small incidents, normal operations, and large scale emergencies.

H. INCIDENT COMMANDER

1. The person in overall command of the incident is called the Incident Commander.
2. The Incident Commander establishes incident strategy and develops a plan of action to meet the strategy.
3. Other functional areas are established based on incident requirements. If the Incident Commander does not assign someone to the various functions on the Incident Command System Organizational Chart, the Incident Commander is responsible for the unassigned functions.
4. The highest ranking fire officer on the scene will assume the duties of Incident Commander, except that Company Officers have the option of assuming Command from another Company Officer of lower rank, or deferring command transfer until a Chief Officer arrives.

Rev. 10/14

5. The radio designation for the Incident Commander is "Command". All communications to the fire alarm dispatcher shall be channeled through the Incident Commander (Command), unless their urgency dictates otherwise. All communications to the Fire Alarm Dispatcher made by members other than the incident Commander must be pre-authorized by Command, or justified due to imminent hazards.

I. ESTABLISHING COMMAND

1. The Incident Commander is designated as "Command" whether manned by the Fire Chief, or a Fire Fighter assigned as an acting officer.
2. The term Command identifies:

The Incident Commander

The Command Post

The Command Function

The term "Command" eliminates confusion during Command transfers. Operating units may not remember who assumed Command, but they must recognize the importance of orders being issued by "Command" and the need to communicate "Through channels" to "Command".

3. Three command modes are identified for use by Company Officers arriving at the scene prior to a Chief Officer:

NOTHING SHOWING MODE

This is a Mobile Command Mode. The Company Officer is in Command, while investigating the situation. Command is maintained via the portable radio on a fireground channel. The apparatus location is considered the temporary command post.

FAST ATTACK MODE

This too is a Mobile Command Mode. The Company Officer is in Command, while taking action with company members to stabilize the incident. Command is maintained via the portable radio on a fireground channel. The apparatus location is considered the temporary command post.

COMMAND MODE

Rev. 10/14

The Command Mode requires a stationary Command Post, usually on the exterior. This mode is used by Company Officers in situations of large proportions, during unusually hazardous operations. The Command Mode must be established by stating the assigned company, position of the command post, and the word "Command".

Regardless of the mode of operation, there must ALWAYS be someone in "Command".

The three "Command Modes" apply only to Company level operations. Command Officers (Chief Officers) DO NOT have a "Mobile Command" option.

Chief Officers must assume the "Command Mode" utilizing a stationary Command Post whenever a situation requires a one alarm or greater response to handle the incident.

Command mode "Command" is established by giving the Unit designation, location of the command post, and the word "Command". This transmission will be made on the Command Fireground Channel:

For example: "District 1"

"Main Street"

"Command"

This communication establishes that District 1 is in Command, and the Command Post is located on Main Street. If the Command Post is established within a building, the building name or address will be substituted for the street name.

For Example: "District 1"

"Westin Lobby"

"Command"

Establishing Command inside the Westin Hotel lobby.

Command must be established, but not necessarily communicated to Dispatch and on-scene units when a less than full one alarm response is needed to resolve the incident.

Rev. 10/14

As higher-ranking Chief Officers arrive, they will assign previous Incident Commanders and other Chief Officers to positions that may be mobile.

4. There are two important considerations when placing the Command Post:
 - a. Place the first due in District Chief car as close to the building as possible without interfering with apparatus placement. This will aid in the ability to maximize the use of the SCBA monitoring computer.
 - b. Ideally, the position chosen will offer a view of two sides of the building.

The first consideration of parking out of the way of apparatus placement, **MUST ALWAYS** be observed. The second consideration of placement, where two sides of the building can be viewed is **USUALLY** good practice. There is a distinct advantage in being able to see the effects of tactical decisions. However, there are times when seeing the scene, overwhelms the Incident Commander, causing the Commander to focus on the visible, while failing to deal with the not so visible. Generally speaking the larger and more complex the situation, the farther away the Command Post should be. Isolation from the distractions of the scene can be an important factor in developing good action plans.

J. TRANSFERRING COMMAND

1. "A good basic Command transfer rule for Company Officers is:
"If you can't improve the quality of Command, don't transfer it."
2. The Incident Command System allows flexibility in the area of Command Transfer with the following options available to later arriving Chief Officers:

The higher ranking Officer **CAN** assume the position of:

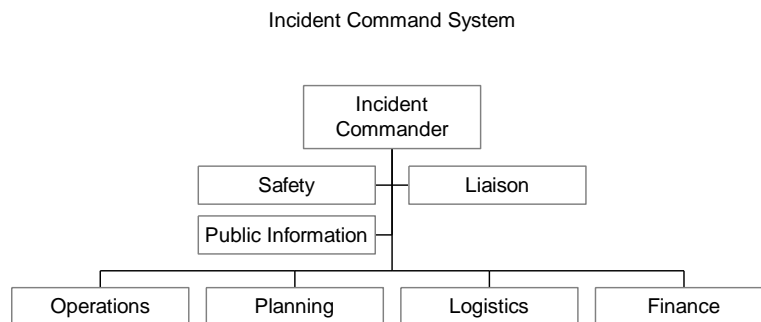
- a. Incident Commander allowing a lower ranking officer to continue as Operations Section Chief.
- b. Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief, returning the Company Officer to the Company. The lower ranking Chief Officer or Company Officer can also be assigned as a Division or Group Commander.

Rev. 10/14

- c. Incident Commander/Operations Section Chief, assigning the previous Commander to the Planning Section, thereby utilizing their knowledge of what has already happened.
 - d. Incident Commander, assigning another member as Operations Section Chief, and the previous commander to another Section, Logistics or Finance.
3. The Fire Chief or higher ranking Chief Officer cannot permit a lower ranking Officer to retain Command while they are on the scene. The highest ranking on scene Officer is responsible for the outcome, whether or not Command was assumed. The separation of the Incident Commander and Operations Section allows this Chief Officer to retain ultimate authority, while lower ranking officers coordinate and control operating forces.

K. COMMAND STAFF

1. Three Command Staff positions are identified for use in the Incident Command System organization, as illustrated below:



Command Staff positions are established to assume responsibility for key activities that are not a part of the line organization. Command Staff positions can be organized where all Command Staff positions report directly to the Incident Commander; or they can function under a Command Staff Officer, where all Command Staff positions report to the Command Staff Officer who, in turn, reports to the Incident Commander. This consolidation under a Command Staff Officer is done, only under the most challenging situations, to reduce the number of people reporting to the Incident Commander.

2. INFORMATION OFFICER

Rev. 10/14

The Information Officer's function is to develop accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, resources committed, and other matters of general interest. The Information Officer will normally be the point of contact for the media, and other agencies which desire information directly from the incident. The Information Officer will usually be located at a safe stationary position, in or near the command post. Most communication with "Command" will be face to face.

3. SAFETY OFFICER

The Safety Officer's function at the incident is to assess hazardous and unsafe situations and advise the Incident Commander of such conditions. This Officer develops measures to assure the safest possible conditions for operating units. The Safety Officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts. The Safety Officer should establish control zones, collapse zones and no-entry zones. The Safety Officer should monitor all radio transmissions and stay alert to transmission barriers that could result in missed, unclear, or incomplete communication. The Safety Officer function is mobile, acting as a consultant to Division, Group, or Branch commanders, but reporting to the Incident Commander. The Safety Officer should make sure that incident scene rehab is established. He should monitor for the need for Critical Incident Stress intervention management and notify the Incident Commander if needed. The Safety Officer shall ensure that the RAT Team is available and ready for deployment. The Safety Officer is responsible for the post extinguishment air monitoring and structural integrity.

4. LIAISON OFFICER

The Liaison Officer's function is to be a point of contact for representatives from assisting agencies. Representatives from assisting agencies are coordinated through the Liaison Officer. Agency representatives assigned to an incident should have authority to speak on all matters for their agency.

L. UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE

1. The need for a Unified Command is brought about because:
 - a. Incidents have no regard for jurisdictional boundaries. Wildland fires, floods, tornados, earthquakes, etc., usually involve several jurisdictions and agencies.
 - b. Individual agency responsibility and authority is normally legally confined to a single jurisdiction.

Rev. 10/14

2. The concept of Unified Command simply means that all agencies who have a jurisdictional responsibility at a multi-jurisdictional incident, contribute to the process of:
 - a. Determining overall incident objectives.
 - b. Selection of Strategies.
 - c. Ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities will be accomplished.
 - d. Ensuring that integrated tactical operations are conducted.
 - e. Making maximum use of all assigned resources.
3. The proper selection of participants to work within a Unified Command structure will depend upon:
 - a. The location of the incident, the political jurisdictions involved.
 - b. The kind of incident, which functional agencies of the jurisdictions are required.
4. A Unified Command structure could consist of a key responsible official from each jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdictional situation or it could consist of several functional departments within a single political jurisdiction.
5. Common objectives and strategies on major multi-jurisdictional incidents should be written. These objectives and strategies then guide development of the action plan.

UNDER A UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN WILL BE DONE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL ---- THE OPERATIONS SECTION COMMANDER.

The Operations Chief will normally be from the agency that has the greatest jurisdictional involvement. Designation of the Operations Chief must be agreed upon by all agencies having jurisdictional and functional responsibilities at the incident.

Rev. 10/14

NOTE:

This idea of Unified Command seems to violate the principle of one highly visible commander. On closer examination it becomes obvious that there is still one commander (Operations Chief) handling all tactical operations. The Unified Command Structure does appreciate the need for a central command, but recognizes the problems associated with multi-agency and/or multi-jurisdictional incidents.

M. OPERATIONS SECTION COMMANDER

1. When the Incident Commander assigns the Operations Section to another member, that member is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities. Tactical operations at the incident include all activities which are directed toward reduction of the immediate hazard, establishing situation control, and restoration of normal operations.
2. If the Incident Commander does not assign another individual to the position of Operations Section Commander, the Incident Commander is responsible for management of incident tactical activities.
3. When the operations section is assigned as a separate section, the radio designation for the Operations Section Commander shall be "Operations".

N. OPERATIONS SECTION - SUBORDINATE UNITS1. COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resources may be managed in three different ways, depending on the needs of the incident. This management of resources has a pronounced effect on the number of units that can be properly managed.

Single Resources

Single resources are individual units, Engine Company, Ladder Company, Medic Unit, Heavy Rescue Squad, Bulldozer, Helicopter, etc. A Single Resource is the equipment, plus the required individuals to properly utilize the equipment.

Rev. 10/14

Task Force

A Task Force is any combination of resources which can be temporarily assembled for a specific mission. All resource elements within a Task Force must have common communications and a member in charge. Task Forces should be established to meet specific tactical needs, but demobilized as single resources.

The most common Task Force used by the Cincinnati Fire Division consist of 2 Engine Companies, and a Ladder Company.

Strike Teams

Strike Teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type, which have an established minimum number of personnel. Strike Teams must always have a member in charge, and will have common communications among resource elements.

The Cincinnati Fire Department recognizes the following Strike Teams:

Engine Co. Strike Team	3 Engine Companies
EMS Strike Team	3 Medic Units

The use of Strike Teams and Task Forces is encouraged, wherever possible, to maximize the use of resources, reduce the management control of a large number of single resources, and reduce the communications load. Manning is assumed to be four (4) or more fire fighters per Company.

2. DIVISIONS AND GROUPS

Divisions and Groups are established during an incident when the number of resources (Single, Task Forces, and Strike Teams) exceeds the span-of-control of the Operations Section Commander.

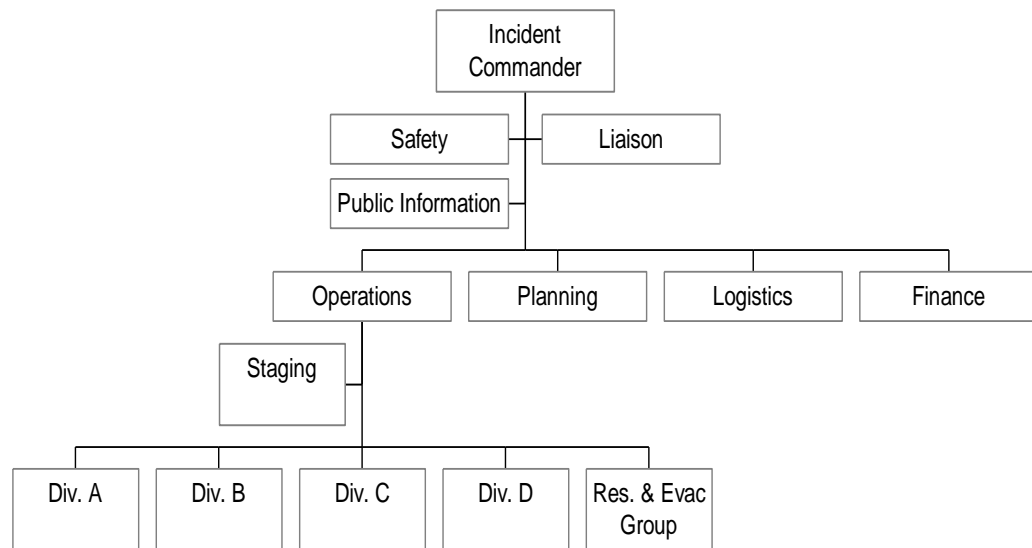
Divisions are normally established to divide an incident into geographical areas of operation.

Groups are normally established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation.

Rev. 10/14

The use of the two terms is not essential, but can be a useful management tool when dividing the incident.

Incident Command System



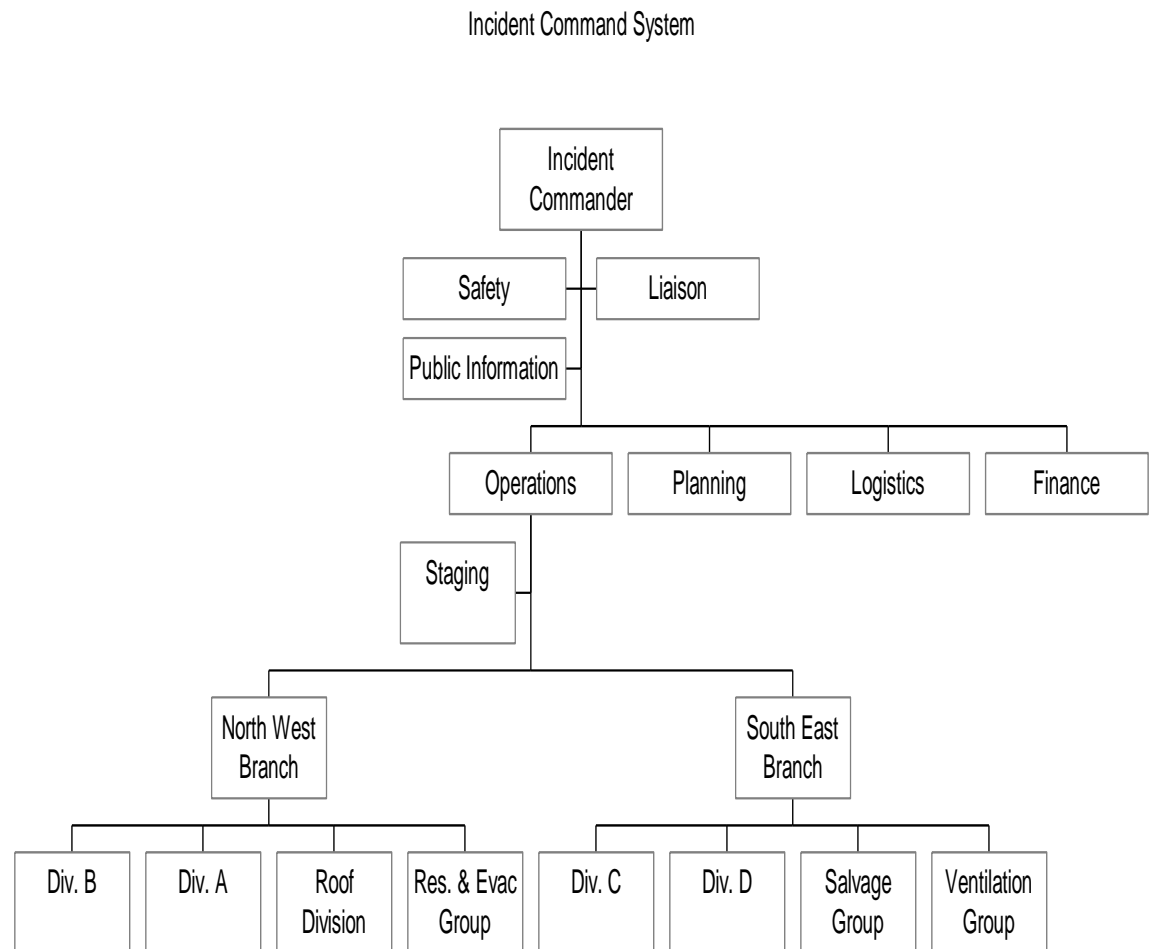
Rev. 10/14

3. BRANCHES

Branches may be established during an incident for the following reasons:

- When the number of Divisions/Groups exceed the recommended span-of-control for the Operations Chief.
- Reorganization into branches reduces the span-of-control to within acceptable limits in a large scale operation.

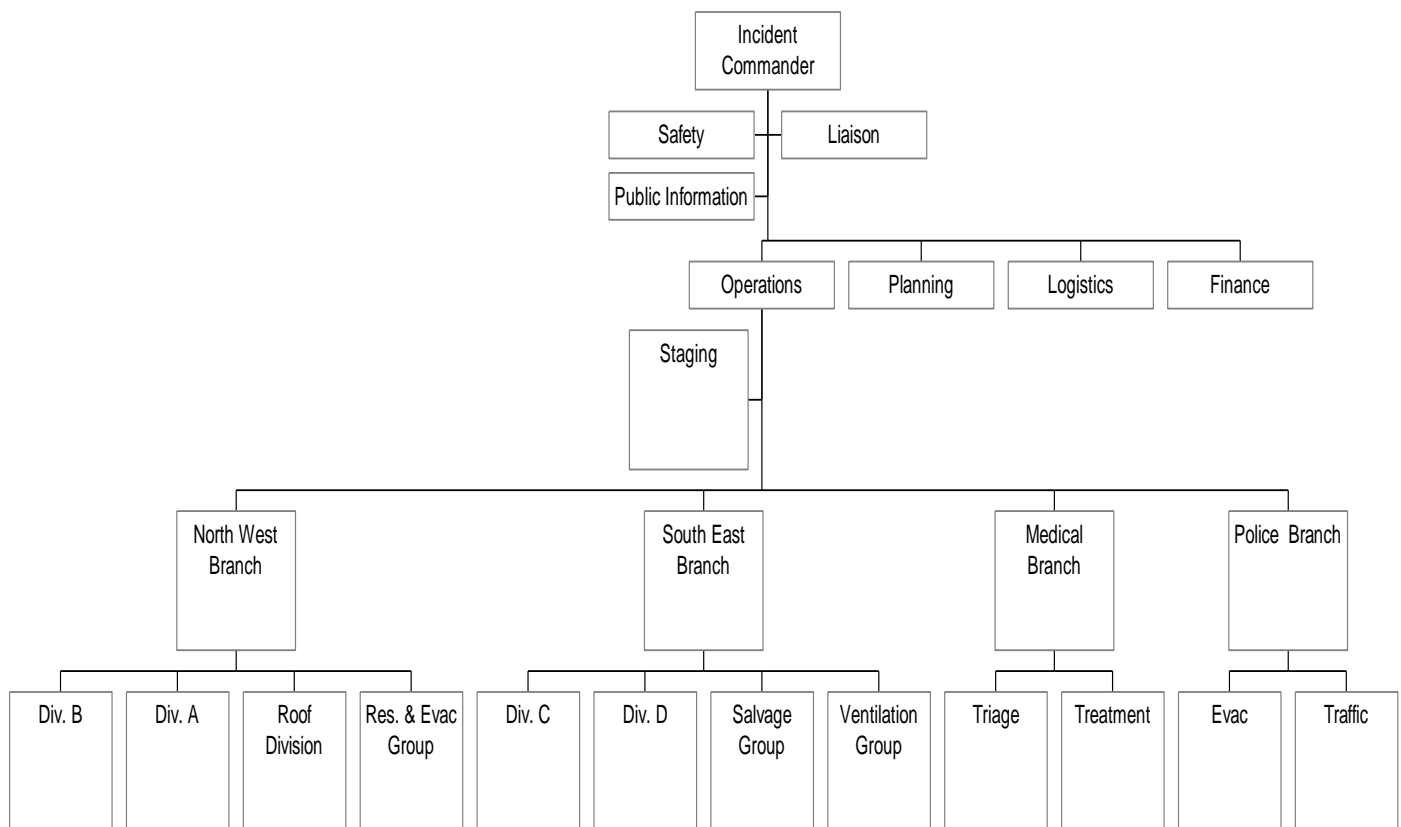
When this happens, the Operations Chief should designate a Branch Structure, and allocate divisions/groups to the Branches, as shown below:



Rev. 10/14

- The second reason for forming branches is when the nature of the incident calls for a functional Branch Structure. For example, a Hazardous Materials evacuation may require substantial Police assistance. In this case, a Functional Branch may be established for the Police, but under the direction of the Operations Section Commander. A Hazardous Materials incident with multiple injuries may involve a large scale medical effort making the establishment of a Medical Branch a valuable option.

Incident Command System



Rev. 10/14

4. STAGING

Staging is usually subordinate to the Operations Section, but could be assigned to the Logistics Section. More information regarding staging is contained in Section 202.03.

O. PLANNING SECTION CHIEF

1. When the Incident Commander assigns the Planning Section to another member, that member is responsible for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of tactical information about the incident. This section maintains information on the current status, and attempts to forecast what is about to happen in the situation. The status of resources assigned to the incident is tracked through the Planning Section. This Section is also responsible for the preparation and documentation of action plans. The Planning Section has four primary units, and may have a number of technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation, and forecasting requirements for additional resources.
2. If the Incident Commander does not assign another individual to the position of Planning Section Chief, the Incident Commander is responsible for planning activities.
3. When the Planning Section is assigned as a separate section, the radio designation for the Planning Section Chief is "Planning". During most incidents, the Planning Section Chief will be located in the Command Post, and will seldom communicate via the radio.

P. PLANNING SECTION - SUBORDINATE UNITS

1. RESOURCES UNIT

The Resources Unit (Restat) has the responsibility of maintaining the current status of all resources. A status keeping system will be developed showing the current location of all assigned resources, as well as their current status.

2. SITUATION UNIT

The Situation Unit (Sitstat) is responsible for collecting, processing, and organizing situation information; preparing situation summaries, and developing projections, and forecasts of future events, related to the incident. The Situation Unit will prepare maps and intelligence information for use in the Action Plan. This Unit may also require expertise in the form of technical specialist.

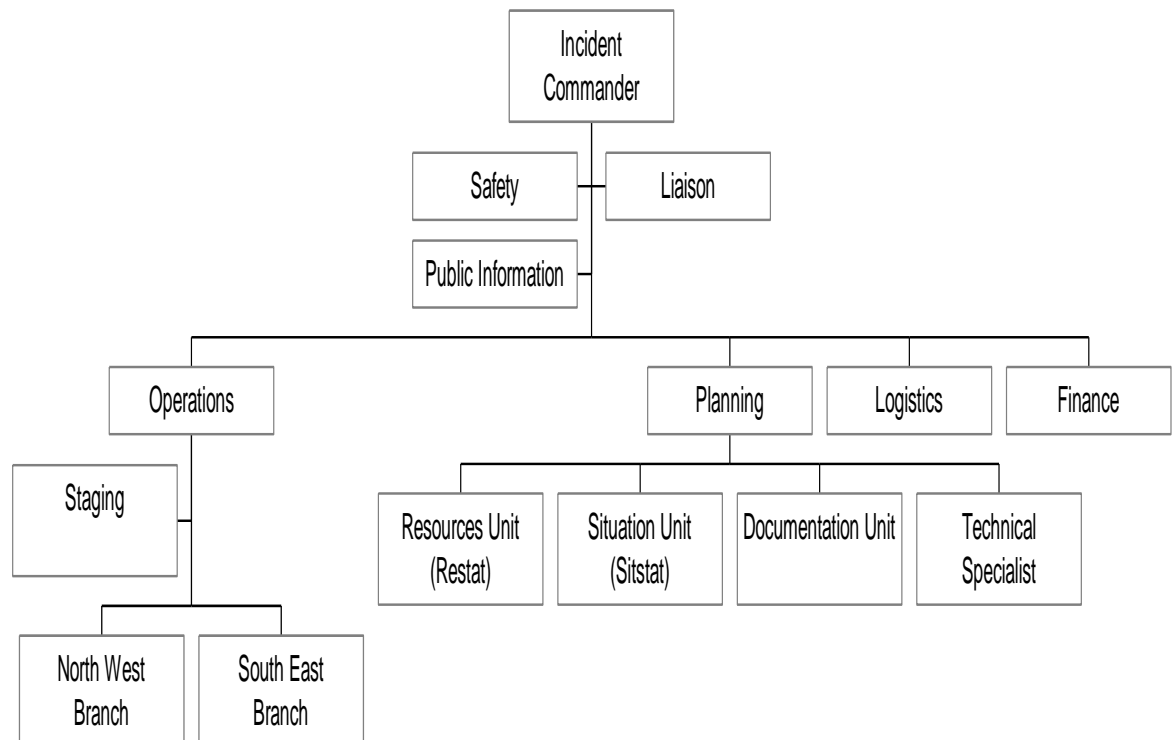
3. DOCUMENTATION UNIT

The Documentation Unit is responsible for maintaining accurate and complete incident files for legal, analytical, and historical purposes. The Documentation Unit is maintained within the Planning Section, primarily because the unit has a major responsibility toward the preparation of the Incident Action Plan, as well as maintaining files on many records, which are developed as part of the overall Command Post and planning function.

4. DEMOBILIZATION UNIT

The Demobilization Unit develops a plan for releasing resources from the scene. In large scale incidents this can be a critical function, returning scarce resources to under protected areas. Even at the scene of multiple alarm fires, the releasing of units in reverse order of response is not always the best practice. It may be possible to bring fresh crews to the scene, returning exhausted crews on other apparatus parked in staging.

Incident Command System



Q. LOGISTICS SECTION CHIEF

Rev. 10/14

1. When the Incident Commander assigns the Logistics Section to another member, that member is responsible for the direct management of all incident support needs. The Logistics Section orders resources from off-site locations. The Logistics Section is more complicated during long term incidents where basic human needs must also be met.
2. If the Incident Commander does not assign another individual to the position of Logistics Section Chief, the Incident Commander is responsible for the procurement of needed off site materials.
3. When the Logistics Section is assigned as a separate section, the radio designation for the Logistics Section Chief is "Logistics". During most incidents, the Logistics Section Chief will be located in the command post, and will seldom communicate via the radio.

R. LOGISTICS SECTION - SUBORDINATE UNITS1. SUPPLY UNIT

The Supply Unit is responsible for ordering, receiving, and processing of all resources requested by the Logistics Section Chief.

2. COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The Communications Unit in the Incident Command System has a major responsibility for effective communications planning, due to the potential multi-agency use of the Incident Command System. This is especially important in determining required radio nets, establishing interagency frequencies, and ensuring that maximum use is made of all assigned communications capabilities.

At large scale incidents requiring the institution of a Communications Unit, this unit will establish a communications plan; manage communications equipment, in addition to installing, procuring and maintaining the actual equipment. At incidents where the formal Communications Unit is not established, pre-planned resources will be used. All communications at the incident should be in PLAIN ENGLISH. No codes should be used, and all communications should be confined to essential messages.

Rev. 10/14

Communications at the incident scene can include:

Fire Ground Talk Groups; within each talk group there are 16 channels that can be utilized.

Command Channel

- This channel should link: Incident Command, key staff members, Section Chiefs, Branches, Divisions and Groups.

Tactical Channels

- There may be several tactical channels. They may be established around agencies, departments, geographical areas, or even specific functions.

Support Channels

- Used to handle resource status changes and other non-tactical or Command functions. (i.e.- Staging Channel)

Radios are the most common communications tool for emergency operations, but other communications methods offer advantages, and should be considered during long term or communications intensive situations. In addition to radios, the following means of communication can be used at the scene:

- face to face
- messengers
- telephones
- public address systems
- built in emergency communication systems

The best form of communications is face-to-face conversation, but running an entire incident scene on face-to-face communications would be virtually impossible.

3. OTHER LOGISTICS UNITS

Some other units that may be established at the incident are:

- Medical (for treatment of incident personnel)
- Rehabilitation (Rehab)
- Food
- Facilities (sanitation, sleeping, etc.)
- Maintenance (maintenance and refueling of equipment)

Rev. 10/14

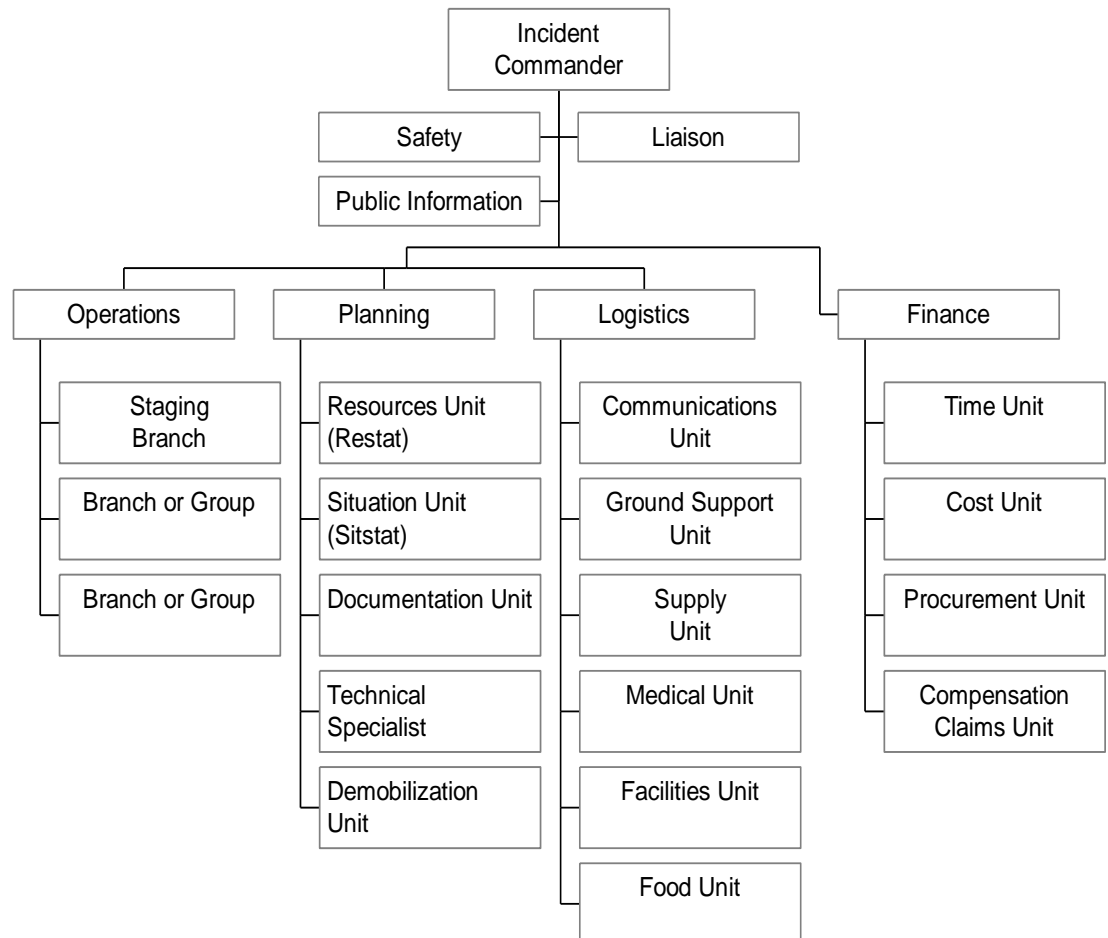
S. FINANCE SECTION

1. When the Incident Commander assigns the Finance Section to another member, that member is responsible for providing financial services (renting or leasing equipment, etc.).
2. If the Incident Commander does not assign another individual to the position of Finance Section Chief, the Incident Commander is responsible for management of incident financial activities.
3. The Finance Section will not be allocated radios, and therefore, does not have a radio designation.
4. This Section is seldom implemented. Many times, financial needs are handled sufficiently by the Documentation Unit of the Planning Section.
5. Possible Units under the Finance Section include:
 - Time Unit
 - Procurement Unit
 - Compensation/Claims Unit
 - Cost Unit

Rev. 10/14

6. Below is an organizational chart showing the Logistics and Finance Section.

Incident Command System



T. TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

Rev. 10/14

1. Technical Specialist may be called upon, depending on the needs of the incident. Their place on the organizational chart is usually within the Planning Section, but they may function as part of another Planning Section Unit (e.g. a meteorologist could be made part of the Situation Unit) or, Technical Specialist can become a Unit of their own, reporting directly to the Planning Section Chief.

On occasion, a Technical Specialist could be assigned to another Section (e.g. a chemist assigned to the Operations Section to give advice as to chemical reaction or neutralization). If the need for a Technical Specialist's expertise is of short duration, that person should be assigned to the Situation Unit. If the expertise requires several persons and/or will be required for an extended period, it may be advisable to establish a separate unit under the Planning Section.

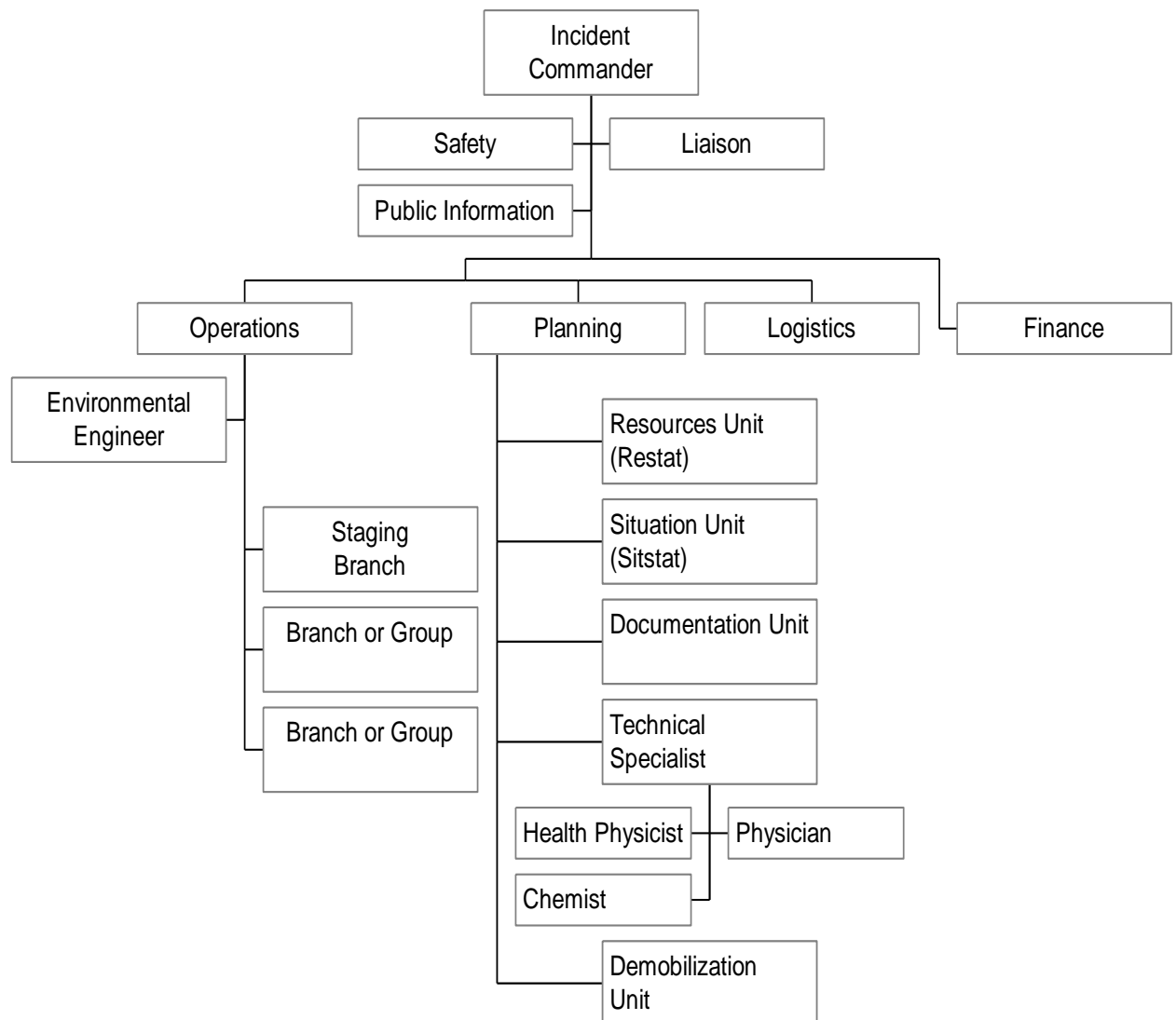
2. The incident will dictate the need for Technical Specialists. Below is a list of some of the specialists that may be needed at an incident:

- Chemist
- Meteorologist
- Physician
- Health Physicist
- Toxic Substance Specialist
- Environmental Engineer
- Structural Engineer

Rev. 10/14

3. Below is an Incident organization chart showing the placement of various technical specialists, within different sections.

Incident Command System



Rev. 10/14

U. EXTENDING THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM ORGANIZATION

1. An Incident can be divided into separate incidents if the organization can not fulfill incident span-of-control needs. This dividing usually involves a geographical boundary, whether natural or political. The use of Branches, Division, and Task Forces/Strike Teams should meet regional needs.

However, wildland fires, hazardous materials incidents, and natural disasters can extend into many communities, resulting in the utilization of resources from several communities, state, and federal agencies. In such cases, an Area Command Authority (ACA) can be established dividing the incident into multiple incidents. The Unified Command Structure will most likely be in effect in such situations. If a Unified Command determines that the incident should be divided into separate incidents, the following should be accomplished:

- a. An Area Command Authority (ACA) should be established. The existing Unified Command members may continue as jurisdictional liaison representatives to the Area Command Authority (ACA).
- b. A decision would be reached by the unified command on how best to divide the incident. This could be done in several ways, depending on terrain, political boundaries, current Branch Structure, etc.
- c. Incident Commanders, Command and General Staff would be selected for each incident.
- d. Supporting organizations, facilities, locations, etc., would be designated.
- e. An appropriate time would be designated for establishing the separate incidents with individual names.
- f. The Area Command Authority would be responsible to ensure that jurisdictional objectives are being met through the respective incident action plans, and that necessary procedures are established and functioning to ensure inter-incident coordination on all matters.

Rev. 10/14

2. Below is an organization chart showing an Area Command Authority.

Area Command Authority

