Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Guidelines

Part I. System Description
Section B
Field Response Level

The contents of this guideline have not been changed from the original document, however, the guideline has been reformatted to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 508 standards.

1. ICS Description

Background:

At the field (incident) level, the use of SEMS is intended to standardize the response to emergencies involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple agencies. SEMS requires emergency response agencies to use the Incident Command System (ICS) as the basic emergency management system.

ICS was originally developed by the fire services to provide a standard system for managing emergencies. Considerable effort has been done to make ICS adaptable to the needs of other disciplines. ICS provides a common organizational framework through which agencies can work collectively at the scene of an emergency. ICS also has several other features which contribute to its being an effective emergency management system for either single or multiple agency use.

Features of ICS, which apply to all SEMS levels, are described in Part I.A General System Description and are not repeated here. Three features which have special importance to the field level operations described in this section are: the modular organization of ICS, Unified Command and Incident Action Plans.

The SEMS Field Response level Approved Course of Instruction provides separate training modules, which provide in-depth coverage of the subjects discussed in this section. Over seventy hours of training and a wide variety of training materials are available. Most of the modules used in the SEMS Field Course are taken from a generic national ICS training curriculum. Organizational diagrams used as examples in this guidance are drawn from the generic national ICS training program.

Overview of the Structure of ICS:

An organizational structure using a hierarchy of sections, branches, divisions/groups and units was originally developed within the Incident Command System to provide and organization which did not directly duplicate an agency's current response organization, and one which any agency could readily adapt to in a multi-agency or multijurisdictional response.

The concept of using this structure within the SEMS Field Response organization is based on the following:

- Develop the form of the organization to match the function(s) to be performed.

- Fill only those organizational elements that are required.

- Stay within recommended span-of-control guidelines.

- Perform the function of any non-activated organizational element at the next highest level.

- Deactivate elements no longer required by the incident.

The designated organizational elements established for use in the ICS are listed below. How these are applied in ICS will vary slightly from section to section within the organization.

- Command

- Section

- Branches

- Divisions or Groups

- Units

- Teams, Task Forces, single resources or other elements as defined by agency policy

Incident Facilities:

Several primary facilities have been designated and described for widespread use in the ICS. The facilities that are discussed in the Field Response level of instruction are:

- <u>Incident Command Post (ICP)</u> -- Location where the primary command activities are conducted.

- <u>Staging Area</u> -- Locations attached to the incident where resources may be temporarily located while awaiting assignments.

- <u>Base</u> -- The location where primary logistics functions for an incident are coordinated and administered.

- <u>Camp</u> -- A location within the general incident area, which is equipped and staffed to provide sleeping, food, water and sanitary services to incident personnel.

- <u>Helibase</u> -- The main location for parking, fueling, maintenance and loading of helicopters operating in support of an incident.

- <u>Helispot</u> -- Any designated location at an incident where a helicopter can safely land and take off.

While these facilities will meet the requirements of most incidents, discipline-specific applications may require the use of additional facility locations. For example, a temporary morgue facility may be set up for certain incidents.

2. Functions of ICS

There are five primary functions within the ICS management structure. Each of these is important, and will have a role in any incident.
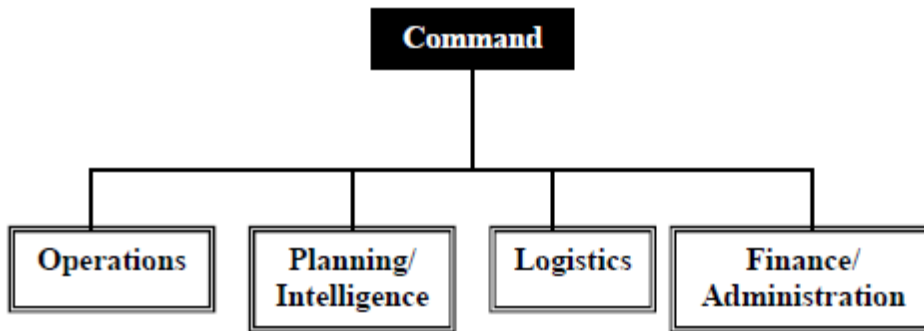
1. Command

2. Operations

3. Planning/Intelligence

4. Logistics

5. Finance/Administration

Command:

Command is the action taken to direct, order or control resources by virtue of some explicit legal, agency, or delegated authority. The on-scene command of an incident or an event is carried out by the Incident Commander who is commonly referred to as the IC.

The authority and rank of the IC representing a jurisdiction will vary depending upon the size and/or nature of the emergency. For example, in small incidents the IC may be a lower ranking person or a person with qualifications adequate only to meet the existing situation. If the situation requires, the initial IC will transfer command to a higher ranking or more qualified person as they arrive at the scene. Similarly, as incidents transition into a reduced level of activity, transfer or command may be made to lower ranking or less qualified personnel.

Exhibit B-1

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                        │   Command   │
                        └──────┬──────┘
          ┌────────────┬───────┴──────┬──────────────┐
   ┌──────┴──────┐ ┌───┴────────┐ ┌───┴─────┐ ┌───────┴────────┐
   │ Operations  │ │ Planning/  │ │Logistics│ │   Finance/     │
   │             │ │Intelligence│ │         │ │ Administration │
   └─────────────┘ └────────────┘ └─────────┘ └────────────────┘
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The IC has the overall responsibility for the effective management of the incident, and must ensure that an adequate organization is in place to effectively moderate the situation. The IC may have a deputy IC, who should have the same qualifications as the IC. Optional deputy positions for Command, Section and Branch levels provide backup support and are also extensively used on an inter-agency basis to improve coordination between multiple agencies or disciplines.

The IC may assign the authority to conduct the primary functions of operations, planning/intelligence, logistics and finance/administration to others. When these functions are filled, the individuals become members of the incident General Staff. Any of these primary functions not assigned to others remain the responsibility of the IC.

In addition to the primary functions, the IC also has responsibility for staff level activities of liaison, information and safety. The authority for managing and/or conducting these activities may also have to be delegated to others.

ICS allows for a wide range of functions to be performed, and provides an organizational structure to accommodate those functions. A basis premise of ICS is that the next higher level in the organization will perform all lower level functions, which have not been specifically assigned to an individual.

Operations:

Operations is responsible for the coordinated tactical response directly applicable to, or in support of the mission(s) in accordance with the Incident Action Plan. In ICS, Operations is a Section level function within the organization. On smaller incidents, the IC usually performs the functions of operations.

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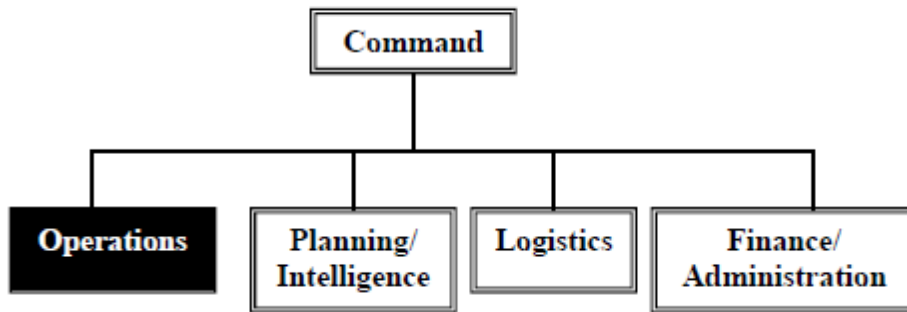
The Operations Section can develop from either the top down, or from the bottom up. In either case, the Operations Section can contain a hierarchy of:

- Branches (functional or geographical)

- Divisions (geographical) or;

- Groups (functional)

- Resources organized as single resources, or resource combinations e.g., task forces, teams, squads, platoons.

In some discipline specific applications of ICS, the Operations Section can also employ units. For example, an ICS multi-causality branch may have a Medical group which contains a Triage Unit and a Treatment Unit.
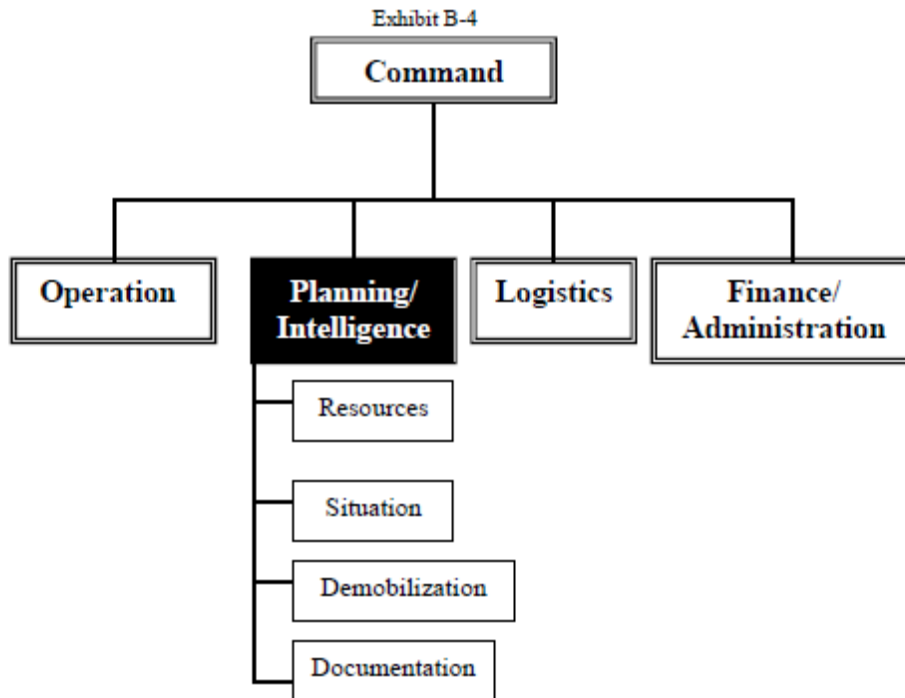
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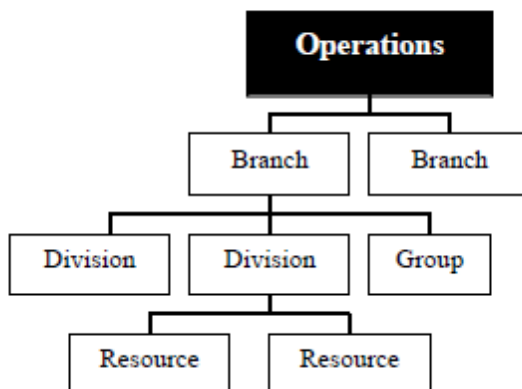
Planning/Intelligence:

In ICS, the function of Planning can also be called Planning/Intelligence. The planning function is responsible for the collection, evaluation, and documentation of information

about the development of the incident and the status of resources. When activated for an incident or event, Planning or Planning/Intelligence is always found at the Section level. If the planning function is not activated, all planning functions will be the responsibility of the IC.

Exhibit B-4

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                          Command
        ┌───────────┬───────────┴──────────┬─────────────┐
   Operation    Planning/      Logistics         Finance/
                Intelligence                  Administration
                    │
                    ├── Resources
                    │
                    ├── Situation
                    │
                    ├── Demobilization
                    │
                    └── Documentation
```

At the field level, the planning units described in the generic national ICS are:

- Resources

- Situation

- Demobilization

- Documentation

Other special purpose units could also be assigned to the Planning Section depending upon need. For example, on some large and/or long-term incidents, the Advance Planning Unit may be desired. The primary criteria for adding Planning Section Units to an incident are:

- They are essential to the needs of the incident.

- The function cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

- Effective span-of-control must be maintained.

Technical Specialists may also be assigned to the Planning/Intelligence Section on an incident. Technical Specialists can represent just about any specialized service or function, which is not normally within the expertise of the assigned incident staff. Technical Specialists may be reassigned as necessary to other parts of the organization.

Logistics:

The Logistics Section is responsible to provide facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials in support of the incident. The requirement to provide on-site logistical support will vary based on the size and scope of the incident, the functions involved, and the discipline that has incident jurisdiction.

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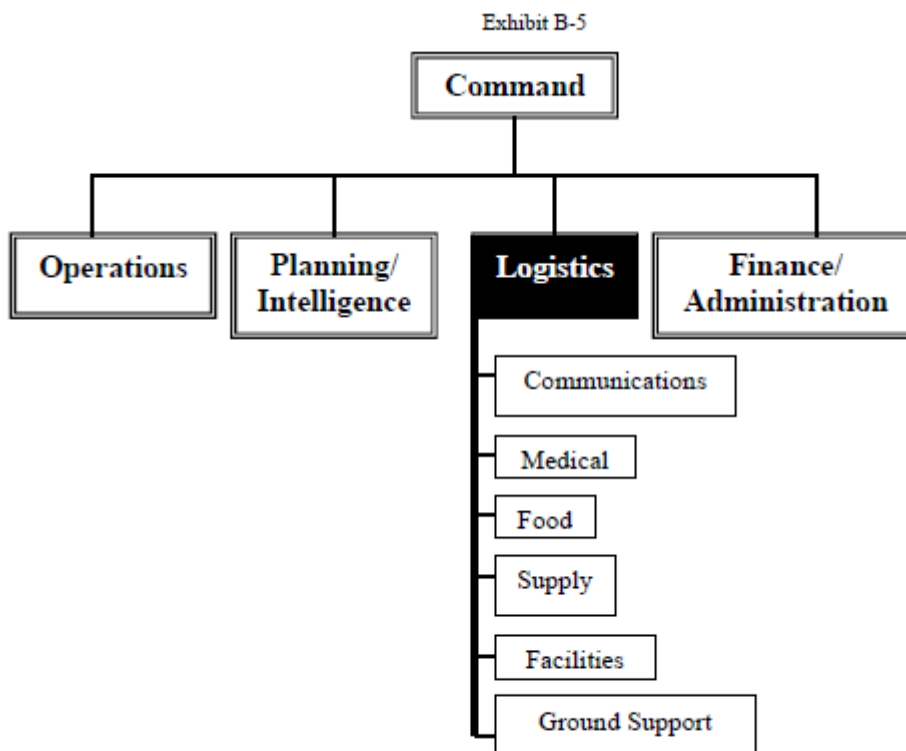
The ICS National Training Curriculum Logistics Units

The national training curriculum for the generic version of ICS describes six commonly used logistics units that may be activated as needed:

1. Communications

2. Medical

3. Food

4. Supply

5. Facilities

6. Ground Support

Discipline Specific Logistics Needs

Discipline specific applications of ICS may modify the unit structure of the Logistics Section to meet functional needs. For example, large-scale law enforcement ICS applications may require a Personnel Unit. A natural disaster related incident might require a Volunteer Processing or Coordination Unit.

Some jurisdictions may, in the interests of economy and coordination, elect to support one or more incidents through a centralized control of certain logistical functions such as food services. The concept to keep in mind is that the form or structure of the Logistics Section should meet the functional needs of the incident.

Logistical Services and Support to Responders and Victims

Logistics support services and support to the incident organization, and also meet the immediate on-scene needs of persons, which may be directly affected by the incident.

A primary purpose of Logistics is to provide services and support to incident responders. For example, the Medical Unit in the Logistics Section provides medical services to personnel assigned to the incident organization, and not to victims of the emergency or disaster.

Meeting the direct medical needs of those victims within the jurisdiction of the incident would be a responsibility of the ICS Operations Section, through for example, a Medical Branch or a Medical Group. Logistical support needs of the Medical element in Operations would be provided by ordering needed support through the Logistics Section.

The Logistics Chief has the responsibility for processing all of the resource orders used in support of the incident. This can also include resources needed to provide victim relief, e.g., food, water, shelters and medical aid for victims. On larger incidents these functions are provided through the Supply Unit in Logistics.

Logistics Section Branches

When span-of-control on very large incidents become difficult due to the duties and interactions involved, the Logistics Section can be divided into a Service Branch and Support Branch. This is normally only done to ease span-of-control considerations. If the Logistics Section is not activated, all logistics functions are the responsibility of the IC.

Finance/Administration:

Finance/Administration is responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident, and for any administrative aspects not handled by the other functions.

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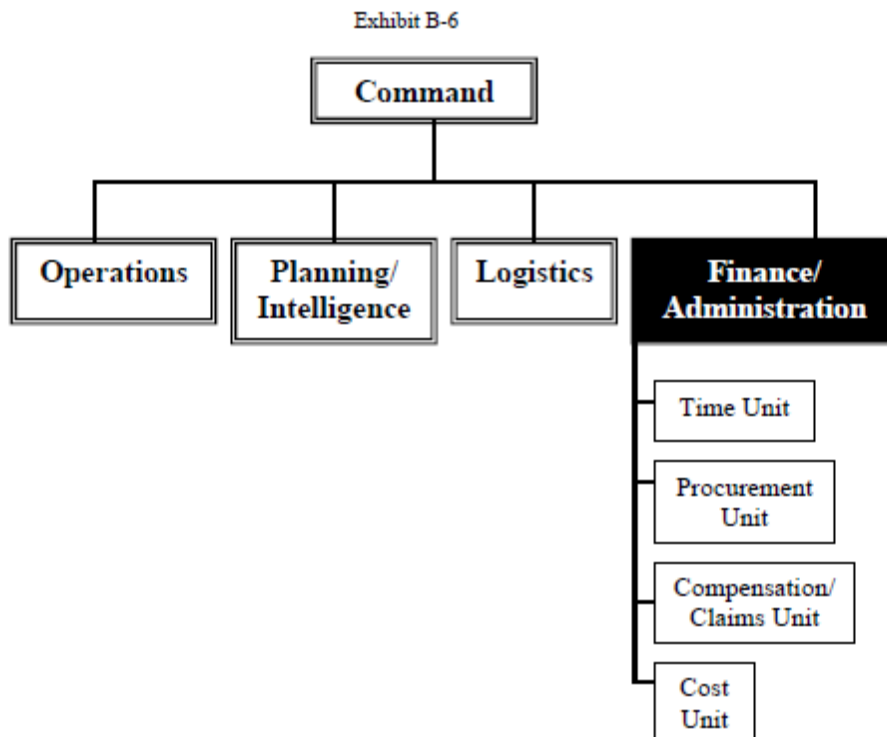
There are four commonly used units within the Finance/Administration Section:

1. Time Unit

2. Procurement Unit

3. Compensation/Claims Unit

4. Cost Unit

The activation and use of the Finance/Administration function will depend on agency policy, type and size of incident. On small incidents, the IC may handle the functions. In

some cases, where it is important to have a closely monitored assessment of costs, the IC may only activate the Cost Unit. In general, when there is a need it is best to activate an appropriate unit within the organization. Some jurisdictions may elect to centrally manage some or all-incident finance functions. For example, providing a cost analyst to each incident over a certain size. The cost analyst could function as a unit in the Finance/Administration Section (if activated) or as a Technical Specialist in the Planning/Intelligence Section.

3. Principles of ICS

The SEMS Regulation states that emergency response agencies operating at the field response level of an incident shall utilize the Incident Command System incorporating the functions, principles and components of ICS. The principles of ICS are described below:

   a. ICS can be applied to the following kinds of incidents:

        i.   Single jurisdictional responsibility with single agency involvement.

        ii. Single jurisdictional responsibility with multiple agency involvement.

        iii. Multiple jurisdictional responsibility with multiple agency involvement.

        iv. ICS can also be used for managing planned events. meant that the system could be used in a

"Agency" was used to mean the organization within a jurisdiction that had responsibility to address the emergency situation, e.g., City X Police Department or County Y Fire Department, or state agency (_____).

This principle of ICS variety of jurisdictional and agency combinations. For example:

   1. Single jurisdiction - single agency

   2. City X - City X Police Department

   3. Single jurisdiction - multiple agencies

      County Y - County Y Fire Dept.

      County Y Public Works Dept.

      County Y Sheriff

County Y Emergency Medical Services

City X Fire Dept.

Special District

Health Care Providing Agency

4. <u>Multiple Jurisdictions - Multiple Agency</u>

Jurisdictions: County W, County Y, City X and Special District Agencies:

County W Sheriff, Fire, Public Works, County Y Sheriff, Fire Coroner, Public Works

City X Fire, Police, Public Works, etc.

Special District

b. <u>The organizational structure of ICS adapts to any emergency or incident to which emergency response agencies would be expected to respond, and</u>

c. <u>The system shall be applicable and acceptable to all user agencies.</u>

ICS is a management system. The kind and size of a situation to which it is being applied will determine which management elements should be activated and at what level of staffing. For example, planning for the use of ICS to manage a planned event such as a parade requires a different set of organizational elements than what is required to manage a hazardous materials incident.

d. <u>The system is readily adaptable to new technology.</u>

When ICS was first developed, resources status keeping, the development of Incident Action Plans, the resources ordering process, and timekeeping were all done manually. Through the use of automation, these processes are gradually becoming automated. Similarly, the use of more sophisticated communications enhances the effectiveness of the ICS design. New technologies serve to make ICS perform more effectively as a management system.

e. <u>The system expands in a rapid and logical manner from an initial response into a major incident and shrinks as organization needs of the situation decreases.</u>

The modularity and flexibility for application of ICS allows it to rapidly adopt and build the organizational form for the function it is to perform. Aside from the position of the person in overall command, the IC, there is no required structure or order in which positions are filled. The organization can be as small as one person, or large enough to handle thousands.

f. <u>The system has basic common elements in organization, terminology and procedures.</u>

ICS was designed for multi-agency involvement. ICS uses common, standardized terminology related to organizational elements and titles for personnel staffing the organization, for commonly used resources, and for facilities that may be used to support the organization. All of these contribute to the use of the system in a multi-agency environment. The organizational structure does not mirror that of any existing incident management system.

4. Activation Criteria for ICS

SEMS regulations state that where an agency has jurisdiction over a multiple-agency incident, it shall organize the field response using ICS.

An incident is defined as an occurrence or event, either human-caused or by natural phenomena, that requires action by emergency response personnel to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources.

In the most rigid sense, ICS within the SEMS Regulations need only be used on incidents, which require multiple agencies, or multiple jurisdictional involvements whether they are single discipline (e.g., all fire or all law enforcement) or multi-discipline. Activation of ICS therefore would be required whenever an incident involves more than one agency.

A number of incidents may start by being single discipline but may expand to multi-discipline when additional resources are needed. One of the dilemmas often facing field response agencies has been this "gray area" of when are we using ICS and when do we use whatever it is we currently use as an agency response system or procedure.

There is a natural reluctance for emergency response agencies to operate within or transition between two emergency response systems. How then should agencies transition between non-ICS forms of response and ICS? The best answer is that they should not--ICS is a system, which can be used on any incident.

A basic premise of ICS use is that:

Every incident, no matter how small can be managed according to the principals of ICS.

The first person on the scene who has single discipline management responsibility should always follow the basic principles of ICS which include:

- Awareness of his or her responsibility for the five primary functions;

- Establishing objectives for the incident;

- Having an incident action plan (written or verbal);

- Ensuring effective span of control;

- Using common terminology as appropriate to the situation;

- Delegating authority and activating organizational elements within the ICS structure only as necessary;

- Providing for personnel accountability and a safe environment; and

- Ensuring effective communications.

While the operating situation may change, which may require moving from a one person response to multiple persons response, and incorporate one or more additional agencies from the same or additional jurisdictions, there is no "system switching" which is required. Therefore, ICS can be used as a single emergency management system for all sizes of incidents.

ICS provides the built-in capability for modular development so that the form or shape of the organization always corresponds to the functional need.

Some of the important "transitional" steps that are necessary in applying ICS in a field incident environment include:

- Recognizing in advance of the requirement that organizational elements should be activated and taking the necessary steps to delegate the authority to others.

- Establishing incident facilities as needed and placing them in locations where they can do the most good.

- Commencing the use of common terminology as soon as possible for organizational elements, position titles, facilities and resources.

- Moving from a single "in your head" incident action plan to the use of a designated Incident Briefing Form to the use of a full Incident Action Plan.

5. Expansion of the ICS Management Structure-Modularity

There is complete flexibility in using the modularity feature of the ICS organizational structure at the Field Response level of SEMS. Planned events are usually organized in advance, and the operations organization can be developed using a top down approach. Incidents n the other hand usually start with a few resources and expand the organization, from the bottom up as necessary.

It is not necessary nor is it desired to implement levels of the organization unless they are required. The Incident Commander (IC) can be directly in charge of tactical personnel and equipment resources without prior activation of an Operations Section, Branches, Divisions, etc. The IC remains responsible for all functions, which have not been formally activated.
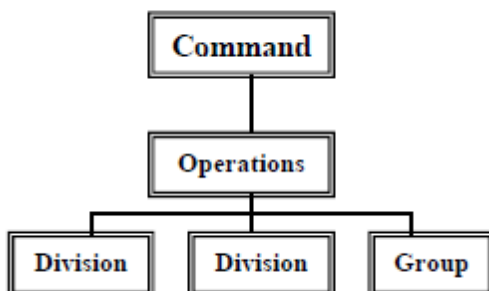
Exhibit B-7
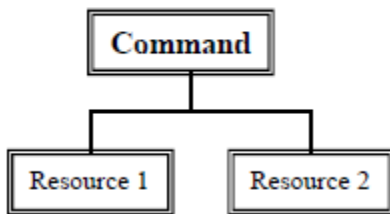
In small incidents, the only organizational levels that might be activated could be Command and Resources.
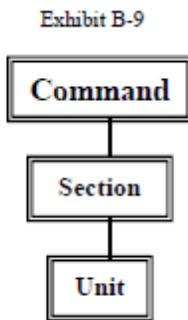
As incidents increase in size and/or complexity, the Operations Section builds from the bottom up, primarily based on span-of-control considerations.

Therefore, on a somewhat larger incident the organization could be:
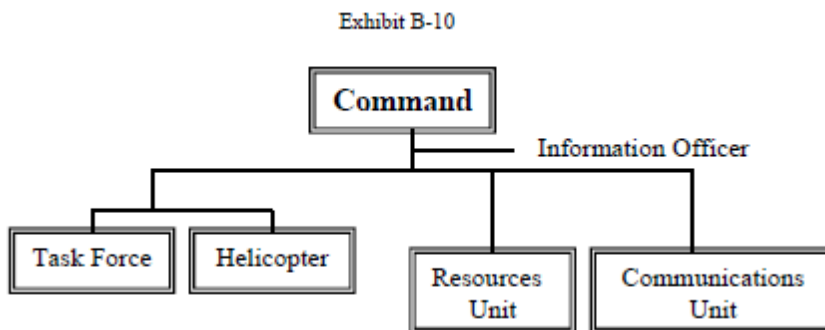
Exhibit B-8

In other Sections at the field response level, i.e., Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, and Finance/Administration the normal organizational structure would be:

Exhibit B-9

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┌─────────────┐
│   Command   │
└──────┬──────┘
       │
┌──────┴──────┐
│   Section   │
└──────┬──────┘
       │
┌──────┴──────┐
│    Unit     │
└─────────────┘
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The use of these will vary somewhat depending upon the ICS section.

On large incidents, Branches may be introduced below the Section level in the Operations and Logistics Sections to provide a span-of-control for a larger organization.

An important aspect of the modularity in the SEMS Field Response level, is that there is nothing to prohibit an Incident Commander form activating one or more units in various sections without first activating the Section organizational element:

Exhibit B-10

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                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │   Command   │
                    └──────┬──────┘
                           │──────── Information Officer
        ┌───────────┬──────┴──────┬─────────────┐
┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌────────────────┐
│ Task Force│ │ Helicopter│ │ Resources │ │ Communications │
│           │ │           │ │   Unit    │ │     Unit       │
└───────────┘ └───────────┘ └───────────┘ └────────────────┘
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The span-of-control for the Incident Commander in the above example is still one-to-five which is the recommended optimum.

These concepts of developing a Field Response level organization are covered in more detail in the Field level training course.

6. Resources and Staging Areas

Resources use on Incidents

A resource is defined in ICS as the personnel and equipment available or potentially available for assignments to incidents. There are many ways in which resources can be used on incidents. The primary method, which will be used in most incidents, is single resources. Examples of single resources will vary by different disciplines.

Single resources can also be brought together into other combinations for use on incidents. When all of the single resources retain the same basic capabilities, they are commonly called teams, squads, platoons etc., depending upon how he applying discipline chooses to configure and use them.

Another combination of single resources commonly used in ICS are Task Forces. Task Forces are any combination of resources, which are assembled for a particular tactical need. Thus a Task Force could contain a mixture of different kinds of resources.

Task Forces are defined according to the operational need. For example, a task force used by a jurisdiction in an urban civil disorder might include:

- One police patrol unit

- Three fire engines

- One basic life support unit

Another example task force might be:

- One bulldozer

- Three dump trucks

The primary criteria for the use of resource combinations in ICS, is that they fall within appropriate span-of-control guidelines, that they have a leader, and common communications.

In some applications, aircraft assigned to an incident are used as single resources. For example, a helicopter would be used as a single resource and would report to the Operations Section Chief if that position were activated or to the IC. As the use of aircraft increases, a separate Air Operations organization can be established at the Branch level.

Additional examples of how resources are used were described in 5. Expansion of the ICS Management Structure--Modularity.

Staging Areas

Staging Areas are considered a facility within the ICS. All Staging Areas are under the control of the Operations Section. They are used to temporarily locate resources that are available for assignment. Staging Areas can be established for certain types of resources, e.g., n ambulance Staging Area etc., or they can contain a mix of resources. Staging Areas can also be established to serve a functional branch at an incident.

Staging Areas are distinct from Mobilization Centers, which are off-incident locations. Emergency services personnel and equipment may be temporarily located at Mobilization Centers pending assignment to incidents, release, or reassignment.

7. Unified Command

Unified Command is a procedure used at incidents, which allow all agencies with geographical, legal, or functional responsibility to establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies, and a single Incident Action Plan.

A single Operations Section Chief will have the responsibility for implementing and managing the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan under Unified Command.

The use of Unified Command is a valuable tool to help ensure a coordinated multi-agency response. Unified Command procedures assure agencies that they do not lose their individual responsibility, authority, or accountability.

Unified Command is highly flexible. As the incident changes over time with different disciplines moving into primary roles, the Unified Command structure and personnel assignments can change to meet the need.

Primary Features of a Unified Command Incident Organization

A single integrated incident organization.

- Collocated (shared) facilities.

- A single planning process and Incident Action Plan.

- Shared planning, logistical and finance/administration operations.

- A coordinated process for resource ordering.

Advantages of using Unified Command

- One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.

- A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident goals.

- Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.

- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.

- No agency's authority or legal requirements will be compromised or neglected.

- Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions and constraints of all others.

- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.

- Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.

Unified Command is such an important concept, that an entire training module is devoted to it in the Field Response Level Course of Instruction.

8. Incident Action Plans

The Incident Action Plan developed at the field response level contain objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy and specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period. The plan may be verbal or written.

It is important that all incidents have some form of an incident action plan. The plan developed around some duration of time called an Operational Period, will state the objectives to be achieved and describe the strategy, tactics, resources and support required to achieve the objectives within the time frame. Generally, the length of the operational period is determined by the length of time needed to achieve the objectives.

Small incidents with only a few assigned resources may have a very simple plan, which may not be written. As incidents become larger, or require multi-agency involvement, the action plan should be written.

Incident Action Plans will vary in content and form depending upon the kind and size of an incident. ICS provides for the use of a systematic planning process, and provides forms and formats for developing the Incident Action Plan.

Small incidents do not require elaborate Incident Action Plans. Most simple, short-term and single agency incidents do not require written Incident Action Plans. The general guideline for use of a written versus a verbal action plan is when:

- Two or more jurisdictions are involved.

- The incident continues into another planning or operational period.

- A number of organizational elements have been activated.

- It is required by agency policy.

For incidents being run under Unified Command, the Incident Action Plan should be written. This provides all agencies with a clear set of objectives, actions and assignments. It also provides the organizational structure and the communications plan required to manage the incident effectively under Unified Command.

Components of an Incident Action Plan

Incident Action Plans have four main elements that should be included. There is no single format, which will fit all situations. Several ICS forms are appropriate for use in Incident Action Plans.

1. Statement of Objectives - Statement of what is expected to be achieved. Objectives must be measurable.

2. Organization - Describes what elements of the ICS organization will be in place for the next Operational period.

3. Tactics and Assignments - Describes tactics and control operations, and what resources will be assigned. Resource assignments are often done by the Division or Group.

4. Supporting Material - Examples could include a map of incident, a communications plan, medical plan, the traffic plan, weather data, special precautions, a safety message, and et.al.

9. Area Command

As a part of the general guidance related to the SEMS Field Response, it is appropriate to consider the use of Area Command.

In ICS, Area Command is an expansion of the incident command function primarily designed to manage a very large incident that has multiple incident management teams assigned. An Area Command may also be conducted as a Unified Area Command.

The purpose of an Area Command is to:

- Set overall priorities within the geographical area covered by the Area Command.

- Determine appropriate strategies for use in achieving the priorities.

- Allocate critical resources based on priorities.

- Ensure that incidents are properly managed.

- Ensure that objectives are met, and strategies followed.

Examples when Area Command might be used:

Natural Disaster in a Municipality

A large municipality has widespread damage as a result of an earthquake. The city has been divided into several geographical areas. Within each area, there are several separate incidents of various sizes, e.g., collapsed bridge, industrial fire, hotel evacuation etc. Each incident would have an ICS structure developed to the level necessary. Some of the incidents may be managed by the Fire Department, some by the Public Works Department and some by the Police Department. Some maybe functioning under a Unified Command structure.

A Unified Area Command made up of Police, Fire, and Public Works would be established for each of the geographical areas. An Area Command facility would be established and staffed to the level necessary.

Another example would be widespread riverine flooding in Northern California. The areas affected are protected by a vast array of levees that are maintained by state and local agencies. Flood fight activities consist of strengthening weak levees and repairing levee failures. The state Department of Water Resources and local levee maintaining agencies have a number of incidents in different geographical areas. As in the case above, some incidents may also be functioning under a Unified Command structure.

A Unified Area Command is made up of levee maintaining agencies, the Department of Water Resources, local Operational Areas (if activated) or counties and others with jurisdictional authorities for each of the geographical areas. An Area Command facility would be established and staffed to the level necessary.

Wildland Fire Example

A number of fires are burning within a several county area. Some of the fires are in close proximity to one another. An Area Command may be established over several of the fires in the same proximity which are vying for the same critical resources.

Area Command Reporting Relationships

When Area Command is established, Incident Commander(s) for the incidents under the authority of the Area Command will report to the Area Commander. The Area Commander is accountable to his/her agency or jurisdictional executive or administrator. This could be the jurisdictional EOC or another location. It is important to note that Area Command is a command function of Field response, and not an EOC function.

In the municipal example sited above, the Unified Area Command established within a single municipality may receive policy direction from the City EOC. In the flood example the policy direction would come from the DWR, Department Operations Center, and local and Operational Area (if activated) or county administrators.

In the case of the wildland fires, the Area Command would report to the jurisdictional administrator. If the fires under the control of the Area Command are all in the same jurisdiction, such as a county, then only one jurisdictional administrator is involved. If they cover multiple jurisdictions, then the Area Command should be run under Unified Area Command with each of the Unified Area Commanders reporting to his/her agency administrator.

Under major disaster conditions, Area Command has much to offer. Some of the advantages are listed below:

Advantages of Using Area Command

- Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each IC will be accomplished at the Area Command level. Using and Area Command allows the Incident Commanders and their incident management teams to focus their attention on their assigned incident.

- Area Command sets priorities between incidents and allocates critical resources according to priorities established by the Agency Executive.

- 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.

Requirements in Establishing Area Command

The following requirements apply to either an Area Command or a Unified Area Command.

1. Incident Commanders covered by the Area Command must be notified that an Area Command is being established.

2. The Area Command team should consist of the best-qualified personnel with respect to their functional areas. The functions of Area Command require personnel that have experience in, and are qualified to oversee, complex incident situations.

3. The Area Command organization operates under the same basic principles, as does the Incident Command System.

4. The Area Command organization should always be kept as small as possible.

   Area Command organizational positions could consist of:

Area Commander and, only as necessary:

- Area Command Logistics Chief

- Area Command Planning/Intelligence Chief

- Area Command Critical Resources Unit Leader

- Area Command Situation Unit Leader

- Area Command Information Officer

- Area Command Liaison Officer to help in maintaining off-incident inter-agency contacts.

It is important to remember, that Area Command does not in any way replace the incident level ICS organizations or functions. The above positions, if established, are strictly related to Area Command operations. Specific duties and responsibilities will be established by the Area Commander.

Incident Commanders under the designated Area Commander are responsible to, and should be considered as part of, the overall Area Command organization. They must be provided adequate and clear delegation of authority.

An Area Command of Unified Area Command should develop an action plan concerning the priorities, objectives and needs of the Area Command. The plan should:

- Clearly state Agency policy, objectives, and priorities, including priorities for critical resource allocations.

- Provide an organization with clear lines of authority and communications.

- Identify specific functions to be performed at the Area Command versus those on incidents, such as in the area of public information.

Area Command facilities may be co-located at department operations centers, EOCs, or other locations. It is recommended that they not be established in conjunction with and existing Incident Command Post (ICP).

A training module dedicated to Area Command is included in the SEMS Field Level Course of Instruction.

10. Relationship to Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and/or Department Operations Centers (DOCs)

Regulations require that when a local government EOC is activated, communications and coordination be established between the Incident Commander and the department operations center to the EOC, or between the Incident Commander and the EOC. The regulations also require that communications and coordination be established between a local government EOC, when activated, and any state or local emergency response agency having jurisdiction at an incident occurring within that local government's boundaries. The relationship between Incident Commanders, department operations centers, and emergency operations centers is discussed briefly below. Additional information is provided in the SEMS Field Level Course of Instruction.
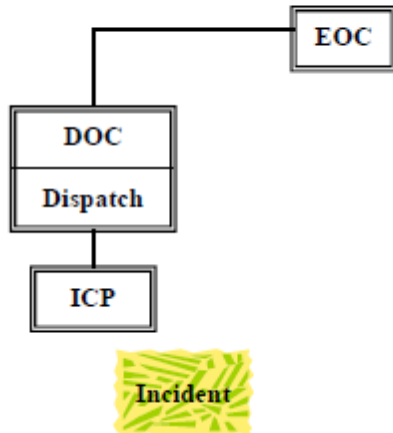
ICS field response organizations will normally communicate with the local government level (either department operating centers or EOCs) through dispatch centers. Dispatch centers have dispatch authority as determined by agency or jurisdiction policy. Because of the communications systems involved, agency dispatch centers will often function in an intermediate role between Incident Commanders in the field and department operations centers or EOCs. Also, in some cases under heavy load conditions, agencies may elect to move into an "expanded dispatch" mode, which may provide a higher-level authority at the agency dispatch facility.

Dispatch centers may be departmental or may be centralized within the jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions have the capability to go from departmental dispatching to centralized dispatching when the local government EOC is activated. The jurisdiction's dispatching arrangements and communication capability along with local policies will affect how the field level is linked to the local government level.

In many jurisdictions, the ICS field response organizations will be primarily linked (through a dispatch center) to the department operations center (DOC) of the agency that has jurisdiction over the incident. In these cases, department operations centers (DOCs) have agency level authority over their assigned Incident Commanders. The DOC is responsible for coordinating with the local government EOC.

Exhibit B-11

Local Government A

In some jurisdictions, ICS field response organizations may have direct communications with and/or receive policy direction from the local government EOC when it is activated. Whether this occurs will depend upon the size and policy of the jurisdiction, and lines of communication that are available. EOCs do not carry out tactical activities, but rather support field operations.

Exhibit B-12

Local Government B
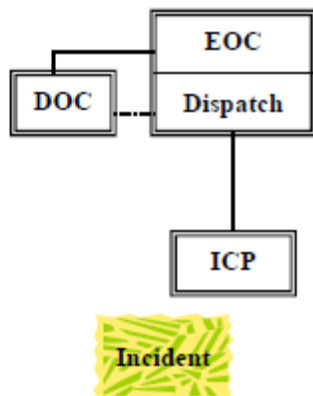
11. Relationship to Multi-Agency Coordination Systems

Multi-Agency Coordination Systems (MACS) operate to prioritize incidents, exchange information and, by member consensus determine resource allocation priorities between multiple incidents.

There is no direct link between ICS structures at the field response level and the MACS. MACS communicate with agencies, not with incidents

12. Relationship to Multi-agency or Inter-agency Coordination

The Incident Command System is designed to incorporate multi-or inter-agency coordination throughout the system. Thus there is no separate multi-agency or inter-agency coordination group established at the Field response level. Field level coordination takes place in several ways.

- The ICS general staff positions are designed to be filled by personnel from either single or multiple agencies. For example, it is possible within ICS to have the Incident Commander from one agency and the Operations Section Chief from another.

- Agency Representatives may be assigned to incidents for coordination purposes and have a level of authority as determined by their agency. Agency Representatives initially report to the Incident Liaison Officer.

- Multi-agency or inter-agency coordination can take place at all organizational levels of the ICS structure, i.e., section, branch, division/group or unit. This also includes having mixed multi-agency resource teams or task forces that work together at an incident. This ability to intermix inter-agency personnel within the incident organization is only limited by agency policy, inter-agency agreements, and ensuring that all personnel are adequately trained and qualified.

13. Involvement of Special Districts, Public Utilities Community Based Organizations, Collaboratives and Private Agencies in Incident Response

The level of involvement of special districts, public utilities, Community Based Organizations, Collaboratives and private agencies will vary considerably depending upon the kind of incident. In general, special districts, or other agencies that have a statutory or jurisdictional involvement with the incident should be represented at the incident. The form of the involvement may be as a part of a Unified Command, or as an

Agency Representative from an assisting or cooperating agency. In some cases, a special district or public utility may have lead agency responsibility.

At the field response level under ICS, assisting agencies are described as those that directly contribute tactical or services resources to another agency. For example, if the fire department provides engines and paramedic units to standby at a law enforcement hostage incident, they would be considered an assisting agency. For this kind of an incident, the fire department would not normally be part of a Unified Command. Another example, of an assisting agency would be an oil or chemical company with trained teams that directly support the incident tactical operations on a hazardous materials incident.

A cooperating agency supplies assistance other than direct tactical resources to the incident control effort. Telephone companies, electric and gas utilities, water districts, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other Community Based, Collaboratives, private agencies and special districts could be cooperating agencies depending on the type of incident.