

Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guideline

Subject: Expanding the Organization

SOG 705

Purpose: This guideline defines the approved methods by which Egg Harbor Fire Department implements Command during large-scale events that require an expansion of the basic Incident Command System/National Incident Management System (ICS/NIMS). It identifies the required positions that should be implemented, and the most effective management structure.

Scope: This procedure applies to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

Guideline

As a small incident escalates into a major incident, maintaining an effective span-of-control may become difficult as more sectors are implemented. The Incident Commander additionally may become overwhelmed and overloaded with the many facets of information management. The Incident Commander is responsible for assigning companies, updating the tactical worksheet, planning, forecasting, requesting additional resources, radio communications, and fulfilling all the other functions of Command. At times like these, the Incident Commander's most immediate need is functional support. As additional ranking officers arrive on-scene, the Command organization may be expanded through implementation of branches and sectors. It will additionally require the involvement of company officers and other staff personnel to fill the required Command and General Staff positions. Sector level positions will be implemented as they are needed, based on the needs of the incident.

Operational Guidance

I. Expanding the organization

A. One of the first sections typically implemented is the operations section chief. The operations section is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities, the tactical priorities, and the overall safety and welfare of all personnel working in the operations section.

1. An Incident Commander should choose to implement and staff an operations section as a span-of-control mechanism. When the number of branches or sectors exceeds the capability of the Incident Commander to manage effectively, the Incident Commander may staff the operations section to reduce their span-of-control, thereby transferring the direct management of all tactical activities to the operations section chief.

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2. The operations section chief will use appropriate radio channels to communicate strategic and specific objectives to the branches or sectors.

II. Development of branches

- A. Sectors identify tactical level assignments in the command structure. As the span-of-control begins to be excessive, the incident becomes more complex, or when there are two or more distinctly different operations concurrently ongoing (i.e., fire suppression, EMS, evacuation, etc.), the organization should be further sub-divided into branches. Branches may be established during an incident to serve several purposes; however, they are not always essential to the organization of the operations section.
- B. In general, branches may be established for a number of reasons.
 - 1. To ensure an effective span-of-control.
 - 2. When there are multiple, different and distinct functional sectors operating at the same time and event.
 - 3. When the event involves multiple jurisdictions.
 - 4. When the numbers of sectors exceeds the recommended span-of-control.
- C. The Incident Commander or operations section chief should designate a multi-branch structure, and allocate sectors within those branches. In the following example, the operations section chief has five sectors reporting to him, with three additional sectors being added. At this point, a two branch organization was formed.

Figure 1 shows the organization before expansion to a multi-branch structure.

Figure 1

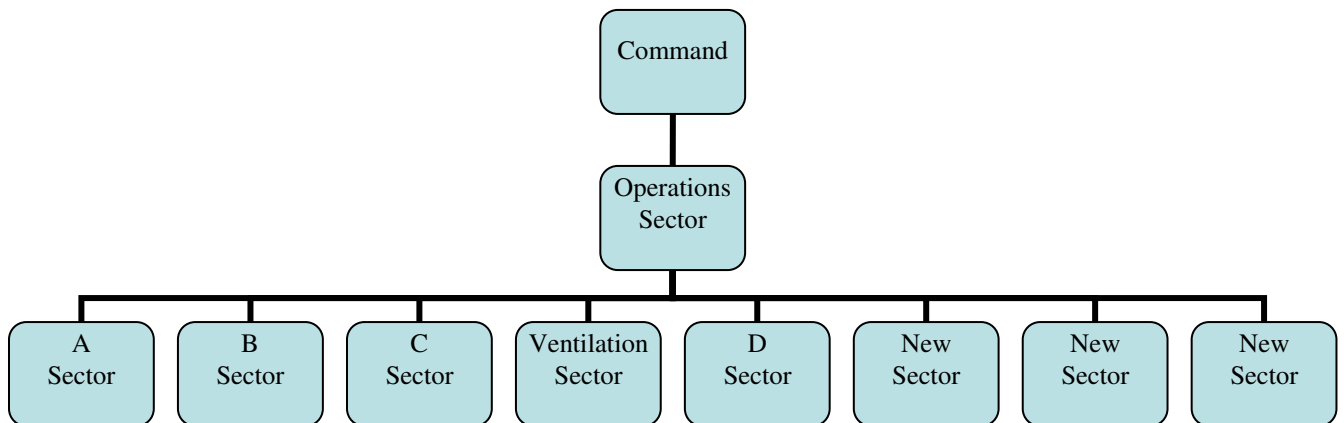
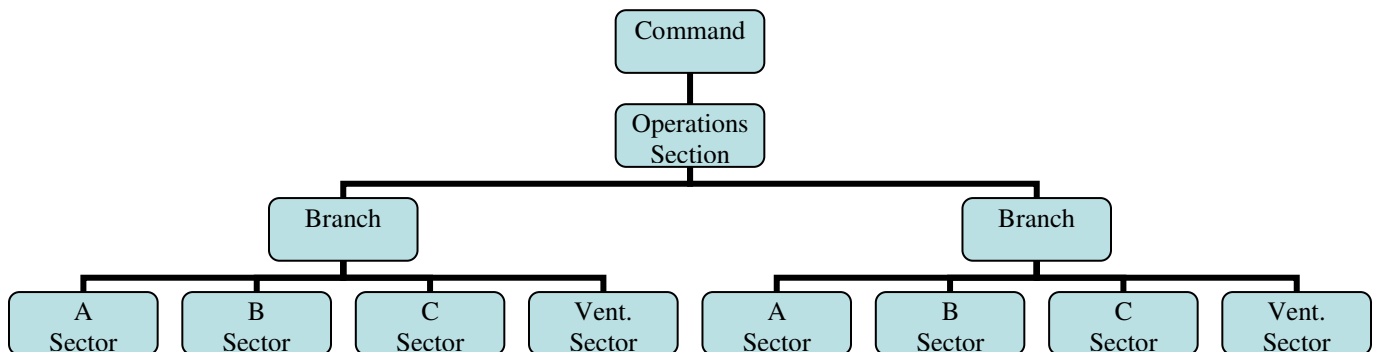


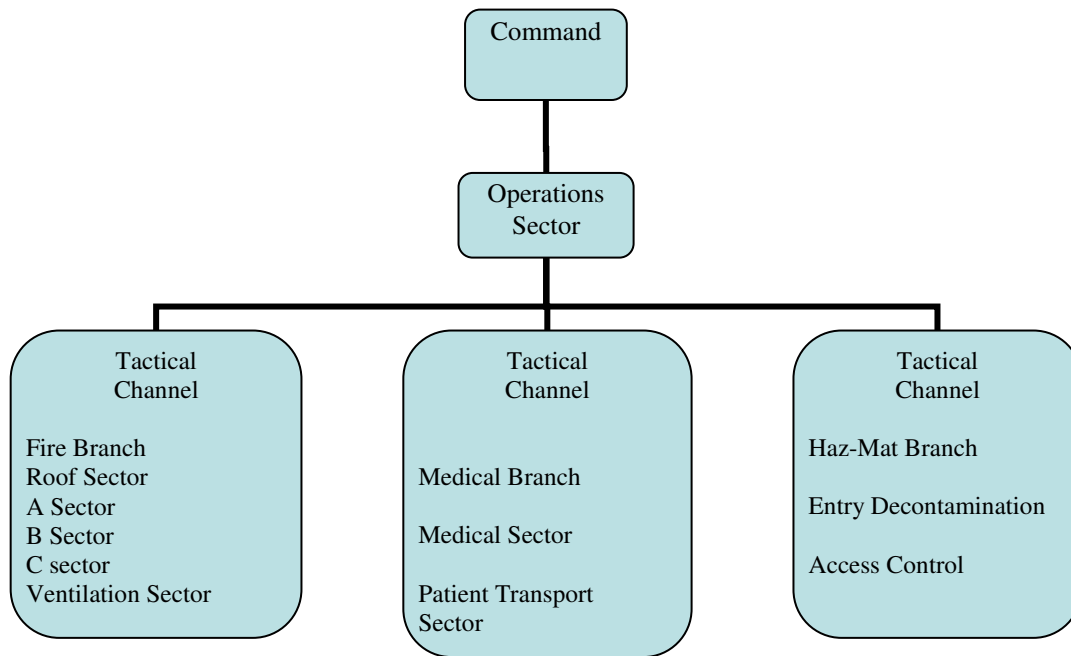
Figure 2 shows the organization with a two-branch organization.

Figure 2



- D. Operations section branches should operate in their area of responsibility on their own (separate) radio channels and communicate to operations on a different channel if possible.
1. The radio designation of branches should reflect the objective of the branch when designating functional branches, (such as, HazMat branch or Multi-casualty branch). Tactical branches may be designated numerically (such as, branch I, branch II, or branch III).
 2. When the Incident Commander implements branch directors, the sector officers should be notified of their new supervisor. This information should include the following:
 - a. To which branch the sector has been re-assigned.
 - b. The radio channel on which the branch is operating.
 3. Radio communications should be directed from the sector officer to the branches - instead of to the Incident Commander or operations. Branch directors will receive direction from the Incident Commander or operations. They will then relay that information to sectors within their respective branches.
 4. Figure 3 illustrates an expanded organizational structure that includes functional branches and subordinate sectors.

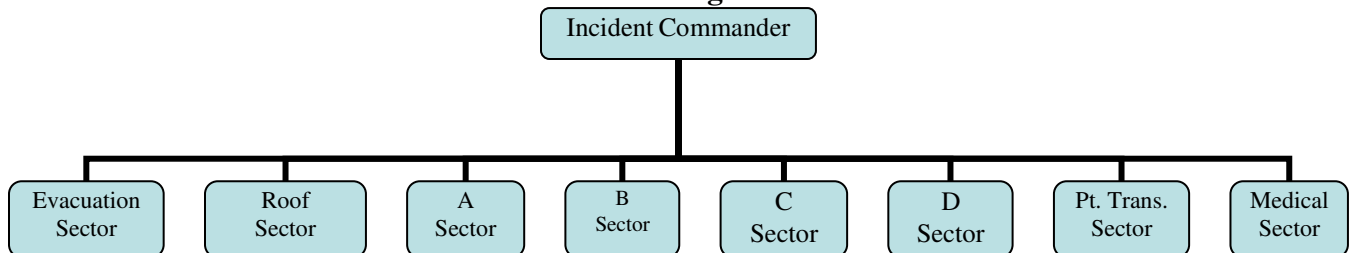
Figure 3



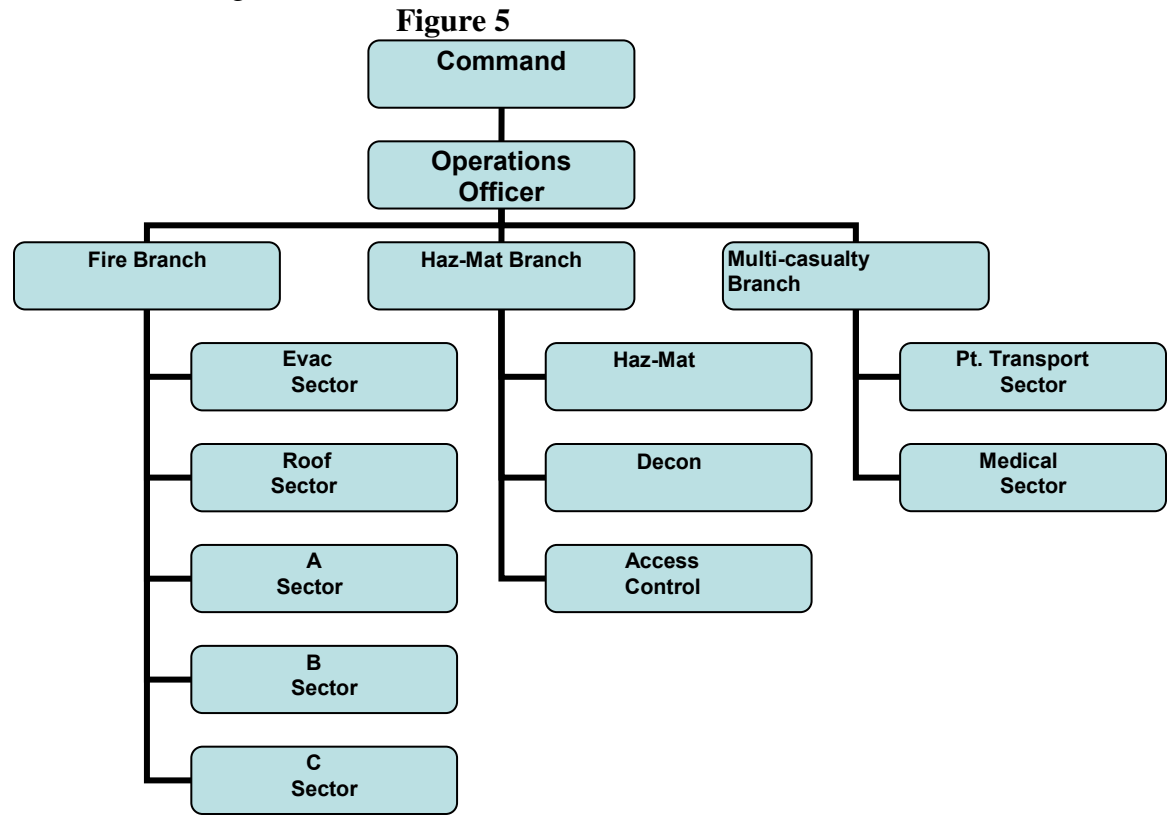
E. Depending on the situation, branches may be located at the command post or at operational locations. When located at the command post, branches can communicate on a face-to-face basis with the operations section chief and/or Incident Commander.

1. When an incident encompasses a large geographic area, it may be more effective to have branches in tactical locations. When branches are sent to tactical positions, they should immediately implement command-and-control within their respective branches. In these situations, operations must assign someone to monitor a “Command Channel.”
2. Branches are not limited to operations. Any of the section chiefs may recommend the implementation of branches within their sections -- with approval of the Incident Commander.
3. The organization expands from an over-tasked one with multiple sectors, as shown in Figure 4:

Figure 4



4. To a more efficient one, with the incorporation of branches, as shown in Figure 5:

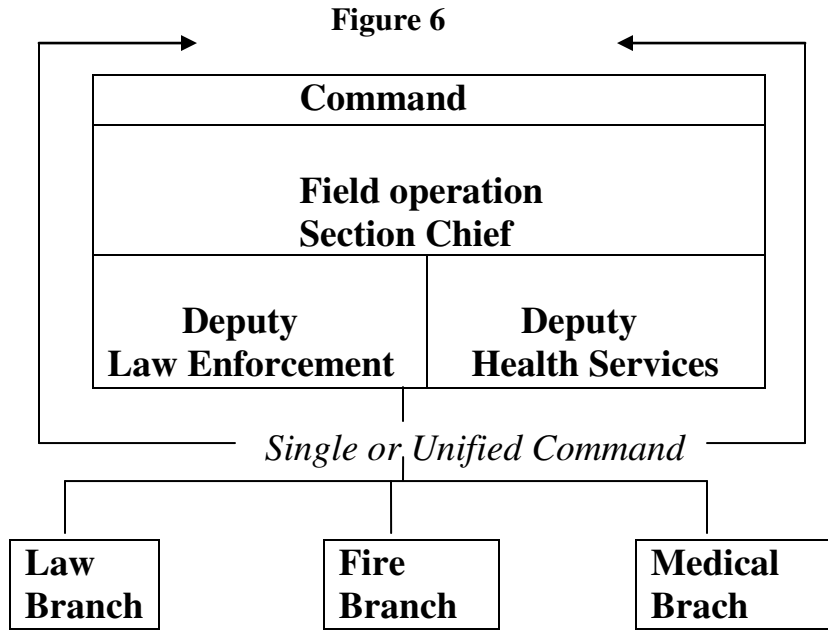


III. Functional branches

A. When the nature of an incident calls for a functional branch structure, (such as a major aircraft crash within a jurisdiction, involving three separate departments within that jurisdiction: police, fire, and health service), each department would maintain its own functional branch, and all would operate under the direction of a single operations section chief.

B. As illustrated in Figure 6, the operations section chief is from the fire department and is working with deputies from police and health services departments. Other alignments could be made depending upon the jurisdiction plan and type of emergency.

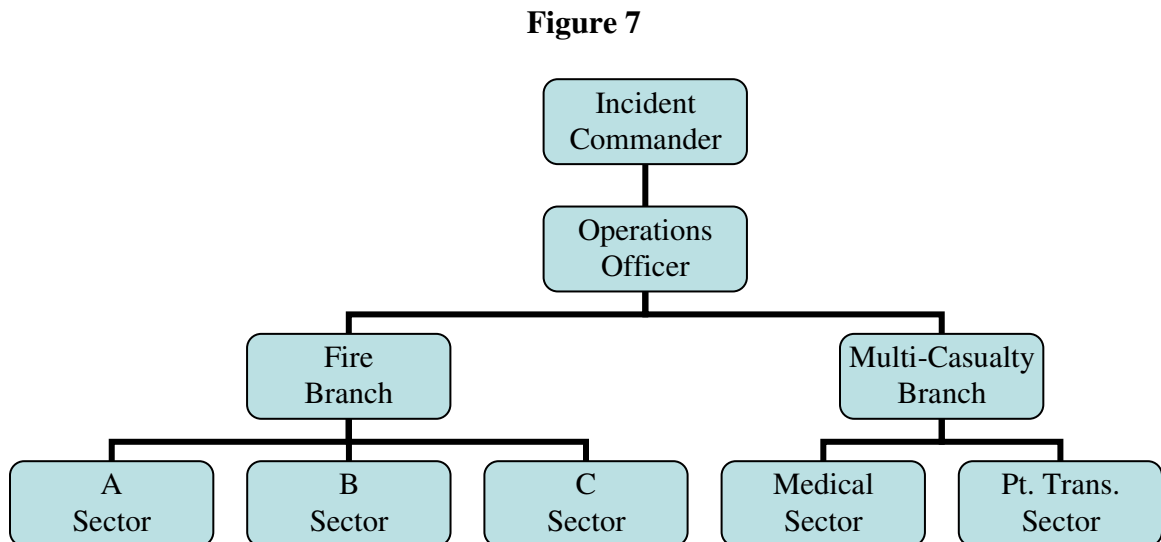
1. Note that Incident Command in this situation could be either *Single or Unified Command*, depending upon the jurisdiction.



IV. Multi-jurisdictional incidents

A. When an incident is multi-jurisdictional, resources are best managed by the agencies that have routine control over those resources. Branches should be utilized at incidents where the span-of-control with sectors is maximized.

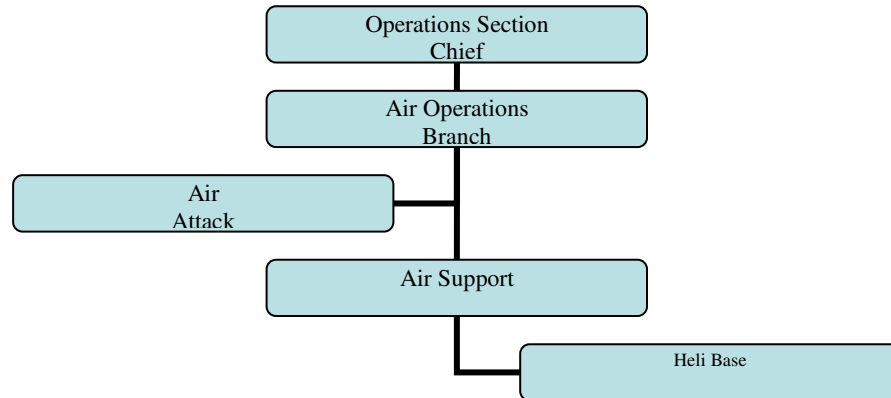
B. Incidents involving two or more distinctly different major management components (such as a large fire with a major evacuation or a large fire with a large number of patients). The Incident Commander may elect to assign branches to forward positions to manage and coordinate activities, as illustrated in Figure 7.



V. Aircraft

A. When the incident requires the use of aircraft, such as for the transportation of victims from a multi-casualty incident, high-rise roof top rescue, swift water rescue, or wildland fire, the operations section chief should establish the Air Operations branch. Its size, organization, and use, will depend primarily upon the nature of the incident and the availability of aircraft. See Figure 8.

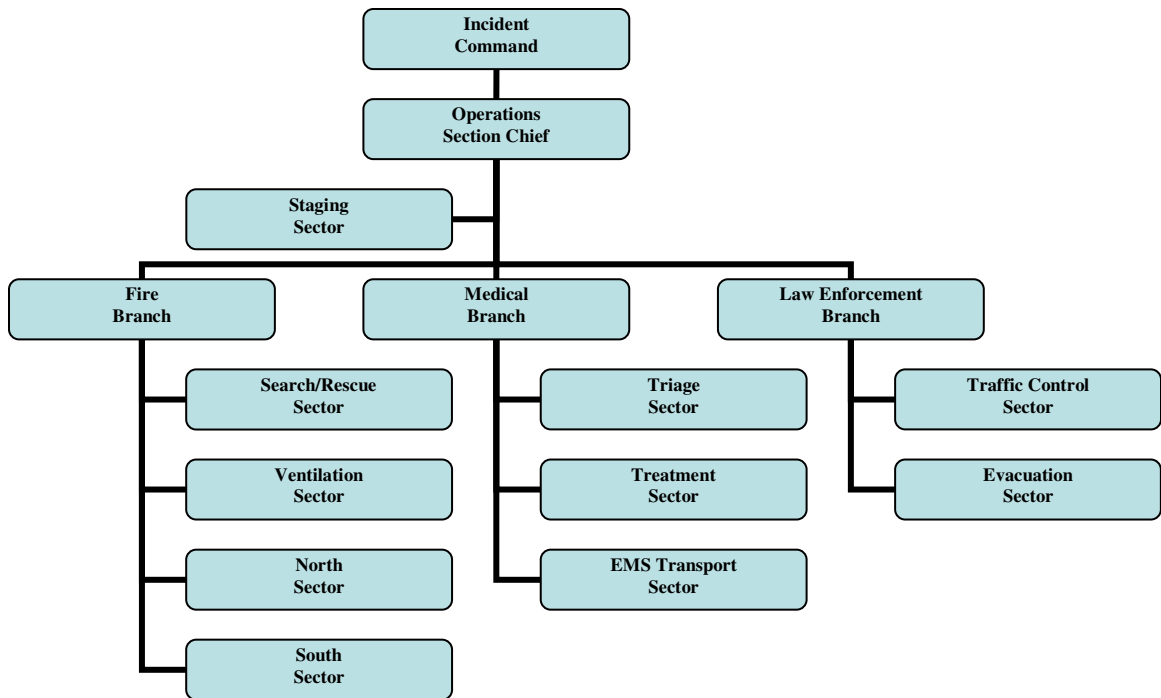
Figure 8



VI. Expanding the Incident

A. As the organization expands to deal with a major incident, the Incident Commander will need additional command post support. The operations section chief is one of the first to be implemented. Figure 9 is an example of how the Incident Management System can expand to fit the size and complexity of various types of incidents.

Figure 9



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VII. Organizational hierarchy

- A. The Incident Management System organizational structure develops in a modular fashion, based on the type and scope of an incident. The organization's staff builds from the top down; responsibility and performance is initially placed with the Incident Commander.
- B. As the need exists, four separate sections can be developed, each with several sub-units that may be established. The specific organizational structure established for any given incident will be based on the 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 requires independent management, an additional officer should be assigned responsibility for that area.
- C. For ease of reference and understanding, personnel assigned to manage at each level of the organization will carry a distinctive organizational title.
 1. Command refers to the Incident Commander.
 2. Officer refers to a member of the command staff (Information Officer, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer).
 3. Section chief refers to a member of the general staff (planning section chief, operations section chief, finance and administration section chief, logistics section chief).
 4. Director refers to the positions of branch director, which is in the operations section, or logistics section between the sectors and the operations section chiefs (branch directors: air operations branch director or service branch director).
 5. Supervisor refers to the positions of sector officer, which is in the operations section and lies between the branch director and strike team/task force leader.

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6. Unit leader refers to a position with supervision and management responsibility of either a sector of resources or a unit such as ground support, medical, or supply.

7. Manager refers to the lowest level of supervision within the logistics section, such as the equipment manager, base manager, or camp manager. The only exception to this is the staging area manager, who reports directly to the operations section chief.

8. Single resources are engine companies, ladder truck companies, Haz-Mat units, Heavy rescue units, or light rescue units with a company officer and crew.

VIII. Single resources

A. As a small incident escalates into a major one, additional organizational support will be required. As additional ranking officers arrive on the scene, the command organization may be expanded through the involvement of officers and staff personnel to fill command and general staff positions.

B. Section and unit level positions within the Incident Management System are to be activated only when the corresponding functions are required by the incident. Until such time that a section or unit is activated, all functions associated with that section or unit will remain the responsibility of the Incident Commander or the appropriate section chief.

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C. It is recommended that two or more units not be combined into a single unit; however, an individual may be assigned responsibility for managing more than one unit. This method of organization allows for easy expansion and demobilization of the system.

D. The command structure defines the lines of authority, but it is not intended that the transfer of information within the Incident Management System be restricted to the chain-of-command. An individual will receive orders from a superior officer, but may give information to any position in a different part of the organization.

E. The majority of positions within the Incident Management System will not be activated until the initial response is determined to be insufficient to handle the situation. When this occurs, qualified personnel should be requested through normal communications with dispatch to fill the positions deemed to be required for the event. If it is later determined that a specific position is not needed, the request can be canceled.

F. The transition from the initial response to a major incident organization will be evolutionary, and positions will be filled as the corresponding tasks are required. During the initial phases of an incident, the Incident Commander normally carries out four section functions that comprise the general staff within a fully expanded incident organizational structure.

1. Operations.
2. Planning.
3. Logistics.
4. Finance and administration.

IX. Sections

A. Section level positions can be implemented at any time, based on the needs of the incident. One of the first sections typically implemented is the operations section chief.

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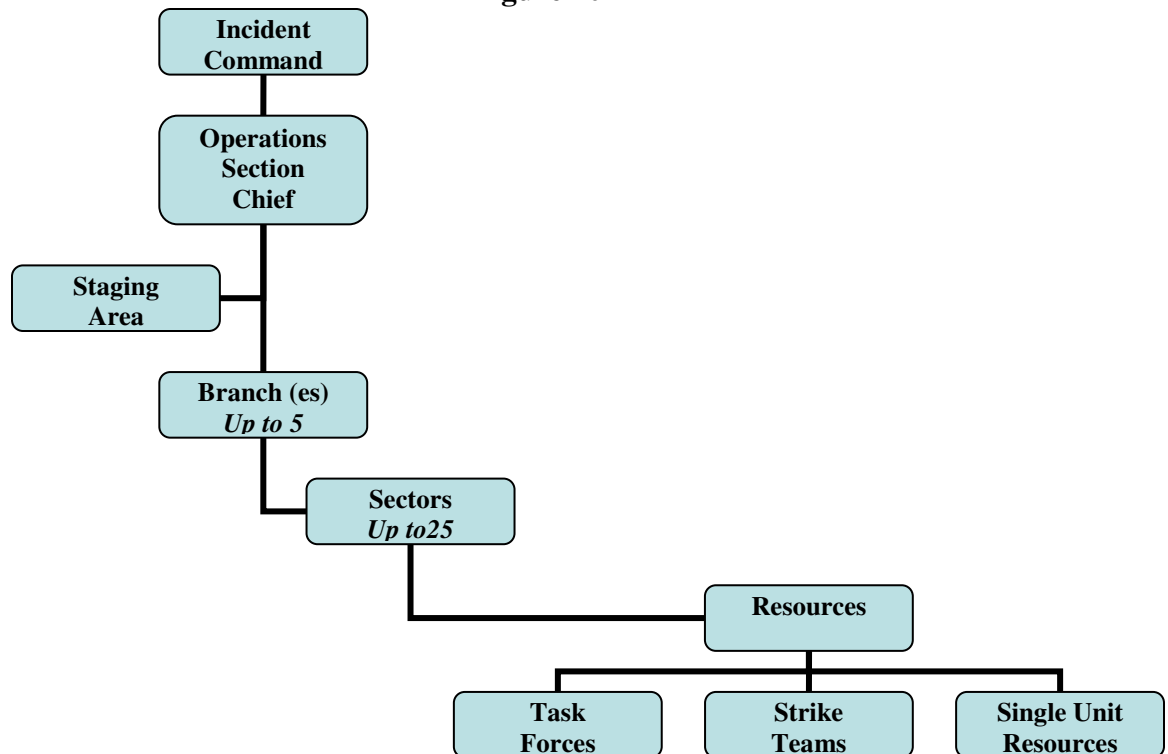
B. Operations section

1. The operations section is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities, the tactical priorities, and the safety and welfare of personnel working in the operations section. It is most often implemented and staffed as a span-of-control mechanism.
2. The operations section chief is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities and should have direct involvement in the preparation of the action plan for the period of responsibility. The roles and responsibilities of the section chief include the following:
 - a. Managing incident tactical activities.
 - b. Coordinating activities with the Incident Commander.
 - c. Implementing the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
 - d. Using tactical objectives and priorities to assign resources.
 - e. Using the ICS/NIMS to build an effective organizational structure.
 - f. Providing tactical objectives for sectors.
 - g. Controlling staging and air operations.
 - h. Providing for life safety.
 - i. Determining needs and requesting additional resources.
 - j. Consulting with, and informing, other sections and command staff.

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3. Figure 10 illustrates the subordinate tactical activities under the control of the operations section chief.

Figure 10



X. Staging areas

A. Staging Areas are locations designated within the incident area, and are used to temporarily locate resources that are available for assignment. If arriving apparatus is not managed effectively, the incident scene can quickly become congested. At major or complex operations, the Incident Commander should establish a central staging area early, and place an officer in charge of staging. The radio designation of “Staging” should be used.

B. In the expanded organizational structure, staging reports to the operations section chief. The operations section chief may establish, move, or discontinue the use of staging areas. All resources within the designated staging areas are under the direct control of the operations section chief, and should be immediately available.

C. Staging will request logistical support (such as food, fuel, or sanitation) from the logistics section.

XI. Planning section

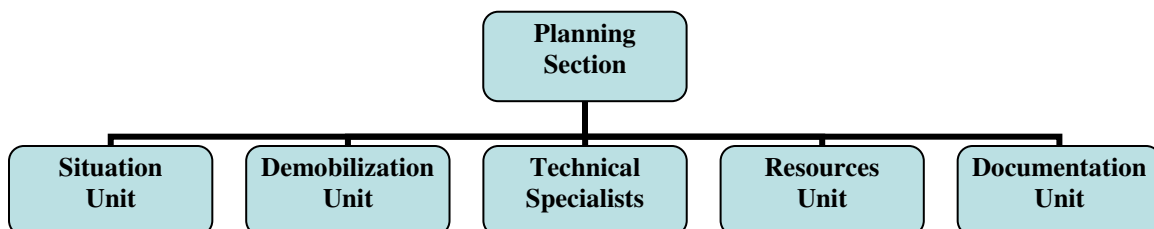
A. The planning section is responsible for gathering, assimilating, analyzing, and processing information needed for effective decision making. Information management is a full-time task at large and complex incidents.

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1. The planning section serves as the Incident Commander's “clearing house” for information. This allows the Incident Commander's staff to provide information instead of having to deal with dozens of information sources. Critical information should be immediately forwarded to the Incident Commander (or whoever needs it). Information should also be used to make long range plans.

2. The planning section chief's goal is to plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources *before* they are needed. Figure 11 is an example of the subordinate resources for which the planning section may be responsible.

Figure 11



3. The roles and responsibilities of the planning section chief include:

- Evaluating strategies and plans with the Incident Commander.
- Maintaining resource status and personnel accountability.
- Refining and recommending any needed changes (with input from the Incident Commander).

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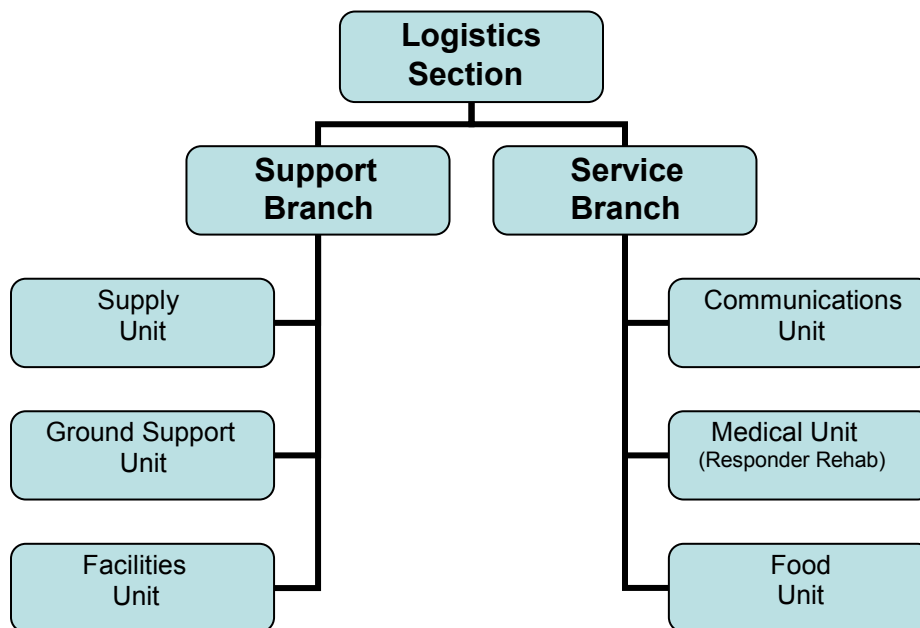
- d. Evaluating the incident organization and span-of-control.
- e. Forecasting possible outcomes.
- f. Evaluating future resource requirements.
- g. Using technical assistance as needed.
- h. Evaluating tactical priorities, critical factors, and safety issues.
- i. Using a standard systematic approach to gather, update, and manage situation status.
- j. Coordinating planning needs with outside agencies.
- k. Planning for incident demobilization.
- l. Maintaining incident records.

XII. Logistics section

- A. The logistics section is the support mechanism for the Incident Command organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all organizational components involved in the incident, including facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance, fuels, food, communications, and medical services. Logistics is also responsible for responder rehabilitation. Figure 12 illustrates services for which the logistics section is responsible.

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Figure 12



- B. The roles and responsibilities of the logistic section include the following:
 - 1. Provision of medical aid for incident personnel.

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2. Management of responder rehabilitation.
3. Coordination of immediate critical incident stress de-briefing.
4. Provision and management of supplies or equipment.
5. Forecasting and acquisition of projected resource needs.
6. Provision of communications plans and equipment.
7. Provision of fuels and coordination of equipment repairs.
8. Acquisition of specialized equipment or expertise.
9. Provision of food and associated supplies.
10. Coordination of fixed or portable facilities.
11. Provision of any logistical needs requested by the Incident Commander.
12. Supervision of assigned personnel.

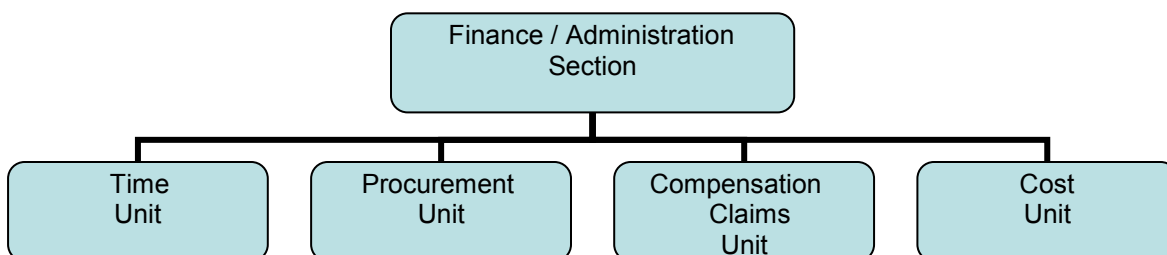
XIII. Finance and administration section

A. The finance and administration section should be established on incidents when the agencies (ies) involved have specific needs for financial services.

B. Not all agencies will require the establishment of a separate finance and administration section. In cases where only one specific function is required, such as cost analysis, that position could be established as a technical specialist in the planning section. Figure 13 illustrates the subordinate services for which the finance and administration section may be responsible.

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Figure 13



C. The roles and responsibilities of the finance and administration section include the following:

1. Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the fire department or City as requested by the Incident Commander.
2. Documentation of all incident financial costs.
3. Documentation of possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies.
4. Analysis and management of legal risk for incidents (such as, hazardous materials clean-up).
5. Documentation of compensation and claims for injury.
6. The finance and administration section is responsible for obtaining any and all needed incident documentation for potential cost recovery efforts.

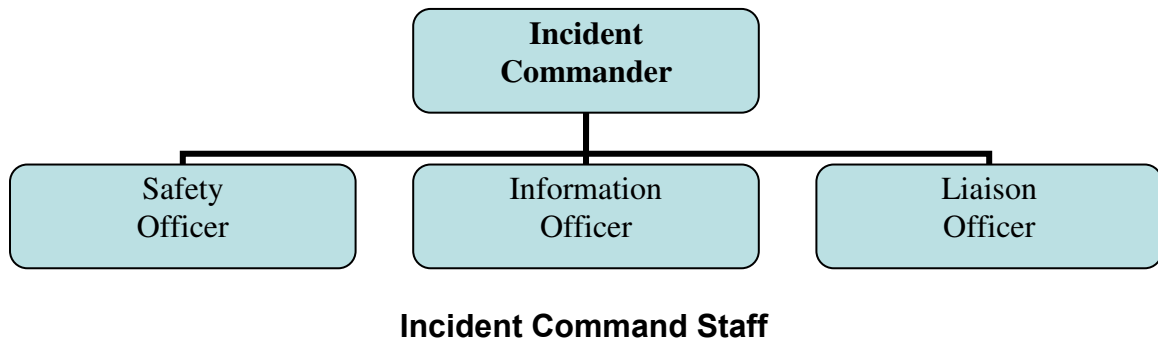
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XIV. The Incident Commander

A. Once the operations section is in place and functioning, the Incident Commander's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning, and other components of the incident. Their focus should be on “the big picture” and the impact of the incident from a broad perspective.

B. In directing the tactical aspects of the incident, the Incident Commander shall provide direction, advice, and guidance to the command and general staffs. Figure 14 shows the relationship dynamic of the command staff.

Figure 14



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C. The roles and responsibilities of the Incident Command Staff include:

1. Reviewing and evaluating the plan, and initiating any needed changes.
2. Providing ongoing review of the overall incident (The Big Picture).
3. Selecting priorities.
4. Providing direction to the command and general staff.
5. Reviewing the organizational structure, and initiating change or expansion to meet incident needs.
6. Staging command and general staff functions.
7. Establishing liaison with other internal agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners, and/or tenants.

D. Command staff positions are established to assume responsibility for key activities that are not a part of the line organization. Responsibilities for the three staff positions identified in the Incident Command staff chart are identified below:

1. The function of the information officer is to develop accurate and complete information regarding an 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 governmental agencies needing information directly from the incident. In either a single or unified Command structure, only one Information officer would be designated, although assistants may be assigned from other agencies or departments involved.
2. The safety officer's function at the incident is to assess hazardous and unsafe situations, and to develop measures for assuring personnel safety. The safety officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent all unsafe acts. In a Unified

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Command structure, a single safety officer should be designated. Assistants may be required and assigned from other agencies or departments making up the Unified Command. This may include the need for a responder rehabilitation assessment.

3. The liaison officer's function is to serve as a point-of-contact for representatives from other agencies. In a single-command structure, the representatives from assisting agencies would coordinate through the liaison officer. Under a unified command structure, the representatives from agencies not involved in the unified command would coordinate through the liaison officer. Agency representatives assigned to an incident should have authority to speak on all matters for their agency.

E. Additional positions may be required, depending upon the nature and location of the incident, or by requirements established by the Incident Commander.

F. An example of incident management, and an expanded organization, at a major Haz-Mat incident, is shown on Figure 15.

Figure 15

