



Effective Date: October 24, 2009

Revision Date:

Bastrop County Emergency Services District No.1 Standard Operating Procedures

Title: Incident Command System

Originator – Fire Chief (Signature/Date): _____

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a basic everyday operating system for all incidents and one that can be transitioned to managing large operations with a minimum of adjustments.

Scope:

This procedure will outline all aspects of the Incident Command System (ICS) components, definitions, functions, positions, and the activities assigned under each. It is designed to offer a framework for emergency operations to integrate the efforts of all members, officers and companies with the goal being to provide an organized and orderly tactical operation.

SOP:

General:

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standard system for managing all Bastrop County ESD #1 Fire Department responses to emergency incidents. The ICS consists of personnel, facilities, equipment, communications, and procedures all operating within a common organizational structure to gain control of an incident. The ICS develops a complete organization with the major functions being Incident Command, Operations, Planning, Liaison, Logistics, and Safety.

The ICS is designed to allow for multi-agency adoption in local agencies, state, and federal local emergency agencies. Therefore, terminology used in the ICS is designed to be acceptable to all levels of government and industry.

The ICS is the basic everyday operating system for all incidents. Therefore, the transition to large operations requires a minimum of adjustment.

The ICS builds with the management of all major functions initially being the responsibility of one or just a few persons. As the incident grows in size and/or complexity, management activities are assigned to additional individuals in order to maintain a reasonable level of control and efficiency.

The organization of the Incident Command System begins to develop from the time the initial attack on an incident occurs until the requirement for incident management and operations no longer exists. The organization develops as the incident progresses, depending on the requirements of the situations. The

basic organizational structure is applicable to small incidents and, major fires, and incidents not involving fire, such as hurricanes, Haz-Mats, or rescues. The system's organizational structure is able to adapt to any emergency or incident to which Bastrop County Fire Department members would be expected to respond. Personnel are responsible for all activities under their organizational section throughout the incident. Positions within the Incident Command System will be activated only when required by the Incident Command.

COMPONENTS OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM:

The Incident Command System has a number of components. These components provide the basis for an effective Incident Command System concept of operation:

- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Integrated Communications
- Unified Command Structure
- Consolidated Action Plans
- Manageable Span-of-Control
- Pre-designed Resource Management
- Comprehensive Resource Management

Common Terminology:

Common terminology will be established for the following elements:

- Position titles (i.e. Incident Commander)
- Resources (Engines which meets minimum specs)
- Facilities (EOC, and Staging)

1. Common Positions Titles

A standard set of position titles and major functions and functional units have been established for the Incident Command System (See Appendix A for ICS definitions). Terminology for the elements is standard and consistent. (i.e. Operations Chief, North Division, Ventilation Group, etc.)

Division and Group level positions within the Incident Command System will be activated only when the corresponding functions are required by the incident. Until such time as a Division or Group is activated, all functions associated with the Division or Group will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander or the appropriate Division or Group Leader.

2. Resource Titles and Specifications

Common names and specifications have been established for all resources used within the Incident Command System. Resources can be general equipment and personnel. Types can be:

- a. Single pieces of equipment.
- b. Strike Teams- A set number of resources of same kind and type (with personnel) under supervision of a Leader.

- c. Task Force- A combination of various types of resources put together for a specific assignment, including manpower, and the supervision of a leader.

The desirability of strike teams for task forces lies in the combination of resources allowing management under an individual or team leader thus lessening the span of control.

3. Facilities

Common identifiers are used for those facilities in and around the incident area, which will be used during the course of the incident. These facilities include such things as the Command Post, Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Staging Areas, etc.

The Incident Command System structure builds from the top down with responsibility and performance placed initially with the Incident Commander. As the need exists, separate sections can be developed (Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Liaison). The organization established for any given incident will be based upon the needs of the incident. If one individual can simultaneously manage all major functional areas, no further positions are required.

Common Communication Procedures:

Communications at the incident are managed through the use of a common plan and are coordinated through Incident Command. All communications at an incident should be in plain English. All communications should be confined only to essential messages. Face to face communications is the most effective medium and should be used where practical. Not only does it reduce the potential for misunderstandings, but also reduces radio congestion.

Radio Networks- Radio networks for large incidents will normally be organized as follows:

- **Command Net** - This net should link together: Incident Command, key staff members, and Division officers.
- **Tactical Net** - There may be several tactical nets. They may be established around agencies, departments, geographical areas, or even specific functions.
- **Support Net** – A support net will established primarily to handle status changing for resources as well as for support requests and certain other non-tactical or command functions. This may be done with cell phones.

Unified Command Structure:

The proper selection of participants to work within the same command structure will depend upon:

- The location of the incident- which agencies, mutual aid cities or industrial companies are involved.
- The type of incident- which agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s) are required.

A unified command structure should consist of an officer from the Bastrop County ESD #1 Fire Department and officers for all responding outside fire department organizations. It could also invite the counsel of individuals or agencies having special expertise or capability.

Unified Action Plan:

Every incident needs some form of an action plan. For small incidents of short duration, the plan need not be written. The Incident Commander will establish this plan and make strategic determinations for the incident based upon the requirements of the situation.

Manageable Span-of-Control:

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 to seven with a span-of-control of five being established as general rule of thumb. Of course, there will always be exceptions; e.g., an individual officer will normally have more than five personnel under his/her supervision.

Comprehensive Resource Management:

In order to maintain an up-to-date and accurate picture of resource utilization, it is necessary that:

- All resources are assigned a current status condition.
- All changes in resource locations and status conditions are made promptly to the appropriate functional unit.

Status Conditions - Three status conditions are established for use with tactical resources at the incident:

- Assigned - Performing and active assignment.
- Available - Ready for assignment. All resources in Staging Areas should be available.
- Out-of-Service - Not ready for available or assigned status.

Changes in Status - Normally, the individual who makes the change in a resource's status is responsible for providing that information to the Command status keeping function.

Incident Facilities:

There are several kinds and types of facilities, which can be established in and around the incident area. The determination of kinds of facilities and their locations will be based upon the requirements of the incident and the direction of Incident Command. The following facilities are defined for possible use with the Incident Command System:

1. Incident Command Post:

Designated as Command, the Command Post will be the location from which all incident operations are directed. There should only be one Command Post for each incident. For large incidents, it may be desirable to have the Special Operations trailer respond and function as the Command Post or move into an appropriate building.

2. Emergency Operations Center (EOC):

The EOC is the location at which primary support activities are performed in a major incident. The EOC may coordinate all equipment and personnel support needs except for emergency response equipment

request, which will normally be handled by the Incident Command Post through Dispatch. There should only be one EOC established for each incident.

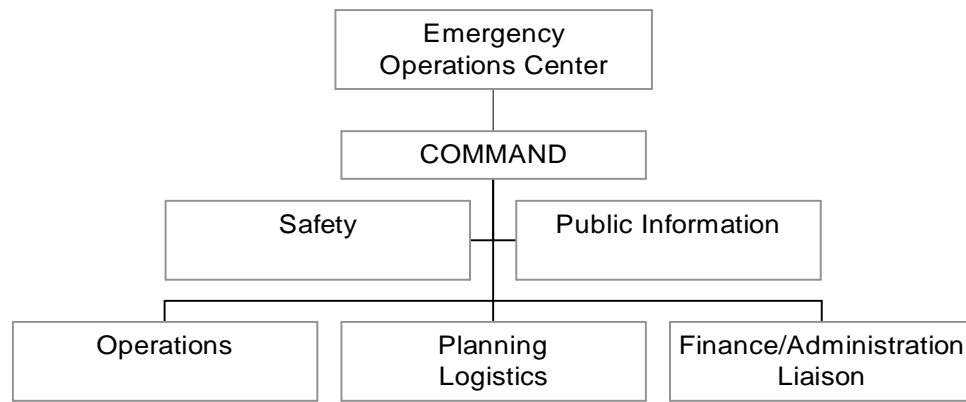
3. Staging Area:

The Staging Area is established for temporary location of available resources on three-minute notice. The Staging Area will be established by the Incident Command to control resources not immediately assigned. Incident Command will assign a Staging Officer for the Staging Area. The Officer is responsible to check in all incoming resources; to dispatch resources at the request of the Incident Command; and to request resources as necessary.

Organization and Operations:

The Incident Command System organization has eight major functional areas. The functional areas are:

- Command
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Liaison
- Safety
- Public Information
- Finance/Administration



Emergency Operations Center:

The Emergency Operations Center is responsible for the overall support of the incident. This includes the following: support in planning, technical, logistics, financial, media and other areas as needed. A major incident organization will contain all positions expected to be required for the largest magnitude incident.

Command:

Command is responsible for overall management of the incident. Command also includes certain staff functions. The transition from the initial attack to a major incident organization will be evolutionary and

positions will be filled, as the corresponding tasks are required. A major incident organization will contain all positions expected to be required for the largest magnitude incident.

1. Establishing Command: "Command" is the radio identifier used by the on-scene individual in charge of the emergency actions. Command will be established by the first arriving officer who can direct the activities of the incoming responders. A radio announcement should be made to give an initial report on the condition at the emergency and to identify that Command has been established and its location.

Example: "4101 on scene, we have a large unit fire in the rear of a commercial structure, 4101 is assuming Hwy 21 Command. Command will be set up on the north side of the building in the parking lot at Hwy 21 and FM 535." It is important that the brief description be given as it gives those responding a chance to prepare mentally for the conditions present.

From that point on, 4101 will not use the radio designation 4101 but rather "Command". If a more senior Bastrop County ES #1 Fire Department officer arrives, Command may be transferred to the more senior person.

Upon assignment of any other personnel to other fire ground assignments such as Division Officers and Staging Officer, Command should give a transmission stating the assignment, (e.g. All Units, 4102 is now North Division or All Units, 4103 is now the Staging Officer and Staging is set up on the corner of Hwy 21 and FM 535.)

At the conclusion of the incident, Command will be concluded by Command announcing the same in a radio message to Dispatch. Command should determine when to divide the organizational responsibility for the incident by creating Divisions and when needed an Operations Chief to take over the tactical implementation of the plan created by the Incident Command. The following are factors, which would encourage Command to divide the incident's organization:

- a. When Command can mentally forecast a situation that will eventually involve a number of responders beyond his or her capability to directly control. A good rule of thumb is whenever there are more than 5 functions, teams or engines reporting to Command.
- b. When Command can no longer effectively observe the activities of all responders because of physical barriers such as inside a building or other obstacles.
- c. Situation when close coordination of personnel is required; such as hazardous materials response or elevated structure rescues.

The command function within the ICS may be conducted in two general ways.

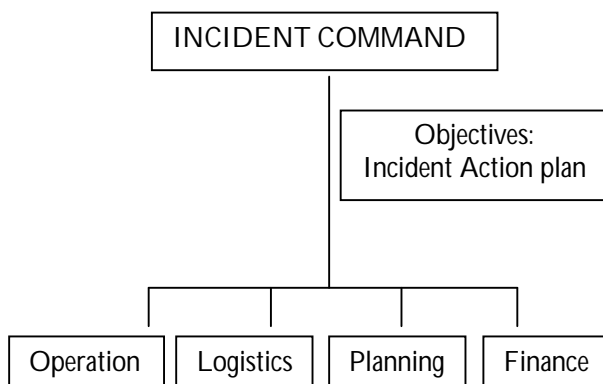
- Single command
- Unified command

1. **Single Command** (typically used)

When the incident is within the Bastrop County ESD #1 jurisdiction, and there is little outside resource assistance needed and no overlap of jurisdictional boundaries involved, a single Incident Commander will be designated to have overall responsibility for the incident.

The Incident Commander will prepare incident directions upon which subsequent action planning will be based. The Incident Commander will be knowledgeable of the action plan, and requests for ordering and releasing of primary resources.

This figure depicts an incident with single Incident Command authority.



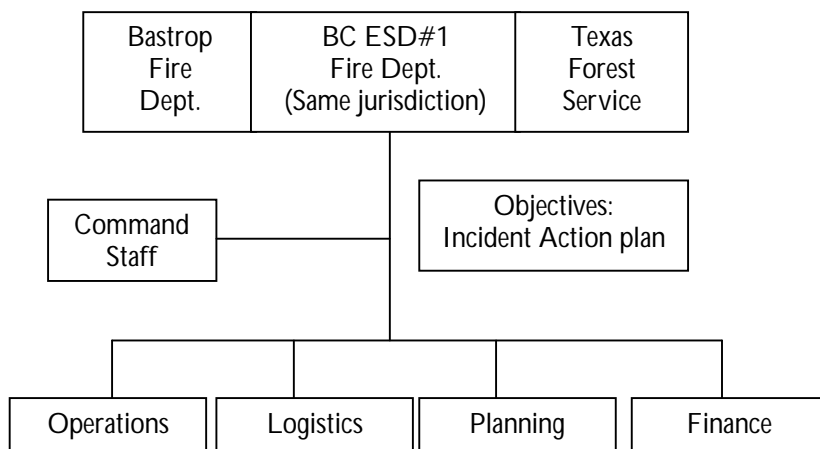
2. Unified Command

A unified command structure is called for under the following conditions if:

- The incident is totally contained within a single jurisdiction, but more than one department or agency shares management responsibility due to the nature of the incident or the kinds of resources required; i.e., a river spill, or a gas release within a plant.
- The incident command has requested outside resources to deal with the incident and feels that a unified command with the other agency representatives will expedite the incident action plan.

In a unified command structure, the individuals designated by their jurisdictions, or by departments within a single jurisdiction, must jointly determine objectives, strategy and priorities. As in a single command structure, the Incident Commander or Operations Chief, if appointed, will have the responsibility for implementation of the plan.

This figure depicts a sample incident with Unified Incident Command authority.



Command Staff:

Command staff positions are established to assume responsibility for key activities, which are not a part of the line organization. In ICS, three specific staff positions are identified:

- Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer

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

Staff Functions

1. Safety Officer

The Safety Officer's function at the incident is to assess hazardous and unsafe situations and develop measures for assuring personnel safety and to advise the Incident Commander and Division Officer of the hazards so they can take the necessary actions. The Safety Officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts, but should only do this after communicating with the necessary line officer and/or the incident commander.

2. Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer's function is to be 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, 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. The Liaison officer will deal with such agencies as Texas Forest Service, Bastrop Co. Sheriff's Office, and EPA.

3. Staging Officer

A Staging Officer will be designated by Incident Command. A staging area within the incident area will be established to temporarily locate resources, which are available for assignment. Incident Command may establish, move and discontinue the use of the Staging Area. The Staging Area Officer will request logistical support (e.g., food, fuel, sanitation) from Logistics.

The Staging Officer is responsible to ensure that:

- a. All staged apparatus is parked in an appropriate manner. All resources within the designated Staging Area are under the direct control of Incident Command and should be on 3-minute availability.
- b. Maintain a log of companies available in the Staging Area and inventory of all specialized equipment.

4. Information Officer

The Information Officer's function is to gather accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, and resources committed and other matters of general interest. The Information Officer will normally be the point of contact for the media. In either a single or unified command structure, only one Information Officer would be designated.

Operations Section:

1. Operations or OPS Chief

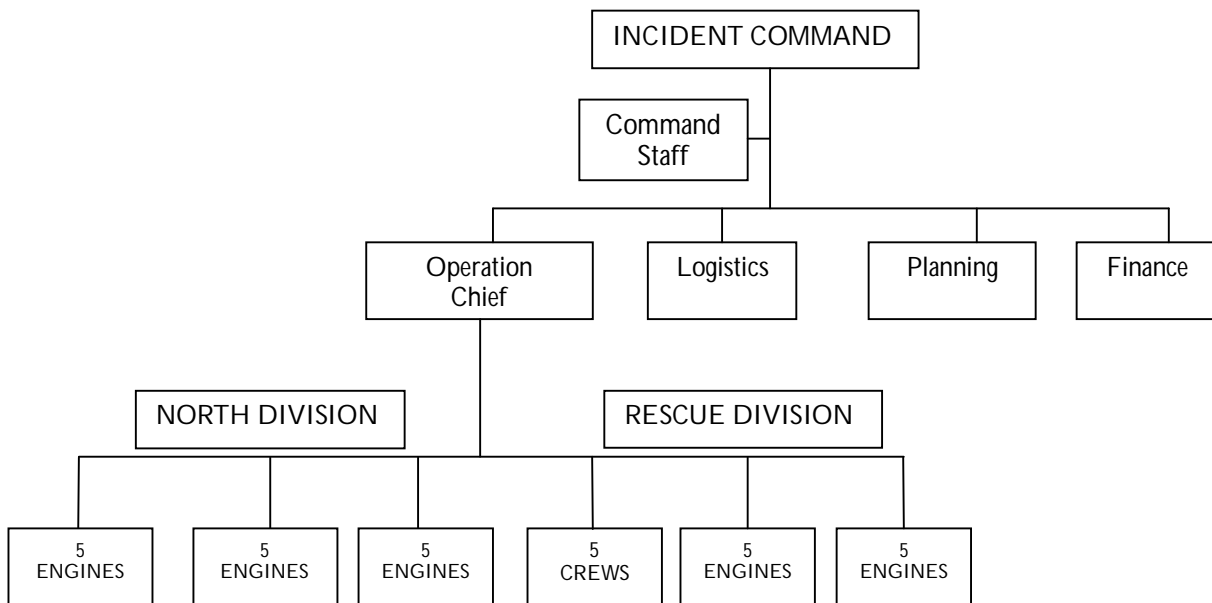
The Incident Operations Chief, when established, is responsible for the direct management of all incidents' tactical activities. Initially in any incident, the individual resources, which are assigned, will be reporting directly to the individual who has overall responsibility (i.e., the Incident Commander). As described earlier, as the incident grows in size and complexity, the IC may designate an Operations Chief to assume tactical direction of resources.

2. Operations Section

The following section discusses the way in which an incident may be organized for tactical operations.

A. Divisions

Divisions are established during an incident when the number of resources, exceeds the span-of-control of the Incident Commander or Operations Chief. Divisions are normally established to divide an incident into geographical areas of operation or into functional areas of operations. Below is an example in a diagram.



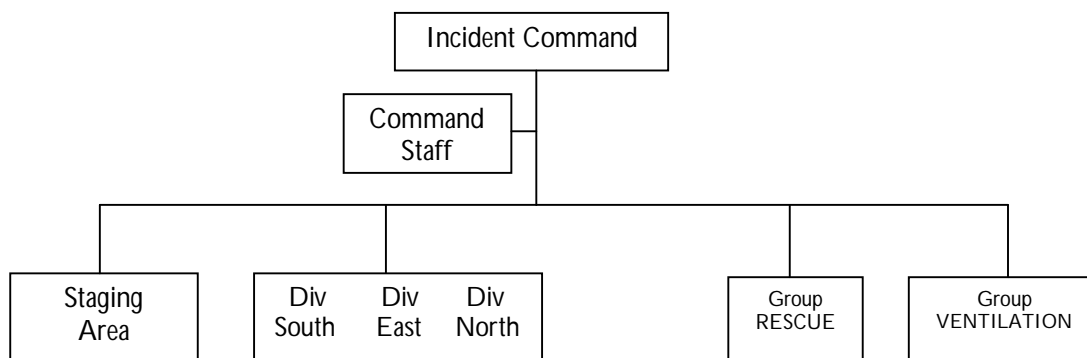
Two Division Organization

3. Geographical Divisions

The best use of Geographical Divisions is to divide an area into natural separations of terrain, geography and fuel; and where resources can be effectively managed under span-of-control guidelines. Functional divisions can best be used to describe areas of like activity; e.g., North, South, Second Floor, etc.

4. Combined Geographical Divisions and Functional Groups Example

Three Divisions, (N,S,E) established around jurisdictional boundaries; one group for Rescue, one group for structure ventilation. Geographical Divisions and functional divisions can also be applied in structure situations. Below is an example of the Combined Geographical Divisions and Functional groups.



5. Medical Division Supervisor:

It is becoming increasingly important to establish a Medical Unit on major incidents. The primary purpose of this unit is to be able to support the Medical Supervisor and to care for emergency responders who may get injured. A Medical Division will be set up to support all major incidents through the local emergency medical services. The Medical Division will have responsibility for all medical support. The Medical Supervisor will develop a medical plan, which will form a part of the action plan. The medical plan should provide information on potential hazardous areas or conditions, and provide off-incident locations and procedures for handling serious situations.

6. Division Officer Duties:

Division officers will be assigned to an area/function to evaluate and report on conditions and will advise Command whenever he or she cannot get their assigned activities done within the time and with the resources assigned. Division officers will use their Division designation as their radio designator. When units are assigned from Staging to a Division they will be told to what Division they are assigned and will report to the Division Officer prior to taking on an assignment. Command should inform the Division officer which units are assigned to them.

7. Air Operations Officer:

The Air Operations Officer is responsible for coordinating the helicopter-landing zone and for communicating with medical helicopters, preferably on the state mutual aid frequency. Air Ops will coordinate with Incident Command concerning the LZ (landing zone) location and transportation of patients. A fire department apparatus shall be on standby for any helicopter-landing zone.

Planning Section:

Composed of:

- Resource unit
- Situation Tracking and Documentation unit

- Demobilization unit
- Technical Support

Normally these functions will be the responsibility of the Planning Chief, and Unit Leader assignments will not need to be made in these areas. The Planning Section is responsible for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of tactical information and dissemination of tactical information about the incident. Planning maintains information on the current and forecast situations, and on the status of resources assigned to the incident. Planning is also responsible for the preparation and documentation of action plans. Planning has four primary areas and may have a number of people, including technical specialists to assist in evaluating the situation and forecasting requirements for additional personnel and equipment.

1. Resources tracking

The Planning Section has the responsibility to make certain that all assigned personnel and resources have checked in at the incident. It is also responsible for maintaining current status on all resources. A status keeping system will be required which will show the current location of all assigned resources as well as the current status condition for all resources and maintain a master list of all resources. This should include key supervisory personnel, primary resources used in tactical operations, as well as support resources, and transportation equipment, etc.

2. Situation tracking and Documentation

The Planning Section is responsible for collecting, processing and organizing situation information, preparing situation summaries, and developing projections and forecasts of future events related to the incident.

3. Demobilization

The Planning officer is responsible for developing an Incident Demobilization Plan. The plan should include specific demobilization instructions for all resources, which require demobilization. Note that many municipal and industrial agencies do not require specific demobilization due to their local nature.

4. Technical Specialists

Technical Specialists assigned to Planning may report directly to the Planning officer; may function in an existing Unit (e.g., a hazardous material specialist or a building specialist could be made a part of the situation planning); or may form a separate Unit within Planning depending on the requirements of the incident and the needs of the Planning officer. It is also possible that Technical Specialists could be reassigned to other parts of the organization: e.g., to Operations on tactical matters. The incident itself will primarily dictate the needs for Technical Specialists. Listed below are examples of the kinds of specialists that may be required:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Meteorologist | • Environmental Impact Specialist |
| • Flood Control Specialist | • Water Use Specialists |
| • Toxic Substance Specialist | • Structural Engineer |

Logistics Section:

The Logistics Section is responsible for providing all support needs to the incident. The Logistics Section will be part of the Incident Command Staff but will receive significant logistical support from the Emergency Operations Center. Logistics arranges for the ordering of all resources from off-incident locations. It would also provide facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fueling, feeding, and communications.

APPENDIX A: ICS DEFINITIONS

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) - A location, away from the emergency, that has access to Incident Command and radio/telephone communications. The EOC Staff may also have a public relations section, a logistical section, a liaison section, and a planning section to coordinate planning.

Incident Commander - The individual in command of the incident and responsible for strategy and coordination of resources. The I. C. operates at the strategic level and will be located in the Command Post.

Command Post - The location, near the emergency scene, staffed by the Incident Commander and his/her staff, from which all emergency control activities are coordinated. The Command Post will be a facility (vehicle or building) that provides communications equipment, resource information, lighting, and space for staff, etc.

Operations Chief - Responsible for coordinating the tactical activities of the Incident when established by Command.

Divisions - Describes a standard system of dividing the emergency into smaller command units. Divisions are set up whenever the span of control of the Incident Commander or Operations Chief begins to get over extended. Normally divisions are named for geographical or functional areas of the Emergency (north, south, interior, 5th floor, etc.)

Branch - Describes a standard system of dividing the emergency into smaller command units. Branches are set up whenever the span of control of Operations Chief begins to get over extended. Branches are set up generally using a two-branch system having divisions and groups in the branch. Branches are used for functional structuring in a multi-jurisdictional incident.

Division Officer - Assigned by the I. C. to manage all activities within a division. Division Officers operate at the tactical level.

Group - Describes a standard system of dividing the emergency into smaller command units. Groups are set up whenever the span of control of the Operations Chief begins to get over extended. Normally groups are named for functional areas of the emergency (ventilation, rescue, monitoring, etc.)

Company - A tactical unit usually comprised of a piece of apparatus plus its crew.

Company Officer - The individual in charge of a company whether they are an appointed officer or the person riding in the right front seat as the apparatus officer.

Command Staff - Those individuals assigned to the Command Post to assist the I. C. and to assume responsibility for managing certain functions. Those functions may include Liaison, Public Information, and Safety.

General Staff - The group of Incident Management personnel comprised of: Incident Command, Operations Chief, Planning Chief, and Logistics Chief.

Staging Division - Location where uncommitted equipment and personnel are assigned on a three-minute available status.