

SECTION 11

INCIDENT COMMAND

Statement of Purpose

By a resolution dated August 10, 2004, the Sangamon County Board adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the comprehensive approach to incident management for all hazards across the county. In accordance with NIMS, the incident command system (ICS) will be utilized in any major incident, the purpose being to provide an integrated command system to assist the Incident Commander in fulfilling his responsibilities to the mitigation, response and recovery in any major incident within Sangamon County.

Situations and Assumptions

Situations

Most incidents are managed locally. In other instances, incidents that begin with a single response discipline within a single jurisdiction may rapidly expand to multidiscipline, multijurisdictional incidents requiring significant additional resources and operational support.

Assumptions

Whether for incidents in which additional resources are required or are provided from different organizations within a single jurisdiction or outside the jurisdiction, the ICS provides a flexible core mechanism for coordinated and collaborative incident management. When a single incident covers a large geographical area, multiple local ICS organizations may be required. Effective cross-jurisdictional coordination using processes and systems described in the NIMS is absolutely critical in this instance.

Concept of Operations

The NIMS requires that the ICS will be taught at the appropriate level to emergency responders and others in Sangamon County. Based on this training, field command and management functions will be performed in accordance with a standard set of ICS organizations, doctrine, and procedures. However, Incident Commanders will retain the flexibility to modify procedures or organizational structure to align, as necessary, with the operating characteristics of their specific jurisdictions or to accomplish the mission in the context of a particular hazard scenario. Incident Commanders will also direct the identification and location of operational and support facilities based on such scenario.

Sangamon County will ensure its integrated communications capability through the development and use of a common communications plan which will include interoperable communications processes and architectures. This planning will address equipment, systems and protocols necessary to achieve integrated voice and data incident management communications.

For effective and efficient incident management and emergency response, the ICS will have interactive management components and will be:

- suitable for operations within a single jurisdiction or single agency, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement;
- readily adaptable to new technology and to any emergency or incident to which domestic incident management agencies would be expected to respond;
- have a scalable organizational structure that is based on the size and complexity of the incident with a scalable organizational structure where objective setting begins at the top and is communicated throughout the entire organization;
- user-friendly and applicable across a wide spectrum of emergency response and incident management disciplines;
- using common terminology for organizational functions, resource descriptions, and incident facilities; and
- using measurable objectives to ensure fulfillment of incident management goals.

Implementation of ICS will be done such that the least possible disruption is caused on existing systems and processes. Its organizational structure will be modular based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident. Responsibility for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization ultimately rests with the Incident Commander, who makes these decisions based on the requirements of the situation.

As incident complexity increases, the ICS organization expands from the top down and functional responsibilities are delegated. Concurrently with structural expansion, the number of management positions expands to adequately address the requirements of the incident. In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement, a Unified Command structure will be used to allow agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability. See Appendix 1.

Incident Action Plans will be relied upon to provide a coherent means of communicating the overall incident objectives in the context of operational and support activities. ICS will follow an approach called “management by objectives” that begins at the top and is communicated throughout the entire ICS organization which includes:

- establishing overarching objectives;
- developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols;
- establishing and directing efforts to attain specific, measurable objectives for various functional activities in support of defined strategic objectives; and
- documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective action.

The command function will be clearly established from the beginning of incident operations. The agency with primary jurisdictional authority over the incident designates the individual at the scene responsible for establishing command. It will also be responsible for gathering, sharing and managing incident-related information and intelligence. When command is transferred, the process will include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.

The following principles will be followed for the effective management and accountability of manpower and resources:

- all responders, regardless of agency affiliation, will report in to receive an assignment in accordance with procedures established by the Incident Commander;
- response operations will be directed and coordinated as outlined in the Incident Action Plan;
- personnel and equipment will respond only when requested or dispatched by an appropriate authority;
- each individual involved in incident operations will be assigned to only one supervisor;
- supervisors will be given a manageable span of control with three to seven subordinates;
- supervisors will adequately supervise and control their subordinates;
- supervisors will communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision by categorizing, ordering, dispatching, tracking, and recovering such resources; and
- supervisors will record and maintain an accurate, up-to-date picture of resource use, reporting resource status changes as they occur.

If necessitated by the complexity of an incident or incident management span-of-control considerations, an Area Command will be activated. Area Command should not be confused with the functions performed by an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). An Area Command oversees management of the incident or incidents, while an EOC coordinates support functions and provides resources support. See Appendix 2.

Appendices

1. ICS Organization and Operations
2. Roles of an Area Command and the EOC
3. Responsibilities of Command Staff
4. Responsibilities of General Staff

APPENDIX 1

ICS ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

The ICS organization has five major functions: command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance and administration. The Incident Commander and Command Staff are responsible for the command function.

Command Staff positions are established to accept responsibility for key activities not specifically identified in the General Staff functional elements. These positions will include, at minimum, the Public Information Officer (PIO), Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. Additional positions may be required, depending on the nature, scope, complexity, and location(s) of the incident(s), or according to specific requirements established by the Incident Commander. The Command Staff is responsible for the overall management of an incident. The PIO, Safety Officer and Liaison Officer report directly to the Incident Commander who will assign to each their responsibility. See Appendix 3.

The General Staff comprises incident management personnel who represent the major functional elements of the ICS including the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief. Command Staff and General Staff will continually interact and share vital information and estimates of the current and future situation and develop recommended courses of action for consideration by the Incident Commander. See Appendix 4.

A single Incident Commander will be designated for incidents that occur within a single jurisdiction with no functional agency overlap or when all parties to a cross-jurisdictional or multifunctional response agree to a single Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will develop incident objectives upon which subsequent incident action planning is to be based. The Incident Commander will approve the Incident Action Plan and all requests pertaining to the ordering and releasing of incident resources.

The Sheriff's Office, through its chain-of-command, is predesignated to provide the Incident Commander for major events in Sangamon County, unless a municipal or special district police chief has jurisdiction and chooses to take this role, or the primary nature of the event clearly does not involve law enforcement matters. Depending on such other primary nature, incident command would be taken by the fire chief with jurisdiction or the director of the Sangamon County Department of Public Health.

The predesignated Incident Commander will be responsible for determining whether the full nature of an event calls for the establishment of a Unified Command structure. Unified Command is an important element in multijurisdictional or multiagency incident management. It provides guidelines to enable agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

All agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for any or all aspects of the event and those able to provide specific resource support will participate in the Unified Command structure. These agencies will contribute to the process of determining overall incident strategies; selecting objectives; ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities is accomplished in accordance with approved incident objectives; ensuring the integration of tactical operations; and approving, committing, and making optimum use of all assigned resources. Unified Command will be run from the Incident Command Post where participating individuals will be directed to collocate to represent their agencies.

The key individual in a Unified Command structure is the Operations Section Chief. This person will normally come from the agency with the greatest jurisdictional involvement in the event and will be selected with the full agreement of all participating agencies. All participating agencies must also approve the consolidated Incident Action Plan which will be developed under the direction of the person chosen as the Planning Section Chief. The tactical implementation of the Incident Action Plan will be directed by the Operations Section Chief. A new Operations Section Chief will be selected for each operational period, generally 12 to 24 hours.

To further the efficiency of the Unified Command structure, its participating members will also keep each other informed of specific requirements for their agencies and establish procedures for joint decision making and documentation. These procedures will be used to evaluate and update the Incident Action Plan at regular intervals being certain that it adequately addresses the mission and policy needs of each jurisdictional agency, as well as the interaction between jurisdictions, functional agencies, and private organizations.

APPENDIX 2

ROLES OF AN AREA COMMAND AND THE EOC

An Area Command will be activated only if necessary, depending on the complexity of the incident and incident management span-of-control considerations. The Chief Executive Officer will make the decision to establish an Area Command.

An Area Command will be established either to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by a separate ICS organization or to oversee the management of a large incident that involves multiple ICS organizations, such as would likely be the case for incidents that are not site specific, geographically dispersed or evolve over longer periods of time (such as a bioterrorism event). In this sense, acts of biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear terrorism represent particular challenges for the traditional ICS structure and will require extraordinary coordination between Federal, State, local, private-sector and nongovernmental organizations.

For incidents which are under its authority, an Area Command will be responsible for:

- setting overall incident-related priorities;
- allocating critical resources according to priorities;
- ensuring that incidents are properly managed;
- ensuring that incident management objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy;
- identifying critical resource needs and reporting them to the EOCs and/or the multiagency coordination entities; and
- ensuring that short-term emergency recovery is coordinated to assist in the transition to full recovery operations.

If the incidents under the authority of an Area Command are multijurisdictional, a Unified Area Command will be established. This allows each jurisdiction to have representation in the command structure.

An Area Command will also be used when there are a number of incidents in the same area and of the same type, such as two or more hazardous material incidents or tornado touchdowns. These represent incidents that may compete for the same resources.

When incidents do not have similar resource demands, they will be handled separately and be coordinated through the EOC. The core functions of the EOC are coordination; communications; resource dispatch and tracking; and information collection, analysis and dissemination.

The multiagency coordination entities at the EOC, when established, will be responsible for:

- ensuring each agency involved in incident management activities is providing appropriate situational awareness and resource status information;
- establishing priorities between incidents and/or Area Commands in concert with the Incident Commander or Unified Command(s) involved;
- acquiring and allocating resources required by incident management personnel in concert with the priorities established by the Incident Commander or Unified Command;
- anticipating and identifying future resource requirements;
- coordinating and resolving policy issues arising from the incident(s);
- providing strategic coordination as required;
- ensuring improvements in plans, procedures, communications, staffing, and other capabilities are acted upon, following the incident(s); and
- ensuring necessary improvements are coordinated with appropriate preparedness organizations following the incident(s).

APPENDIX 3

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMAND STAFF

Public Information Officer

The PIO will be responsible for interfacing with the public, the media, and other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The PIO will also perform a key public information-monitoring role. Whether the command structure is single or unified, only one incident PIO will be designated. Assistants for the PIO, as needed, will be assigned from other agencies or departments involved.

The PIO will not release any incident-related information without the Incident Commander's approval. The PIO will:

- represent and advise the Incident Commander on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident;
- develop accurate and complete information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external consumption;
- handle functions required to coordinate, clear with appropriate authorities, and disseminate accurate and timely information related to the incident, including handling media and public inquiries, emergency public information and warnings, rumor monitoring and response, and media monitoring;
- coordinate public information at or near the incident site;
- serve as the on-scene link to the Joint Information System (JIS), see Note 1;
- serve as a field PIO, during a large-scale operation, with links to the Joint Information Center (JIC), see Note 2; and
- coordinate and integrate public information functions across jurisdictions and across functional agencies; among Federal, State, and local partners; and with private sector and nongovernmental organizations.

Note 1 - The JIS provides an organized, integrated, and coordinated mechanism to ensure the delivery of understandable, timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public in a crisis. It includes the plans, protocols, and structures used to provide information to the public during incident operations, and encompasses all public information operations related to an incident, including all Federal, State, local, and private organization PIOs, staff, and JICs established to support an incident. Key elements include the following: interagency coordination and integration; developing and delivering coordinated messages; support for decision makers; and flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

Note 2 - A JIC is a physical location where public affairs professionals from organizations involved in incident management activities can collocate to perform critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. It is important for the JIC to have the most current and accurate information regarding incident management activities at all times. The JIC will include representatives of each jurisdiction, agency, private sector organization, and nongovernmental organization involved in incident management activities. JICs may be established at each level of incident management, as required. Multiple JIC locations will be established when required by the circumstance of an incident. The JIC provides the structure for disseminating official information with procedures and protocols to communicate and coordinate effectively with other JICs, as well as with other appropriate components of the ICS organization.

Safety Officer

The ultimate responsibility for the safe conduct of incident management operations rests with the Incident Commander or Unified Command and supervisors at all levels of incident management. The Safety Officer, in turn, will be responsible for the set of systems and procedures necessary to ensure ongoing assessment of hazardous environments, coordination of multiagency safety efforts, and implementation of measures to promote emergency responder safety, as well as the general safety of incident operations. The Safety Officer has emergency authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts during incident operations.

In a Unified Command structure, a single Safety Officer will be designated, in spite of the fact that multiple jurisdictions and/or functional agencies are involved. Assistants will be assigned to the Safety Officer from other agencies or departments constituting the Unified Command, when required.

The Safety Officer, Operations Section Chief, and Planning Section Chief will coordinate closely regarding operational safety and emergency responder health and safety issues. The Safety Officer will also ensure the coordination of safety management functions and issues across jurisdictions, across functional agencies, and with private-sector and nongovernmental organizations.

Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is the point of contact for the representatives of other governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and/or private entities involved in incident management activities. In either a single or Unified Command structure, the representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies and organizations coordinate through the Liaison Officer. Agency and/or organizational representatives assigned to an incident will have the authority to speak for their parent agencies and/or organizations on all matters, following appropriate consultations with their agency leadership.

APPENDIX 4

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GENERAL STAFF

Operations Section Chief

The Operations Section Chief will be responsible to the Incident Commander or Unified Command for the direct management of all incident-related operational activities. The Operations Section Chief will establish tactical objectives for each operational period, generally 12 to 24 hours, with other section chiefs and unit leaders establishing their own supporting objectives.

The tactical implementation of the Incident Action Plan will be directed by the Operations Section Chief. A new Operations Section Chief will be designated for each operational period and will have direct involvement in the preparation of the Incident Action Plan for the corresponding period of responsibility.

The Operations Section Chief will organize and manage resources for the Incident Commander. Resources include the combination of personnel and equipment required for incident management operations and will be organized and managed in three ways, depending on the requirements of the incident:

1. Single Resources which are individual personnel and equipment items including the operators associated with them;
2. Task Forces which are combinations of resources assembled in support of a specific mission or operational need, where all resource elements within a task force have common communications and a designated leader; and
3. Strike Teams which are a set number of resources of the same kind and type that have an established minimum number of personnel.

When the number of resources exceeds the manageable span of control of the Operations Section Chief (or Incident Commander), such resources will be divided into either Divisions or Groups. Divisions will be established to divide an incident into physical or geographical areas. Groups will be established to divide an incident into functional areas of operation.

When the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the recommended span of control for the Operations Section Chief, these resources will be divided further into Branches. The NIMS recommends that span of control be one supervisor to between three and seven subordinates.

Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section Chief directs the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of incident situation information and intelligence to the Incident Commander or Unified Command and incident management personnel. Under his direction, the Planning Section will also prepare status reports, display situation information, and maintain the status of resources assigned to the incident.

The Planning Section Chief will direct the development and documentation of the Incident Action Plan, based upon guidance from the Incident Commander or Unified Command. An Incident Action Plan will be developed to meet the need to document actions and/or decisions, including, but limited to, incidents which will effectively span several operational periods, which require resources or authorities from multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, or which require changes in shifts of personnel and/or equipment.

Incident Action Plans will include the overall incident objectives and strategies established by the Incident Commander or Unified Command, specifically addressing tactical objectives and support activities required for each operational period. The Incident Action Plan will also contain provisions for continuous incorporation of “lessons learned” as incident management activities progress.

The Planning Section Chief will also be responsible for the intelligence and information function. This includes developing, conducting, and managing information related security plans and operations as directed by the Incident Commander, safeguarding sensitive information of all types, and coordinating information and operational matters with the public awareness activities of the PIO. He will direct the gathering of intelligence information critical to the incident and assure that it is appropriately analyzed and shared with personnel designated by the Incident Commander, who have a proper clearance and a “need-to-know” to ensure that they support decision making.

Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section Chief will be responsible to the Incident Commander or Unified Command for directing all support requirements needed to facilitate effective and efficient incident management. This includes ordering resources from off-incident locations and providing facilities, transportation, supplies, equipment maintenance and fuel, food services, communications and information technology support, and emergency responder medical services, including inoculations, as required.

Finance/Administration Section Chief

The Finance/Administration Section Chief will be responsible for directing financial and other administrative support services. Not all incidents will require a separate section for these duties. When an incident requires only one specific Finance/Administration function, such as cost analysis, to be performed, the Incident Commander or Unified Command will assign this duty to a technical specialist in the Planning Section.