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Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a modular emergency management system designed for all hazards and levels of emergency response. This system creates a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communication operations with a standardized organization structure. The system is used locally, statewide and throughout the United States as the basis for emergency response management. ICS at the University of Arizona facilitates the University's ability to communicate and coordinate response actions with other jurisdictions. In addition, the system facilitates coordination with external emergency response agencies as well.

Every incident regardless of size, has an Incident Commander (IC). The initial Incident Commander is someone with the most information and who is responsible for overseeing the initial incident, until relieved by a higher authority, or first responders. The **IC is in complete control of the incident, regardless of rank or title.** *All individuals associated with the emergency must listen to and follow the instructions of the IC.*

The following components characterize the Incident Command System:

- Common terminology applied to organization elements, position, titles, facility designations and resources.

- Generic position whereby multiple individuals are trained for each emergency response role and follow prepared action checklists.

- Modular organization based on activating only those organizational elements required to meet current objectives.

- Integrated communication so information systems operate smoothly among all response agencies involved.

- Unified command structure, so organization elements are liked to, for a single overall structure with appropriate span-of-control limits.

- Manageable span of control whereby supervisory demand is held in the one-to-three to one-to-seven range.

- Comprehensive resource management for coordinating and inventorying resources for field responses.

- Consolidated action plans, which contain strategy to meet objectives at both the field response and EOC levels.

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Incident Commander Structure

Structure - ICS is structured with expandable functional sections

   a. Incident Commander (IC) and Command Staff
   b. Operations
   c. Planning
   d. Logistics
   e. Finance/Administration

a. Incident Commander

The Incident Commander (IC) has the authority and responsibility to manage the incident response effort, with general guidance from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Designation of the "IC" being automatically as the first emergency responder arrives on the scene. This may evolve and be passed on to others depending upon the complexity, length, and severity of the incident.

The IC, in consultation with emergency responders, determines the classification of the incident, the required response, and expands the emergency response organization as needed.

The IC assumes all emergency response responsibilities until they are formally delegated to others. If a situation escalates, additional positions are assigned, and resources obtained. Determination of personnel to assume the role of IC will be based on response time, availability of qualified personnel, nature of the incident, level of training, and the demands of the position.

b. Command Staff

The IC may assign an immediate command staff consisting of the following positions and responsibilities:
   • Safety Officer – provides overall operational safety authority
   • Information Officer – acts as sole media contact; distributes information
   • Liaison Officer – interfaces with cooperating agencies
   • Scribe – to record the events

c. General Staff

Operations Section: The Operations Section is responsible for all incident tactical activities. The Operations Section is divided into groups (e.g. fire, law enforcement, emergency medical, facilities management, the Campus Emergency Response Team).

Planning Section: The Planning Section collects and analyzes data regarding operations and prepares extended incident actions plans. Incident Assessment, Resource Status, Recovery and Documentation are units under this division.

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Logistics Section: The Logistics Section is responsible for meeting the resource needs of the Operations Section. This can include procuring specialized equipment and supplies, communication services, providing food and water to response personnel, and meeting the transportation requirement of the incident.

Finance Section: The Finance Section is activated for the purposes of determining the short and long term fiscal impacts of the emergency, and for providing payments to vendors for the use of supplies and equipment.

d. **Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT):** The CERT plays an active, supportive role in campus emergencies. The CERT Chair, Sr. Vice President for Campus Life, manages and activates CERT usually after notification by the Chief of Police. CERT supports the IC and the emergency, by bringing together key campus personnel to help plan and coordinate campus emergency efforts.