



SACRAMENTO  
STATE

**THE EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE**

**TO**

**❖ EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING**

**❖ THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

**❖ THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

**CENTER**

**AND**

**❖ THE PRINCIPLES OF**

**UNIFIED COMMAND**

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## FOREWORD

Bad stuff happens. One need only watch the evening news to become aware of the potential for loss of life, devastation, and havoc which can occur as a result of a manmade or environmental critical incidents and disasters. From both locally and around the world we have seen the results of floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, terrorist events, explosions, gunman, and hazardous materials incidents.

And when it does, regardless of what business you're in, the day-to-day methods that we use to conduct our operation is insufficient to handle a large-scale emergency.

Think about it. In a business organization you are divided up into divisions such as: sales, accounting, production and distribution -- within an academic environment you're divided up into such divisions as: facilities maintenance, educational staff and school administration – even your local law enforcement agency is divided up into the three main divisions of: patrol, investigations and administration. These sections or divisions are the logical configurations that were developed based on how we do our normal daily operations - what works best for us to get our daily job accomplished.

Not one of these daily configurations, including those in law enforcement, works in the crisis environment of an emergency. The routine checks and balances, the paperwork, the daily communications pathways and especially the oversight provided by supervisors, mid-managers and executives – all of it can disappear during a crisis.

What usually happens, in the middle of all the confusion, one executive person within the organization stands up, raises his or her hand, and says, "OK I'm in charge during this crisis". While it is incredibly courageous, no matter how good hearted or competent this fearless executive is, they are only going to be as good as their "emergency management toolbox".

They're going to need a solid understanding about how we conduct total Emergency Operations Planning and the key components of actually managing an emergency.

The majority of Executives regard the field of emergency management as simply the ability to recover from a disaster. Having a Disaster Recovery Plan, they believe, now has insulated them from the terrible effects of a disaster / critical incident. *Nothing could be further from the truth.*

Often overlooked are the components of: Mitigation, Preparation and the Response / Management of the event. As an Executive within an agency you need to conduct an analysis of the potential hazards or threats that your agency

can face. You then need to put into place plans to: Mitigate the effects of these specific events, to Prepare for them through the training of your staff, the conduct of drills and the purchase of the necessary equipment that you will need, and finally – to have a Management team and system in place capable of handling and controlling a wide variety of critical incidents / disasters.

Please do not assume that you have an effective emergency management program in place if you have only addressed the components of Disaster Recovery. If you have not taken care of, and spent the appropriate amount of time and money on, Mitigation – Preparation – and Response / Management, your program is destined for a potential failure.

The emphasis that you place on having a total plan for emergency operations is in direct proportion to the level of success your agency will have in these events.

You and all of the executives within your organization need this information and training. How else are you going to know whether or not your organization can withstand a significant emergency? How are you going to know if you are ready? Simply having one person trained does not guarantee that they might be available at the given moment in time when the emergency arrives.

We need this understanding of emergency management because the very survival of your agency can depend on it. Depending on which source you may look at, fully 30 to 50% of all agencies suffering a significant critical incident or disaster do not ever recover; or they recover as a significantly altered organization, sometimes without various executives.

The purpose of this manual is to provide a simplified modular approach to help Executives understand this emergency management problem and to give them the tools necessary to not only evaluate their own organization's readiness, but to help them in the actual conduct of emergency operations. Your understanding of the principles of management in a critical incident can provide the vital leadership needed at one of these critical incidents.

Our efforts in this book to give you a well-rounded picture with regard to emergency management have been divided up into several key areas:

**Emergency Operations Planning**

**Incident Command System - ICS**

**Emergency Operations Center - EOC**

**Principles of Unified Command.**

These tools have proven themselves as highly effective techniques to handle a wide variety of emergencies. They need to be the cornerstone of your overall emergency planning and critical incident response.

This orientation to emergency management is not just for the emergency services of law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service. It is directed towards anyone at the Executive level in a wide variety of occupational fields: educational institutions, private business corporations and the public sector.

Everyone needs to have an understanding of the principles of emergency management in order to work together during a critical incident. We want everyone working as partners, singing off that same sheet of music. The general term '*agency*' that is used in this manual refers to your specific business, public agency or educational institution.

In this book we hope to give you the Executive an overview of the key components in the emergency management field. We hope to give you this information so that you can conduct a realistic appraisal of your agency's ability to handle one of these incidents. We also wanted to give you some information that you can put into your "executive toolbox" that will help you to get a better understanding of a very complex issue.

It is our sincere hope that this book encourages you to pursue further education and training in the emergency management field that will enable you to confidently step forward when your agency needs you the most.

## **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING**

A comprehensive emergency management program does the following:  
Examines potential emergencies and disasters based on the risks posed by likely hazards.  
Develops and implements programs aimed toward reducing the impact of these events on your agency.  
Prepares for those risks that cannot be eliminated and prescribes the actions required to deal with the consequences of actual events and to recover from those events.

Emergency operations planning activities are divided into four phases that form a cycle. The phases of the cycle are:

**Mitigation** — *Taking sustained actions to reduce or eliminate risk to people and property from hazards and their effects.*

**Preparedness** — *Building the emergency management function to respond effectively to, and recover from, any hazard.*

**Response** — *Conducting emergency operations to save lives and property by doing such things as - evacuating potential victims; providing food, water, shelter, and medical care to those in need; and restoring critical services.*

**Recovery** — *Rebuilding your agency so that you can function on your own, return to normal life, and protect against future hazards.*



Following the emergency, we learn how to mitigate, prepare, and respond better. As we revise our efforts, the cycle repeats. The phases often overlap to fit individual situations and events.

## **MITIGATION**

As the costs of disasters continue to rise, it is necessary to take *sustained action* to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects. These sustained actions are also known as **mitigation**.

Mitigation is the initial phase of emergency management and should be considered before a disaster or emergency occurs. Mitigation, however, should also be a *continuing activity* that is integrated with each of the other phases of emergency management to employ a long-range, community-based approach to mitigation.

The goals of mitigation activities are to:

Protect people and structures.

Reduce the costs of response and recovery.

Mitigation is accomplished in conjunction with a **hazard analysis**. A hazard analysis helps to identify:

What events can occur in and around the community.

The likelihood that an event will occur.

The consequences of the event in terms of casualties, destruction, disruption to critical services, and costs of recovery.

To be successful, mitigation measures must be developed into an overall **Mitigation Strategy** that considers ways to reduce hazard losses together with the overall risk from specific hazards and other community goals.

A sound Mitigation Strategy is one that is based on several factors:

- Prevention measures are intended to prevent existing risks from becoming worse based on new development or other changes within your agencies area. (e.g., road construction, zoning or building code changes).

Prevention measures can be very effective in areas that have not been developed or are in an early phase of development. By implementing prevention measures, such as open space preservation and storm water management, future development can be directed in such a way as to minimize the risk to your agency from known hazards while maintaining other community goals and the overall quality of life in the community.

## MITIGATION

▪ Property protection measures are used to modify buildings or their surroundings to reduce the risk of damage from a known hazard. Property protection measures directly protect people and property at risk and may be simple and relatively low cost (e.g., raising utilities or strapping computers and servers) or they may be more elaborate and expensive (e.g., acquiring land and using that land for recreational purposes or building earthquake-resistant structures in earthquake zones).

▪ Natural resource protection measures are used to reduce the consequences of a known hazard and to improve the overall quality of the environment. Natural resource protection measures can range from erosion and sediment control to wetlands protection to controlling runoff from farmland sediment into downstream waterways.

▪ Emergency services measures protect people before and after an event occurs and may include:

- Warning.
- Response.
- Protective measures for critical facilities.
- Maintenance of health and safety.

To be effective, emergency protective measures should be built into the emergency planning process, exercised, and revised to incorporate lessons learned from both exercises and actual emergencies.

▪ Structural projects directly protect people and property that are at risk from a known hazard. Structural projects involve the construction of man-made structures (e.g., dikes, levees, elevated roadways) to control the damage from a known hazard. These projects can be very expensive, and over the long-term, may actually disrupt the environment in such a way as to increase the overall risk from other hazards. Additionally, some structural mitigation measures may provide the public with a false sense of security, especially in the case of an extreme event, such as the Midwest floods, during which many levees were breached by the flood waters.

## MITIGATION

▪ Public information serves to inform and remind people about the hazards they face and measures they should take to avoid damage or injury. Public information measures may include:

- Outreach projects.
- Real estate disclosure requirements.
- Technical assistance.
- Education programs.

The **Mitigation Strategy** developed must consider the hazards faced, the potential for damage from those hazards, and the overall needs of your agency and community. Mitigation measures must be consistent with the strategy but can be effective only if considered as part of the larger emergency management cycle.

Here's a simple exercise for you to take. Sit down with several other executives and answer the following questions:

1. What is the hazard for which your agency or community is at highest risk?
2. What type(s) of damage is/are likely to occur if an event involving the selected hazard occurs?
3. What steps can be taken to reduce damage from this hazard in our agency?
4. How will you know if the mitigation efforts have been successful?

You should be able to answer each of these questions for all of the specific hazards that you may face in the area where your agency resides.

## **PREPAREDNESS**

Because it is not possible to mitigate completely against every hazard that poses a risk, **preparedness** measures can help to reduce the impact of the remaining hazards by taking certain actions before an emergency event occurs.

Preparedness includes *plans or other preparations made to save lives and facilitate response and recovery operations.*

Preparedness measures involve all of the players in your agency – employees, mid-managers, executives, faculty, students, staff members, etc. and, at the agency level, may include activities, such as:

- Developing an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that addresses identified hazards, risks, and response measures.
- Recruiting, assigning, and training staff who can assist in key areas of response operations.
- Identifying resources and supplies that may be required in an emergency.
- Designating facilities for emergency use.

Generally, your agency's Emergency Operations Plans – EOP, describes how your agency will do business in an emergency. The EOP:

- Assigns responsibility to groups or individuals for carrying out specific actions in the emergency.
- Establishes lines of authority and organizational relationships, and shows how all actions will be coordinated.
- Describes how people and property will be protected in emergencies and disasters.
- Identifies personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources that can be made available by agreement with other agencies — for use during response and recovery operations.
- Identifies steps to address mitigation concerns during response and recovery operations.

## **PREPAREDNESS**

Your agency is responsible for attending to the emergency needs of all the people within your organization. Therefore, your EOP should focus on measures that are essential for protecting your people, including:

- Warning and communications: How the agency will warn all of your people of an existing or impending emergency and communicate internally before, during, and after an event occurs.
- Emergency public information: How your agency will provide continuous information to your people before, during, and after an emergency occurs. Emergency public information is especially critical in light of the recent terrorism threat. Decisions about what to tell the people of your agency and when to provide this information are critical to gaining a reasoned response from the people in your organization. Proper dissemination of emergency public information will be a critical factor in providing confidence that your agency is doing all it can to protect its people and control the situation, and—perhaps most importantly—making the people within your organization into a response asset.
- Mass care: Where and for how long the people of your agency's emergency needs, such as shelter and food distribution, will be accomplished. What facilities will be available, what supplies will be stocked, and how the supplies will be distributed should be all covered under mass care in the EOP.
- Health and medical care: How victims will be cared for, where, and by whom are addressed in the health and medical portion of the EOP. Special issues, such as decontamination, must also be addressed for hazardous materials and terrorist events.
- Evacuation: What routes will be used if evacuation becomes necessary, special transportation or routing requirements (e.g., evacuating the disabled or keeping evacuation routes from your facility open and clear), and other issues dealing with emergency egress are all part of the evacuation portion of the EOP.

## **PREPAREDNESS**

### **Recruiting, Assigning, and Training Staff**

During an emergency or disaster response, it may be necessary to assign personnel to jobs other than those that they normally perform. Regardless of employment status, these personnel must be recruited, assigned, and trained for their jobs *before* an emergency event occurs. Whenever possible, these persons should be included in exercises that enable them to practice the job under simulated emergency conditions so that, when an actual emergency occurs, they are ready to perform in their new capacities with little or no time lost in learning the job.

### **Identifying Resources and Supplies**

Identifying the resources and supplies that will be available for an emergency response is a crucial part of preparedness. Virtually all agencies take an inventory of their personnel and equipment resources to determine what they have and compare it with what they may need in an emergency. Those gaps between on-hand resources and probable requirements can be filled in a number of ways. Among the most common are:

- Mutual aid agreements with similar neighboring agencies, such as one another nearby school district, or in other division of your company that is out of the area. Mutual aid agreements are formal, written agreements between agencies that provide the conditions under which resource sharing can take place during an emergency. Mutual aid agreements are most common among fire departments and law enforcement agencies but may be developed to cover other resources and equipment (e.g., construction equipment, computer equipment, office space, classroom space) as well.

Standby contracts with suppliers of critical equipment and supplies. Standby contracts typically are made for equipment, such as dump trucks or other construction equipment, but are also used for supplies, such as plastic sheeting, chain-link fence, computer equipment and rental vehicles

Under a typical standby contract, the supplier agrees to provide an established quantity of an item at the unit cost in effect on the day *before* the emergency occurs. Standby contracts are a good way for agencies to meet their resource supply requirements without incurring the costs of stockpiling and without paying the rapidly increasing prices that often follow an emergency.

## **PREPAREDNESS**

### **Designating Facilities for Emergency Use**

To ensure an effective and efficient response, certain facilities are designated as part of the emergency planning process. Typically, these facilities include:

- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is the central location from which all off-scene activities are coordinated. Senior Managers and Executives are located at the EOC, as well as personnel supporting critical functions, such as operations, planning, logistics, and finance and administration.

The key function of EOC personnel is to ensure that those who are located at the scene have the resources (i.e., personnel, tools, and equipment) they need for the response. In large emergencies and disasters, the EOC also acts as a liaison between local responders from your agency and the local government resources. (Note that States operate EOCs as well and can activate them as necessary to support local operations. State EOC personnel report to the Governor and act as a liaison between local and Federal personnel.)

- Shelters, which are used to house victims and first responders who are displaced by the event. Shelters should be designated *before* an event occurs, and all of your employees and staff should be aware of shelter locations and transportation routes from their neighborhoods or workplaces to the shelters. In most areas, The American Red Cross operates shelters and coordinates with the local volunteer program manager to ensure that sheltering needs are met.

- Distribution centers, from which food and emergency supplies are made available to the public. In most areas, The American Red Cross, together with other local voluntary agencies, coordinate distribution centers.

- Storage areas for specific types of equipment. Warehouses, supply yards, and other facilities that will be used as providers of the equipment necessary for a response should be designated as part of the planning process.

Other facilities may also be designated in advance, based on the jurisdiction's resources and the areas of the community that are likely to be affected. On-scene facilities, such as the Incident Command Post (ICP) and staging areas, typically are *not* designated in advance because of the requirement for close proximity to the incident site.

## **PREPAREDNESS**

### **Personal Preparedness**

Private Citizens, your employees and staff, can and should also prepare for emergencies. There are several simple steps that you, as an executive, can take to prepare your employees and staff members for an emergency. Personal preparedness activities can not only keep you and your family safe but can help you become a response asset rather than a response burden.

We all know that we accomplish nothing without the hard work of our employees, so it is a natural extension of your care and concerned for the people that work for you, to assist them in their efforts to prepare for emergency events.

Through the use of staff meetings and employee workgroups you can show you or true care and concerned by placing emphasis on such things as:

- Complete your own hazard analysis. If you have lived in the community for any period of time, you are probably aware of the hazards that are high risk for your area. If you are new to the area, talk to some long-time residents to determine what events have occurred historically in your area. Don't forget the "small" emergencies, such as fire or an extended electrical outage.
- Develop your own emergency plan. Play the "what if" game with each of the hazards you selected. *What* would you do *if* \_\_\_\_\_ occurs? Then ask yourself what supplies you would need to take the action(s) you identify, and gather the supplies together. How is our family going to communicate and get back together? What about child or elder care?
- Practice your plan. Even simple tasks can become difficult during an emergency. Practice your plan *before* an emergency occurs until you are thoroughly familiar with the procedures you need to follow if the event occurs.
- Gather supplies. Many agencies have assisted their employees by offering low-cost items such as disaster kits, flashlights, water barrels, etc. in order to help them get better prepared for a local emergency. The better prepared your staff and their families are, the better off they will be during a major event.

Please remember that as an executive, having plans sitting in a bookcase on a wall is useless. The plans must be tested and drilled upon regularly in order to ascertain whether or not your agency is really well prepared.

## **RESPONSE**

**Response** begins when an emergency event is imminent or immediately after an event occurs. Response encompasses *all activities taken to save lives and reduce damage* from the event and includes:

- Providing emergency assistance to victims.
- Restoring critical infrastructure (e.g., lights, heat, utilities).
- Ensuring continuity of critical services.

In other words, response involves putting preparedness plans into action.

One of the first response tasks is to conduct a situation assessment. Local government is responsible for emergency response and for continued assessment of its ability to protect its citizens and the property within the community. To fulfill this responsibility, responders from your agency and local government officials must conduct an immediate **rapid assessment** of the local situation.

Rapid assessment includes all immediate response activities that are directly linked to determining initial lifesaving and life-sustaining needs and to identifying imminent hazards. The ability of your agency and the local governments to perform a rapid assessment within the first few hours after an event is crucial to providing an adequate response for life-threatening situations and imminent hazards. Coordinated and timely assessments enable local government to:

- Prioritize response activities.
- Allocate scarce resources.
- Request additional assistance from mutual aid partners, as well as the State, quickly and accurately.

## **RESPONSE**

Obtaining accurate information quickly through rapid assessment is the key to initiating response activities and needs to be collected in an organized fashion. Critical information includes information about:

- Lifesaving needs, such as evacuation and search and rescue.
- The status of critical infrastructure, such as transportation, utilities, communication systems, and fuel and water supplies.
- The status of critical facilities, such as other buildings on your facility, computer servers, police and fire stations, medical providers, water and sewage treatment facilities, and media outlets.
- The risk of damage to your agency and the community (e.g., dams and levees, facilities producing or storing hazardous materials) from imminent hazards.
- The number of citizens who have been displaced as a result of the event and the estimated extent of damage to their dwellings.

Essential elements of information also include information about the potential for **Cascading Events**. Cascading events are events that occur as a direct or indirect result of an initial event.

For example, if a flash flood disrupts electricity to an area and, as a result of the electrical failure, a serious traffic accident involving a hazardous materials spill occurs, the traffic accident is a cascading event. If, as a result of the hazardous materials spill, a neighborhood must be evacuated and a local stream is contaminated, these are also cascading events. Taken together, the effect of cascading events can be crippling to a community.

Good planning, training, and exercising before an event occurs can help reduce cascading events and their effects. Maintaining the discipline to follow the plan during response operations also reduces the effects of cascading events.

## **RESPONSE**

### **Citizens and Response Operations**

What can private citizens do to facilitate an emergency response? Surprisingly, there is much that citizens can do, and many of the actions that will help the response most are relatively simple.

- Follow your own emergency plan. Assuming that you developed a plan and practiced what you would do during the preparedness phase, this is the time to implement it. Follow your plan unless something related to the event makes it unworkable or unsafe.
- Pay attention to *and follow* emergency directions provided by local officials. Listen to emergency broadcasts on the local media and follow the directions provided in the broadcasts. Emergency announcements are prepared by those who are most familiar with what is actually happening at the incident site and will provide you with the information you need to remain safe during the emergency.
- Don't make unnecessary phone calls, either by cellular phone or land line. Keep critical lines of communication open for emergency use.

Very importantly, if you think you want to help during an emergency, don't just show up at the scene to help. Volunteer with an established voluntary agency *now*. Volunteering before an emergency occurs will enable you to receive the training you need so that, when an emergency occurs and your services are needed, you know where you need to go and what you will do. Volunteering before an emergency also helps the agency and local authorities identify their resources and plan their needs.

The cornerstone process to effective response management is the Incident Command System – ICS. The system will be discussed fully in the next section.

## **RECOVERY**

The goal of recovery is to return your agency and the community's systems and activities to normal. Recovery begins right after the emergency. Some recovery activities may be concurrent with response efforts.

It's imperative that your agency try to get back up and running on as near a normal basis as possible, as quickly as possible. In line with this premise you as an executive must approach the basic concept of re-creating your facility at another place.

The question to ask yourself is: "If I came to work tomorrow and found my entire facility burned to the ground, could I recover and start at another location?" Issues such as backing up files and keeping copies in different secure locations, along with the designation of a temporary facility to relocate operations should be part of a recovery plan.

Long-term recovery includes restoring economic activity and rebuilding community facilities and housing. Long-term recovery (stabilizing all systems) can sometimes take years depending on the nature of the critical incident or disaster.

Although recovery is primarily a responsibility of your specific agency, in conjunction with your local government, if the emergency or disaster received a Presidential Declaration, a number of assistance programs may be available under the Stafford Act. There are two major categories of Federal aid: Public Assistance and Individual Assistance.

Public Assistance is for repair of infrastructure, public facilities and debris removal, and may include.

- Repair or replacement of non-Federal roads, public buildings, and bridges.
- Implementation of Mitigation measures.

Individual Assistance is for damage to residences and businesses or for personal property losses, and may include:

- Grants to individuals and families for temporary housing, repairs, replacement of possessions, and medical and funeral expenses.
- The Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to individuals and businesses.

## **RECOVERY**

- Crisis counseling for victims and responders; legal services; and disaster unemployment benefits.

Recovery from disaster is unique to each agency and community depending on the amount and kind of damage caused by the disaster and the resources that both the agency and community have ready or can obtain quickly. In the short term, recovery is an extension of the response phase in which basic business services and functions are restored. In the long term, recovery is a restoration of both the personal lives of individuals and the livelihood of the community.

After the short term recovery when businesses have been opened, roads have been cleared and opened, debris removed, supplies and shelters secured, communication channels reopened, water and power, life safety and other basic services restored, the community and its leadership must rebuild.

Once the early stage of recovery has brought the community back to a safe and operational level of functioning, the long term recovery process can begin.

Long term recovery may take several months or even extend into years because it is a complex process of revitalizing not just homes but also businesses, schools, public infrastructure, and the community's economy and quality of life.

There are many long term leadership and planning considerations. Applying for assistance programs available from the Federal government, as mentioned previously, is important to consider for obtaining financial and other resources in the case of a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Other long-term considerations can include:

- Keeping citizens informed and preventing unrealistic expectations.
- Mitigation measures to ensure against future disaster damage.
- Management of Donations and other charity programs.
- Partnerships with other agencies and businesses for resources.

## RECOVERY

- Competing interests of groups involved in the planning process.
- Environmental issues.
- Public health measures to take against the risks of diseases, contamination, and other cascading effects from a disaster.
- The unmet needs of victims.
- Rebuilding bridges, roads, public works, and other expensive parts of the infrastructure.

## **SUMMARY**

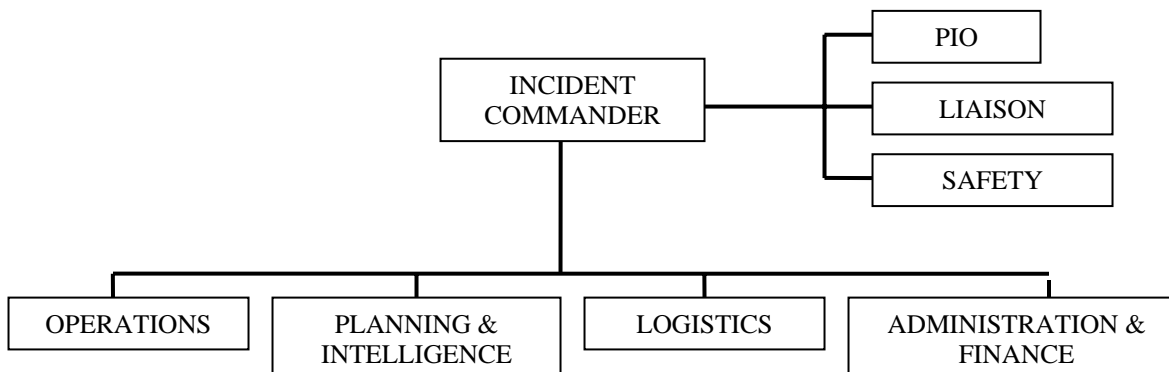
Again, as an executive you have to understand the complete emergency operations planning program. You have to concentrate your efforts on all four components of Mitigation, Preparation, Response, and Recovery.

Don't fall into the trap of concentrating all of your efforts on the Recovery phase. As an executive you can have a critical impact on your agency's ability to lessen the impact of disasters, properly prepare for the hazards in your area and to form a properly trained and equipped comprehensive response team capable of handling any emergency.

The well-being of the people in your agency and the very survival of your business can depend upon how well you handle this task.

(\*Information in this section was taken from The Federal Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Management Institute's course entitled: Principles of Emergency Management.)

## THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM



As an Executive, your responsibility is to make sure that the agency is running at its peak performance level and is capable of handling any kind of an incident that may arise. You can be in command of an agency that runs very well with optimum use of resources and excellent fiscal / budget responsibility, but if a large-scale critical incident / disaster arises and your agency handles it poorly, the continuing ripple effect of this bad performance can go on for a significant period of time.

A major critical incident is every Executive's nightmare. At the onset, there is usually minimal information about what is going on, and the information that is received is usually fragmented and sometimes conflicting.

Most of the initial information received will be coming from panicked and confused employees or public safety first responders that are just arriving on scene and becoming directly involved in a small segment of the event. To compound the problem, depending upon the physical location of the Executive, he or she can be many minutes away from the incident and there can be a significant lack of command authority.

The first twenty to sixty minutes of a critical incident/disaster are the most critical. The policies and procedures that we follow during this initial stage of response to stabilize the event can set the tone for the entire incident. It will determine whether or not we have organized and focused resources on scene, or whether we are fighting from behind the power curve during the entire incident.

Unfortunately, the management of this critical period of time falls not to the Executive, but to your staff members who are physically on the scene of the event. These are active, dynamic incidents with very high-stakes; and they require that employees and staff members stand up to manage the event, often times without Executive supervision.

We therefore need some kind of a universal disaster management plan that can be put into effect by any staff member or employee, and then passed on to mid-management level and Executive personnel as they arrive on scene. The Incident Command System was created for this problem.

### **Background and History of ICS:**

Historically the origins of the Incident Command System are from the Military Reorganization Act of 1920. After returning from World War I, General's Pershing and March completely revamped how the entire United States military effort was organized. During World War I there were approximately 20 separate bureaucracies that had to be dealt with during any part of the conflict. This cumbersome organizational structure was a severe impediment for the conduct of the war and they sought an organizational structure to streamline the process of military management.

This extensive reorganization and streamlining led to the creation of the military G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4 system that went into effect in all branches of the military service. It was used to organize and march armies across Europe and the Pacific Ocean during World War II and it is still in use today.

In the early 1970's, a national project known as FIREScope was convened to try and come up with an organizational system for fighting multi-state forest fires. When this group began to look around for a system that would manage large-scale critical incidents they began to examine the United States military. The military, by its very definition, is always in the emergency management business. So where better to look than at a system that was very effective in crisis management for well over 50 years?

The FIREScope group realized that the G 1-4 organizational structure was a proven tool with a solid track record in the management of the large, quick moving and sometime chaotic events of warfare; and it was adopted by the FIREScope project and named the Incident Command System -- ICS.

ICS then quickly became the nationally recommended standard for all fire departments as an organizational system to use for management of large-scale critical incident events.

It never really received widespread attention or usage in the other public safety disciplines, such as police or emergency medical, until the early nineties when we had the Oakland Berkeley Hills fire in California in 1991, the 1993 attack of the World Trade Center and the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. These events formed the wake-up call in which public safety departments, all levels of education and government, along with the private sector, realized they needed to find a standardized system to manage large-scale multi-agency and multi-discipline events. In 2004 it now forms the basis for

the federally mandated National Incident Management System – NIMS, as part of our efforts in homeland security.

The Incident Command System -- ICS -- provides a management structure and system for conducting onsite emergency operations. It is applicable to small-scale daily operational activities as well as major mobilizations for such things as a campus evacuation, forest fire, flood, or terrorist event.

ICS, because of its standardized operational structure and command terminology, provides a useful and flexible management system that is particularly adaptable to incidents involving multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary responses, as in the case of a public safety response to a critical incident within a school or private business.

### **Some major points about ICS:**

#### *ICS is part of a process.*

One of the reasons why ICS did not initially get favorable reviews from various management and executive groups is because no one viewed the Incident Command System as a part of a process as opposed to a standalone system.

People were told that the ICS was the way to handle an emergency and it needs to be established right away at a critical incident. They believed initially that as soon as they arrived at the scene of a critical incident they were supposed to start placing people into the Incident Command System jobs, and that somehow this would save them.

Because of this approach, they had a real hard time in seeing the relevance of ICS when they needed to evacuate the campus or high-rise building or even establish a perimeter around the barricaded gunman that was actively firing into a neighborhood.

The approach of this manual is that ICS is really the fourth-step in the Critical Incident Response Plan of:

1. LIE - Locate, Isolate, Evacuate - precisely locate the problem – isolate the problem so that it cannot influence other innocent persons - begin the immediate evacuation of people that are injured or are potentially in harm's way.

2. MCI – assess for a Mass Casualty Incident - by definition: five or more serious injuries - activating agency staff members to assist the fire department with the management of the MCI at our facility.

3. Checklist – an emergency action checklist that is in the possession of every employee or staff member - to provide emergency action information and

directions to every employee, and to empower them to call for emergency resources.

4. ICS – this is not how we normally do business. This is an emergency organizational framework that we now move into for the management of this critical incident/disaster.

This four step Critical Incident Response Plan was constructed to give that organizational framework to the overall response to any emergency. Because of the nature of the Executive's position, their role would focus on the Incident Command System.

*ICS is not how we normally do business.*

Every business, school campus or public agency is already organized in order to provide the best service to its customers, students or citizens under normal operating conditions. This day-to-day framework is how we carry on almost all of our business in providing services to our community.

When a critical incident or an emergency occurs, we need to move into a different organizational structure so that we can handle this event in the most efficient manner possible. ICS is this special framework that we operate under during an emergency. Once the emergency is passed, we close ICS down and revert back to our normal operating organization.

*ICS is a team effort.*

In the past, when a large scale critical incident occurred, whatever supervisor, manager or executive showed up on the scene and said, "I'm in charge", that person became the central focus of all attention. They had to do everything and remember the things that were necessary to run the operation.

In an emotional and confusing setting, like a critical incident response, one person can't remember all of the things necessary to run the event. We found that the distractions in this kind of chaotic environment are too big, and things got forgotten and fell through the cracks.

Over the years of using ICS we found that the positions detailed in this emergency framework are entirely adequate to handle any problem that could arise. Literally, there is no task that could occur during a major event that cannot be successfully pigeon-holed or assigned to one of the eight functional ICS jobs.

ICS provides the flexibility needed to rapidly activate and establish an *organizational team* around the functions that need to be performed in a wide

variety of critical incidents from a terrorist event, to a large scale natural disaster such as an earthquake or flood.

The Incident Commander is now joined with the other leaders in the various ICS branches and divisions to form a cohesive group that will manage the conduct of the event. This factor immediately made the running of a critical incident into a team effort; and took it out of the old way of "one person in charge". The use of ICS pooled the knowledge of a group of people, and greatly reduced the potential for mistakes and errors.

*The incident grows the ICS organizational structure.*

One of the key principles of ICS is that the Incident Commander will only activate the branches, divisions and sections that are needed for this specific critical incident.

A lot of potential Incident Commander's mistakenly believe that as soon as they arrive at the scene of a critical incident they have to begin appointing all eight of the jobs in the Incident Command System, this is not true. You don't have to appoint all eight of the jobs right away unless the situation calls for it.

The Incident Commander will conduct an initial size up of the situation, and determine which of the eight ICS *functional areas* he/she needs to run this event and how many *people* need to be placed in each of these areas.

I like to call this the, "stack of dishes theory". If you're going to throw a large party you're going to need all of your dishes. So if you're trying to manage a large-scale incident like a flood event or a significant terrorist incident, you're going to need all eight of the functional areas of ICS and many people assigned to each of these areas, with large numbers of people on both shifts, 12 hours on and 12 hours off.

If you're running a smaller somewhat midsized event, say for example a fairly localized hazardous materials spill for 4-6 hours, you may only need half of your dishes with say 3-4 of the ICS functional areas open and moderate amounts of people in each.

You need to imagine the ICS system as an expandable contractible accordion. It is able to grow as large as the incident needs it to be, and able to be reduced in size as the incident starts to wind down. The Incident Commander gets to open up all the boxes and then gets to close them down or "demobilize" them as the incident is winding down.

*Everyone has to be flexible enough to wear different and sometimes multiple “hats”.*

It is one of those hard realities that we have to face in the management of critical incidents and disasters that we are critically short of command level staff in our daily operations. With this in mind, there aren't going to be enough immediately responding supervisors, managers and executives to command all of the positions within ICS that we decide to open.

We are going to have to be flexible enough to assume multiple jobs. The person who is the PIO (Public Information Officer) for example, may have to assume the duties of the Liaison Officer or Safety Officer. The Incident Commander may have to double as the Operations OIC (Officer in Charge – the generic term utilized to the note the person in command-and-control of a specific team, branch or division), and the Logistics OIC could have to also assume the duties of Staging Area Manager along with Administration and Finance OIC.

This concept of assignment flexibility also means that you may be taken out of your normal job assignment and be tasked with working in an area that you are not normally familiar with. A person who was in the fiscal management section of a corporation, who would normally be assigned in the Fiscal Division under ICS, could be assigned as the Logistics OIC for example, or could be utilized as an assistant PIO.

The Incident Commander needs the flexibility to place people into whatever jobs he/she needs filled at that moment in the management of the event. This means that every supervisor, manager and the executive within your agency has to have an understanding of the Incident Command System and all of the eight job areas, because they could be put it to any one of these jobs at any point in time.

All of The Incident Command System training that you conduct at your agency should be geared towards this “generalist” approach. There is no guarantee that a specific staff member will be physically present within your agency with the incident occurs. In order to overcome the significant obstacle everyone needs to have basic training on each of the eight critical functional areas within ICS.

This is especially true if you're a supervisor, manager or executive and you are sent on a mutual aid mission to another school, branch of your business, or public-sector agency that has suffered a critical incident or disaster. The prolonged time frame of some disasters mandates that we ask for mutual aid help. The assumption is made that if you are being sent, you understand the principles of ICS. That jurisdiction's Incident Commander might be assigning you to a position that you're not normally familiar with. The assumption is that as a

supervisor, manager, executive you know all of these jobs and can fulfill any one of them.

*To be applied under stress -- you need to use ICS on a daily basis.*

One of the big tricks with the Incident Command System is to utilize it during the critical incidents that we respond to all the time. We need to have everyone in the organization trained in understanding all eight of the functional areas within ICS. Then we need to begin to actually use and practice it during our daily “smaller emergencies”.

We need to use the terminology and the functions of ICS during the hazardous materials spill, the severe weather incident, the incident of picketing or labor unrest, the smaller fire incident, etc.

If we are consistent in utilizing its terminology and tasking function in these daily types of calls, we will be very familiar with the ICS format and organization and we'll be able to readily move into it during a large-scale critical incident such as a Columbine High School or a significant terrorist event.

We don't encounter severe critical incidents on a daily basis. Without this type of daily refresher and usage, when the big event comes, we are not going to be as fast and proficient in the application of ICS that we should be.

*ICS is a preplanning tool.*

ICS makes an excellent pre-planning tool if you have a major event such as a demonstration, parade or VIP visit on the horizon. ICS is the tool to utilize to get things organized prior to the event.

We can figure out which teams and divisions we need to handle the event and then appoint the main division heads and team leaders using the Incident Command System weeks or months before the event in order to handle all the pre-planning.

Then, when any questions or problems arise in the planning stage, it gets directed to the correct person in charge of that function. When the actual event arrives, the same person continues in that role during the event. Confusion and loss of information is greatly reduced, and the event will run more efficiently.

*ICS is a system designed for the First Responders.*

Before we had the recent emphasis on the Incident Command System, most training in large-scale disasters and critical incidents was relegated to the manager and executive levels of the agency. Very little of this incident management training filtered down to the line level supervisors and middle managers.

Because of this, most first responders regarded ICS as something that the managers and executives would put into effect later on down the road; usually several hours into the incident. The first responders believed that they did not have to be really too concerned with how ICS works and functions. It turns out nothing could be further from the truth.

Due to a serious shortage of supervisors and managers who are capable of responding immediately to a critical incident, we are finding that the individual first responders at the same have to understand and quickly establish The Critical Incident Response Plan and ICS to begin the long-range management of the event. When you combine this with the possibility that multiple critical incidents or terrorist acts could occur within the same jurisdiction-- knowledge and use of ICS by all the first responders becomes a much more critical issue.

*The Mutual Aid concept -- a Training responsibility.*

As we have briefly mentioned, if you go to another business, school or agency to render aid there is a real possibility that you will be expected to fulfill any number of the jobs in the Incident Command System. We now also have the responsibility to train all of the other allied agencies that could come to help you.

There are very few schools, businesses or public-sector agencies across United States that can actually handle a significant event without utilizing some form of mutual aid. Think about it, every day we are utilizing some form of mutual aid and cooperation with our nearby sister agencies. This "mutual aid" concept will expand greatly during the conduct of a critical incident.

During a critical incident or disaster you're not going to turn away anyone from another agency that shows up to help you when you really need them. In order to smoothly integrate these outside agency personnel into the operation, we need to have a single operating system with common terminology. Basically, we need to make sure they're ICS trained.

If a training program on the Incident Command System hasn't been conducted in your area you need to start one now so that we can all be "singing off the same sheet of music". With everyone involved in the incident using the same organization and terminology according to ICS, it lessened the confusion and miscommunication often created in these types of incidents.

This doesn't just mean law enforcement agencies. You have to work on the "team building" concept with the other public safety first responders in the fire departments and emergency medical services. Most large-scale critical incidents are going to require emergency assistance from these other vital public safety agencies. The more that we train and drill with our counterparts in these services, the better off we're going to be. The goal is to optimize our swift and efficient response as a team, so that we can handle any kind of an event.

## **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Incident Commander**

The Incident Commander sets the priorities for the event, and determines which teams, branches and divisions are opened up to manage the event. What does he or she want to see accomplished and in what priority order? The other division and section members conduct the follow-through. Frequent meetings between the IC and the other OIC's/ Team Leaders of the various divisions and sections are necessary to keep everyone updated as the priorities change, and to guard against duplication of effort.

The incident Commander also demobilizes the organization, closing the various divisions and teams as the incident winds down.

### **The Incident Commander's Staff**

**The PIO** - One of the most critical functions, and is almost necessary all of the time.

Critical functions are:

- 1) Conducting frequent media briefings,
- 2) The handling of VIPs, and
- 3) Manning a telephone reference point for the general public and the media.

\*Estimates for media: (think what questions will they ask? – and have the answers ready ahead of time)

\$\$ of damage (est) / # killed (exact) / # injured (exact)

# of bldg lost or damaged (est)

\*need outside chalk board or briefing schedule to update press

\*rapid, factual information, as soon as possible will cut phone calls jamming lines  
- "only 1 person injured at..."

**Liaison** - The locator of all the agency representatives we may need for this incident. The Liaison OIC has to maintain contact with anyone who can assist us in the management of this incident. Also, there other function is to keep higher management and all of the other allied agencies' command centers informed as to the progress of the incident.

**Safety Officer** – This position has the authority of the Incident Commander, and is charged with operational safety. The job is to ensure we are doing the mission in the safest possible manner by inspecting the area to check on the welfare of all of the staff involved and to stop any form of unsafe behavior.

## **The Four Major Division Assignments:**

**Operations:** The teams in the field handling the mission.

This Operations OIC is responsible for naming the teams needed to handle the mission. Under the Operations OIC you can have such teams as: Damage Assessment Team, Facilities Repair Team, Evacuation Teams, Inner and Outer Perimeter Teams, Security Teams, etc. Each team has a designated Team Leader, reporting to the Operations OIC

**Intelligence / Planning:** Two key missions -

1) To gather all Intelligence on the scope of the occurrence and the people and things involved. This could require a large number of staff depending on the size of the event.

Both field information gatherers and staff working in the office may be necessary. This function also includes maintaining the status on all the manpower and resources committed to the event – known as Situation Status and Resource Status.

2) To plan for the future – what are we going to need in 2 hours, 12 hours, 48 hours, etc. To come up with the lists of manpower and things we will need to run this operation at these time lines, and then forwarding them to Logistics.

**Logistics:** The bullets, bread, beans, and butter people. They are charged with obtaining all of the items we will need – such as batteries, chain link fence, rent-a-cars, generators, toilets, food, etc.

This includes finding the people we will need for the operation through calling out off-duty staff or by using mutual aid. We should replace all staff every twelve hours; this includes all of the command staff, support and field personnel. This is such a significant task for most agencies that we need to create a logistics team to handle it.

Logistics is also in charge of maintaining a Staging Area. This will be the central location for all supplies delivered and staff signing in, prior to their actual assignment. Once called for, the items and personnel leave the control of Logistics and are sent to their appropriate teams or positions.

**Finance / Administration:** Two key missions -

1) Finance- to pay for all of the items we purchase, rent, or lease during the incident, and to account for all timekeeping and payroll issues. The Finance OIC will be responsible for tracking all costs incurred during the event and submitting any reimbursement paperwork to state and federal agencies.

2) Administration- accounts for all of the paperwork. Becomes the collection point for all IOD forms, workers compensation documentation, city/county liability forms, work orders and reports, etc. The Administration OIC ensures that all teams, sections and divisions keep a log and then obtains copies of the logs every 12 hours in order to write the after action report for the incident.

I realize that this is just a “Thumbnail Sketch” of the Incident Command System. This is not meant as a full explanation of the functions of ICS.

We realized that if you don’t deal with ICS all of the time, it would be hard to remember the various tasks assigned to all of the jobs, and the possible subgroups that could be created for each one of these eight major tasks. A complete checklist for each of these job assignments is attached at the end of this document. These checklists allow the user to immediately become familiar with what might be unfamiliar territory.

The ICS model is a highly effective way to manage everything from a multi-car accident, a hazardous materials spill or a multi-state forest fire. It has a proven track record for simplicity and the ability to do the job.

Please try to **fully** adopt this system if you haven’t already done so. There are many excellent schools, and Train –The –Trainer programs that can help your agency become more proficient in the Incident Command System. With a quick class and some of tabletop exercises, you can become proficient in a very short order. Then, as your agency gets familiar with the job titles and duties of each job, working in the ICS format during a critical incident or even a large scale disaster will be second nature.

## UNIFIED COMMAND

The concept of Unified Command during a critical incident answers to the basic question of "who's in charge of this incident?" The general rule of thumb is that anytime an incident goes beyond your own agency's capabilities, and requires you to utilize the services of other agencies or departments such as police, fire, emergency medical service or public works -- you need to form a Unified Command with all of these other players.

Anytime that the scope of an incident becomes so large as to include other agencies beside your own, there's a possibility for misinformation and conflict over who is in charge of this event and you should be thinking - *Unified Command*.

In its most basic form, a Unified Command is formed when all of the field leaders from the various agencies are present and are sitting around the same table. I've seen many instances where various commanders have said that they are running a Unified Command, when in reality they are not. If the Fire Department command post is in one direction, the school or business operations command post is in another direction, the Public Works command post is in another direction and the Police Department command post is yet another direction -- you don't have a **Unified** Command with all of these leaders separated.

The lack of coordination and the information that could be lost can cause mismanagement of a critical incident and we need to do whatever we can to not have this occur. We need to practice and train with all of the players around the same table. We need to forgo our attachment to our own command post trailers and executive offices and move to a position where all the leaders can manage the event together. This command post or Emergency Operations Center – EOC, should be centrally located to the event.

Unified Command speaks to the issue that all of the major players in an incident have a need to get together to share information, resources, and responsibility for the smooth delivery of effective service. But, as in all groups, there needs to be a foreman. A person who all the members will take direction from, a lead person or "*shot caller*", helping to direct the focus of the group, and setting the group's goals for that given point in time.

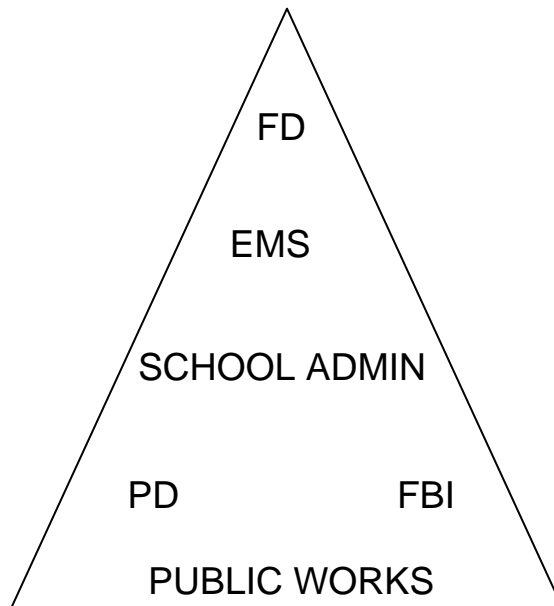
For discussion purposes, let's assume that a large explosion has occurred in a building on a school campus. In our school explosion scenario, there are several main groups that can come together to run this event: the local police department, the fire department, emergency medical services, public works (for heavy lifting capability and potential infrastructure damage) and finally the school administration. If we believed that there was the potential of a terrorist act, these groups would be joined by the FBI.

All the leaders from these various agencies would then group together and gather at a central command post location. Each agency (police, fire, public works, school administration, EMS, etc.) would have its own incident command system being established behind their leader.

In this manner we would all be utilizing the same organizational system, "singing off that same sheet of music", so that we could help each other. The Logistics OIC from police could go and talk to the Logistics OIC from fire if they were having trouble locating a specific item, like say chain-link fence. The PIO's from the various agencies could link together and run a unified PIO organization and the Intelligence OIC's could all share and exchange information that they had gathered.

In order to understand the very fluid concept of "who's the foreman" in a Unified Command event, I like to use the concept of a triangle. I want you to think of the Incident Commander's position on the ICS diagram not as a box for a single person, but as a triangle comprised of the leaders of all the agencies present.

The person who moves to the top of the triangle as our "*foreman / shot caller / group leader*" is the person whose group has the most to do at that given point in time in our management of this event. In our scenario of an explosion at a school, when the event first starts, this is primarily a Fire / Rescue / Medical operation. The agency leader that we would all look to for guidance and direction would be the fire department's Incident Commander. This person would move to the top position in the triangle as the initial "shot-caller".



***Unified Command For An Explosion At A School  
Fire Department Leader.***

The fire department Incident Commander will set the goals for these initial stages of the operation. Their skill and expertise in the handling of an MCI, the treatment and transport of the injured, the rescue of victims who may be trapped and the availability to deal with any hazardous materials involved, all speaks to the principle that we as the other agencies in the Unified Command should be taking our direction from the Commander who has the most skill and knowledge to deal with the event at that given point in time.

During the time that fire is in the lead position of the Unified Command, this does not mean that law enforcement or any of the other agencies involved are sitting around idly waiting until fire duties have finished. Local law enforcement, along with all of the other agencies involved, will be responsible for establishing their own incident command system to manage this event during the time that the Fire Department is in charge.

As the fire department's involvement begins to wind down - everyone has been rescued, the fire has been put out and the casualties have all been moved from the scene to local area hospitals- the next group with the most amount of things to do is the local law enforcement agency. If you will, the football gets handed off or passed on to the next group; the local law enforcement agency now has the most to do and their Incident Commander will now move to the top of the triangle and assume duties as the group leader.

When Incident Command passes to law enforcement, the law officer in charge will then set the goals for the operation, and begin conduct of the preliminary investigation. This will include identifying and taking initial statements from potential witnesses and victims, along with crime scene preservation, any emergency actions toward suspect apprehension, and evidence collection.

When the fire department begins to wind down its functions of fire-rescue-medical response, the fire and law commanders will agree when incident command will pass to law enforcement. When this occurs, simultaneous broadcasts should be made on both the fire and law enforcement channels so that all personnel understand that incident command has passed from the fire service to law enforcement.

Also at this time, the specific location for the command post should be repeated via radio so that there is no mistake as to where the command post for this "Unified Command" is located.

This concept of a change in “who is the group leader” within the Unified Command does not mean that the fire department is finished and can leave the scene. Yes, their entire operation will wind down greatly and they will need a small fraction of the people that they had during the initial stages of the event, but their continued presence is vital. Their numbers and equipment may be greatly reduced, but they are still necessary for the continuity of information and in the event any fire issues arise. It is essential that under the Unified Command concept that a Fire Department officer remain in the command post who can direct fire resources if they are needed during this time.

As the law enforcement mission winds down, assuming that we have not discovered criminal involvement in our school explosion, control of the incident will now pass to the school administration. The command level person from the school administration would now move to the top of the triangle and become the group leader; the setting their goals for the incident and being supported by the other groups in the Unified Command.

Again, this does not mean that the local law enforcement or any of the other agencies would leave the scene. They would still leave a command level person at the incident command post and sufficient forces on scene to handle any kind of problems that may arise in their area of expertise.

At some point during the final stages of the incident, the participating leaders would need to make a decision as to when the Unified Command would be disbanded or demobilized. In general, the Unified Command would be disbanded / demobilized when an agreement was reached that the final command agency could handle the entire event utilizing its own internal resources. In our example case of the school explosion, this would be the school administration.

When this decision is made within the command group, the Unified Command is broken down with all of the other members returning to their normal duties. The emergency stage has passed and control of the area would return to the school administration so that they can "get back in business" as fast as they can.

The school administration may elect to keep its on-site staff managing the reorganization and recovery of the school in the already established organizational framework of the Incident Command System. As hard as it may be to spare the personnel, their participating group is already established using ICS and it is an excellent organizational framework for this huge task. They will be able to continue managing the recovery of the school utilizing a seamless organizational system that can handle all of the problems that may arise.

### *Private Companies and Corporations*

As many critical incidents have unfolded within the confines of Private Companies and Corporations, we need to address the issue of their inclusion within the Unified Command structure.

Many corporations have decided to avail themselves of recent training in the Incident Command System, staffing an EOC and in the management of critical incidents as part of their disaster response and planning efforts. These companies have seen the advantage of utilizing the same organizational structure as the other first responders to lessen the communications issues and to promote rapid response to the incident. As public safety first responders we need to be aware of this trend and take advantage of it.

Just like the school administration, the Company management can and should be treated as a full partner in the initial response to a critical incident. They form a critical element that is responsible for the accountability and safety of their personnel, identical to that of the school. They are also the specific source for critical intelligence information on potential hazards along with the layout and design of their buildings and facilities.

Therefore, the same basic principles that we would utilize by including the school administration into a Unified Command organization would apply to any private corporation or entity that is affected by a critical incident. So for example, if a critical incident occurred at a large manufacturing facility within your jurisdiction, you would need to include the command level personnel from this company into the Unified Command structure that would be built to manage the critical incident.

The staff and personnel of these companies are valuable partners that should not be overlooked, and in order to run a proper Unified Command they're expertise must be included in the group.

## **THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

Emergencies take the form of accidents, HAZMAT spills, fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, terrorism, earthquake, and virtually any other event that may injure people, the environment, or property. As an Executive you may be prepared to apply your resources to emergencies that involve your facility, but are you prepared for emergencies that require resources beyond those of your agency? Are you prepared for emergencies that affect your entire area or community?

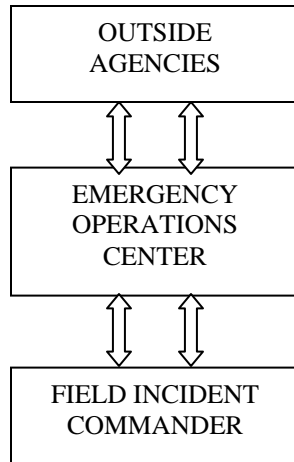
Many executives are unaware of the many other agencies and resources that are available in the event of an emergency or disaster. Therefore, they are unprepared to take advantage of the assistance available or to deal with the government and private agencies involved when they arrive on scene to help.

This is illustrated by an executive who developed an elaborate site specific emergency response plan, and trained and equipped his emergency response team only to have his first incident degenerate into chaos and confusion as his plan collapsed.

A large petroleum spill occurred on the grounds of his facility and the local fire, police, and EMS departments, the local fire marshal, the state fire marshal, state EPA, state OSHA, and the US Coast Guard all showed up. The executive was surprised and unprepared. When he was later told that these agencies should be a part of his emergency plans and that an Integrated Emergency Management System and Incident Command System was available that would make the arrival and deployment of these outside agencies nearly seamless, he realized his mistake. He had planned in a vacuum by planning as if an emergency would only involve his agency's personnel and resources.

Managing emergencies on behalf of your agency may involve interaction with a multitude of government agencies. Some are there to help you with a vast array of equipment, expertise, and funds. Others may be there to enforce laws and regulations. Regardless of their function and motivation, you must be prepared to work with them. These agencies include local city, county, state and federal agencies, as well as a multitude of volunteer and private nonprofit corporations. There is a wealth of assistance available to you, your employees, and your facility from these sources; but you have to be able to coordinate all of them and smoothly integrate them into your emergency.

The central coordination point between the group out in the field actually handling the emergency and all of these outside agencies and resources is called the Emergency Operations Center –EOC.



An Emergency Operations Center - EOC is a location from which centralized emergency coordination can be performed. It is a specific location where decision makers can gather during an emergency. The use of EOCs is a standard practice in emergency management.

Your agency should have a designated EOC located in an area of your facility that is not likely to be involved in an incident. An alternate EOC should be designated in the event that the primary location is not usable.

The physical size, staffing, and equipping of the EOC will depend on the size and complexity of your agency and the level of emergency operations it can expect to manage. The level of EOC staffing will also vary with the specific emergency situation. Remember, as in the Incident Command System, the incident will build the structure necessary to handle it.

Ideally, the EOC should contain such items as:

- Communications equipment
- A copy of your agency's emergency management plan and EOC procedures
- Blueprints, maps, and status boards
- A list of EOC personnel and descriptions of their duties
- Technical information and data for advising responders
- Building security systems information
- Information and data management capabilities
- Telephone directories
- Backup power communications and lighting
- Emergency supplies

-- and any other tools the executive may feel are necessary to respond quickly and appropriately to an emergency.

Your agency's EOC facility should be capable of serving as the central coordination point for:

- All the agency's emergency operations.
- Information gathering and dissemination.
- Coordination with local governments, outside agencies, mutual aid and volunteer organizations.

The internal organization of the Emergency Operations Center is modeled on the job terminology used in the Incident Command System – ICS. With the main positions being:

- **Management** – responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination.
- **Operations** – responsible for coordinating all area operations in support of the emergency response.
- **Planning / Intelligence** – responsible for the coordination of collecting, evaluating and disseminating information and the coordination of future action plans.
- **Logistics** – responsible for coordinating usage of facilities, services, personnel, equipment and materials.
- **Finance / Administration** – responsible for the coordination of tracking and documenting all financial activities and the coordination of all administrative aspects to the event.

The EOC organization should include representatives from special districts, volunteer agencies and private agencies with significant response roles.

I like to use the position title “Coordinator” to refer to the lead person of each organizational element in the EOC. ***By using this term we reinforce the concept that the main role of the EOC is coordination, not command and control of the actual events in the field. The command and control of the field event is conducted out of the Incident Command Post – ICP, by the person designated as the Incident Commander – IC.***

The State of California has a Standardized Emergency Management System –SEMS that utilizes the components of the Incident Command System – ICS at all levels of response within the state. They use the following diagram to reinforce the roles at the Field and EOC levels.

PRIMARY SEMS/ICS FUNCTION	FIELD RESPONSE LEVEL	EOC LEVELS
Command/ Coordination	<u>Command</u> is responsible for the directing, ordering, and/or controlling of resources by virtue of explicit legal, agency or delegated authority.	<u>Coordination</u> is responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination through the joint efforts of governmental agencies and private organizations.
Operations	Responsible for the coordinated tactical response of all field operations directly applicable to, or in support of, the mission(s) in accordance with the Incident Action Plan.	Responsible for coordinating all jurisdictional operations in support of the response to the emergency through implementation of the organizational level's action plan.
Planning/ Intelligence	Responsible for the collection, evaluation, documentation, and use of information about the development of the incident, and the status of resources.	Responsible for coordinating the collecting, evaluating, and disseminating of information; developing the organizational level's action plan in coordination with the other functions, and maintaining documentation.
Logistics	Responsible for providing facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials in support of the incident.	Responsible for coordinating the providing of facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials.
Finance/ Administration	Responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident, and for any administrative aspects not handled by the other functions.	Responsible for coordinating all the financial and administrative aspects not assigned to the other functions.

A partial listing of the emergency functions that could be coordinated within an EOC could include such items as:

Communications	Personnel
Alerting and warning	Transportation
Situation analysis and reporting	Utilities
Reconnaissance	Animal control
Damage assessment	Advanced planning
Public information	Compensation and claims
Hazardous materials control	Cost accounting
Fire and rescue	Documentation
Law enforcement	Demobilization planning
Traffic control	Facilities management
Medical treatment	Food management
Public health	Fuel management
Coroner coordination	Information systems
Care and shelter	Liaison with other agencies
Lodging and registration	Purchasing
Feeding	Recovery planning
Population movement	Risk management
Rescue	Safety
Construction and engineering	Sanitation
Street recovery	Temporary housing
Structural and facility inspection	Time recording
Debris removal	Vital records control
Flood control	Water resources
Supply procurement	

## **SUMMARY**

As an executive you have to realize that every organization needs a central point from which to coordinate an emergency response. This Emergency Operations Center – EOC - is a critical part of your total emergency management plan.

It's important to remember that merely establishing a specific location and stocking it with certain items is not enough. The staff that you intend to utilize in the EOC has to be thoroughly trained and drilled in the proper conduct of running a full-scale emergency coordination effort