

# INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

## Structure Fire Operations ICS-SF



Firefighting Resources of California  
Organized for Potential Emergencies

Revised September, 2015

This document contains information relative to the Incident Command System (ICS) component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This is the same Incident Command System developed by FIRESCOPE.

Additional information and documentation can be obtained from the following sources:

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## Contents

FORWARD .....	4
COMMAND GUIDELINES .....	6
Responsibilities of Command: .....	6
Functions of Command:.....	7
Risk Management: .....	7
After Action Review: .....	9
Establishing Command.....	9
Initial Radio Report .....	10
Radio Designation .....	10
360 Assessment .....	11
Follow-up Radio Report .....	11
Command Options .....	11
Passing Command.....	12
Transfer of Command .....	13
General Considerations.....	14
Mayday.....	14
Emergency Traffic .....	15
COMMAND STRUCTURE .....	15
Incident Command System Operations .....	15
Command Organization .....	16
Command Structure-Basic Organization.....	17
Division Designation.....	19
Division/Group Supervisor Guidelines .....	24

COMMAND STRUCTURE-EXPANDING THE ORGANIZATION .....	27
Expanding the Organization - Sections .....	27
Expanding the Organization – Branches .....	29
Organizational Structure .....	30
Incident Commander .....	31
Command Staff .....	32
Command- Single and Unified .....	33
Single Command - Incident Commander .....	33
Unified Command .....	34
Single/Unified Command Differences.....	35
APPENDIX A–GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	36
Appendix B –Integrated Communications .....	41
Appendix C - Sample Tactical Worksheets.....	42
Appendix D - Tactical Priorities and Strategic Objectives .....	49

## FORWARD

FIRESCOPE last revised this document more than twenty years ago. While much of the strategy and tactics of combating structure fires has remained unchanged over the last twenty years, there have been some recent changes that will be recognized in this document. These changes include addressing:

- Risk Assessment
- Improved Accountability
- Rapid Intervention
- Mayday
- Transitional Fire Attack

It is recognized by FIRESCOPE that the vast majority of structure fires are short term incidents (less than one operational period). Due to the compressed time frame, most structure fire incident management systems incorporate only the Command and Operations functions of ICS. For longer term incidents requiring the implementation of the Planning, Logistics and/or Finance/Administration functions, the FIRESCOPE Field Operations Guide ICS 420-1 (FOG) should be used as a reference.

The purpose of the Incident Command System (ICS) is to provide for a systematic development of a complete, functional command organization designed to allow for single or multi-agency use, which increases the effectiveness of command and firefighter safety. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) identifies concepts and principles that answer how to manage emergencies from preparedness to recovery regardless of their cause, size, location or complexity. The ICS is a component of NIMS.

The ICS provides an organized method to apply goals and objectives to structure fire incidents. This system helps to provide fire ground safety and accountability. This document is primarily for structural fire incidents but may be applicable to other types of emergency incidents.

The key elements of the system are:

- The systematic development of a complete functional organization with the major functions being Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance.
- Designed to allow for multi-agency adoption in federal, state, and local fire agencies. Therefore, organizational terminology used in the ICS is designed to be acceptable to all levels of government.
- Designed to be the basic, everyday operating system for all incidents within each agency. Therefore, the transition to large and/or multi-agency operations requires minimal adjustment for any of the agencies involved.
- The organization builds from the ground up, with the management of all major

functions initially being the responsibility of one or just a few persons. Functional units are designed to handle the most important incident activities. As the incident grows in size and/or complexity, functional unit management is assigned to additional individuals in order to maintain a reasonable span of control and efficiency.

- Designed on the premise that the jurisdictional authority of the involved agencies will not be compromised. Each agency having legal responsibility within its jurisdiction is assumed to have full command authority within its jurisdiction at all times. Assisting agencies will normally function under the direction of the Incident Commander appointed by the agency having jurisdiction.
- Multi-jurisdictional incidents will normally be managed under a Unified Command management structure involving a single Incident Command Post and a single Incident Action Plan – applicable to all agencies involved in the incident.
- The system is intended to be staffed and operated by appropriate personnel from any agency, and a typical incident could involve the use of personnel from a variety of agencies, working in many different parts of the organization.

The system expands and contracts organizationally based upon the needs of the incident. Span-of-control recommendations are followed closely; therefore, the organizational structure is not larger than required. Although the focus of this document is structure fire operations, the document recognizes the importance in the fire service of coordinating incident response with responders of other disciplines, such as medical, law enforcement, and public works. An effective incident management system must provide an integrated multi-discipline approach. JCS provides an overall structure that allows the successful integration of multiple disciplines, allowing application to the "all hazard" nature of emergency incidents.

The FIRESCOPE Program believes that any incident management system should be guideline driven for the following reasons:

- Written guidelines reflect department best practices for incident management.
- Guidelines provide a standardized approach to managing any incident.
- Guidelines provide predictable approaches to incident management.
- Guidelines should be applied routinely.
- Guidelines provide a training tool for firefighter reference.
- Guidelines provide a baseline for critiques and review of incidents.
- Guidelines make the Incident Commander's operations more effective.

This model reflects a guidelines approach to the overall organization structure of the ICS.

## COMMAND GUIDELINES

**Purpose:** This document identifies standard operating guidelines that can be employed when establishing command at a structure fire incident. The system provides for the effective management of personnel and resources while providing for the safety and welfare of personnel. It also establishes guidelines for the implementation of all components of ICS for structure fire operations.

### **Command Guidelines are designed to:**

- Establish the responsibility for command on a specific individual through a standard identification system, depending on the arrival sequence of members, companies, and chief officers.
- Ensure that formal command will be established from the onset of the incident.
- Establish an effective incident organization defining the activities and responsibilities assigned to the Incident Commander and to other individuals operating within ICS.
- Provide a system to process information to support incident safety, accountability, management, planning, and decision making.
- Provide a system for orderly transfer of command to subsequent arriving officers.

**Responsibilities of Command:** The Incident Commander is responsible for the overall management of the incident. The safety, welfare and accountability of personnel are taken into consideration when achieving the following incident priorities:

1. Life safety
2. Incident stabilization
3. Property conservation
4. Environment protection

ICS is used to facilitate the completion of the tactical priorities. The INCIDENT COMMANDER is the person who drives ICS towards that end. The Incident Commander is responsible for building an ICS organization that meets the organizational needs of the incident, and achieves the completion of the incident's tactical priorities. The Functions of Command define standard activities that are performed by the Incident Commander to achieve the tactical priorities.

**Functions of Command:** The functions of Command at a structure fire include:

- Assume and announce command.
- Rapidly evaluate the situation (size up, risk management)
- Establish and announce the location of an effective operating position (Incident Command Post).
- Initiate, maintain, and control the communication plan. (See Appendix B.)
- Identify the overall strategy, develop an Incident Action Plan, and assign companies and personnel to include RIC. All of these actions should be consistent with plans and standard operating guidelines.
- Request appropriate resources when necessary.
- Ensure accountability of all resources utilizing ICS 201 or other tactical worksheet. (See Appendix C.)
- Ensure the utilization of a Time Clock when appropriate.
- Develop an effective ICS organization using divisions and/or groups to maintain the span of control.
- Provide tactical priorities and strategic objectives. (See Appendix D.)
- Coordinate activities with other agencies and cooperators (Law Enforcement, Ambulance, Utilities, Building Department, etc.)
- Continuously assess incident conditions and review, evaluate, and revise the Incident Action Plan as needed.
- Provide for the continuity, transfer, and termination of command

The Incident Commander is responsible for all of these functions. As command is transferred, so is the responsibility for these functions.

**Risk Management:** One of the Incident Commander's primary duties is to determine the life safety profile of the incident and apply the most appropriate level of risk to first responders. The Incident Commander should integrate principles of risk management into the functions of command. Risk management involves the identification and evaluation of risk, and the prioritization of actions followed by coordinated application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities. Risk management should be based on the following principles:

1. Activities that present a significant risk to the safety of responders shall be limited to situations where there is a potential to save lives.
2. Activities that are routinely employed to protect property shall be recognized as inherent risks to the safety of responders, and actions shall be taken to reduce or avoid these risks.
3. No risk to the safety of responders shall be acceptable when there is no possibility to save lives or property.

4. In situations where the risk to responders is excessive, activities shall be limited to defensive operations, or risk mitigations should be employed to reduce exposure to responders.

These risk management principles should be employed by supervisory personnel at all levels of the Incident Command System. It must be remembered when evaluating risk that not only the severity of the risk but also the frequency of occurrence is of concern. High risk events that occur infrequently pose the greatest threat to responders because of the likelihood they will have limited experience in dealing with such events.

There are a variety of actions available to assist in the management of risk. Together these actions provide a solid framework for protecting responders from the risks involved in emergency operations. These actions include:

- Provide effective and frequent training
- Establish standard operating guidelines
- Have a well-defined incident action plan that incorporates contingencies
- Evaluate the situation and risk (size-up)
- Utilize full personal protective clothing
- Provide effective incident management (Company Unity, Unity of Command, Appropriate Span of Control)
- Ensure effective communications
- Establish safety procedures and utilize Safety Officers
- Ensure adequate resources are available
- Assign Rapid Intervention Crew/Company(s)
- Provide for Incident Medical Needs
- Provide for rest and rehabilitation
- Regularly evaluate situation for changing conditions
- Learn from previous experience by conducting an After Action Review after each incident

One of the most critical actions in managing risk is the evaluation of the situation and risks involved. Critical indicators that support gaining situational awareness and evaluating risk include:

- Structural Triage
  - Limited ways in and out
  - Can't tell what the building is being used for
  - Can't tell where the fire is
  - Has the potential to have been burning undetected
  - Can't determine floor plan or layout (no pre-tire intel)
  - Construction Type (I-V) and features that frequently result in unexpected fire behavior

- Smoke Conditions
  - Volume and density
  - Pressure and velocity
  - Color
  - Rate of change
  - View all sides of building'(360 assessment)
  - Compare volume in relation to building size
  - Zero visibility
- Fire Conditions
  - Contents vs. structure
  - Burn time
  - Rate of spread
  - Heat levels
  - No ventilation
- Lack of Progress
  - Progress not matching expectations
  - Repeated acknowledgment of Incident Clock
  - Delay in forcible entry
  - Delay in ventilation
  - Fire attack and ventilation not coordinated
  - Inadequate resource availability

**After Action Review:** An After Action Review (AAR) is a professional discussion of an event, focused on performance standards, that enables personnel and agencies to discover what happened, why it happened and how actions can be improved in the future. The AAR is a critical leadership tool used to ensure maximum effectiveness, safety and proficiency.

**Establishing Command:** The first fire department member to arrive at the scene shall establish command of the incident. The initial Incident Commander shall remain in command until command is passed, transferred or the incident is stabilized and terminated:

- The first member on the scene must initiate the parts of ICS necessary to effectively manage the incident.
- A single company incident (trash fires, small exterior fire, etc.) may only require that the company acknowledge their arrival on the scene.
- For incidents that require the commitment of multiple companies, the first member on the scene must establish and announce "command", and initiate an ICS organization appropriate for the incident.
- When a Chief Officer arrives at the scene at the same time as the initial arriving company, the Chief Officer should establish command of the incident.

**Initial Radio Report/Size up:** The first arriving resource activates the command process by giving an initial radio report.

- Unit designation of the unit arriving on the scene
- Confirmation of the incident location/conditions
  - Nothing showing
  - Smoke showing (amount, location, color, pressure)
  - Fire Showing (amount and location)
- Life hazard and exposures
- A brief description of the building
  - Occupancy (house, apartment, strip mall, box store, high-rise, church, etc.)
  - Size (large, medium, small or dimensions, i.e. 100'x150')
  - Height/number of floors
  - Construction type
- Brief description of action taken
- Establish Orientation ("A side")
- Declaration of strategy and potential
- Any obvious safety hazards
- Identification and location of Incident Commander
- Request required resources when necessary

**Radio Designation:** The radio designation "Incident Commander" or "IC" will be used along with the geographical location of the incident (i.e., "7th Street Incident Commander", "Metro Center IC"). This designation will not change throughout the duration of the incident. The designation of "Incident Commander" or "IC" will remain with the officer in command of the incident throughout the event.

**Examples:**

"Engine Six is on scene of a dumpster fire with no exposures. Engine Six can handle."

"Engine Eleven is on scene of a one story, single family structure. Flames are visible through the windows on the A side of the structure. Life safety status unknown, Engine Eleven is deploying a hose line for an interior attack. The next engine on scene will be assigned water supply. Engine Eleven will be 7<sup>th</sup> Street Incident Commander."

"Engine One is on scene of a 100' x 150' warehouse, fire showing through the roof, with exposures to the Bravo side of the structure. Engine One is laying a supply line and attacking the fire with a master stream and establishing a hand-line for exposure protection. This is a defensive fire. Engine One will be Buckeye IC."

**360 Assessment:** The initial IC must attempt to perform a 360 assessment. This task can be reassigned to another resource if the IC is not able to complete. An updated radio report will be given after the 360, however if there are important updates that must be given during the walk-around (power lines down, discovery of basement, victim found) this information must be transmitted immediately.

**Follow-up Radio Report:** This report will include any information that was garnered during the 360 assessment.

- Credible information given by occupants or bystanders
- Confirm life safety status, and status of primary search
- Update on fire/smoke location and conditions
- Flow Path (if determined)
- If utilities were secured during the 360, announce it at this time
- Confirm assignments and/or deploy resources
- Any other pertinent information

**Command Options:** The responsibility of the initial Incident Commander presents several options, depending on the situation. If a Chief Officer or member, without tactical capabilities (i.e., staff vehicle, no equipment, etc.) initiates command, the establishment of an Incident Command Post should be a top priority. At most incidents, the initial Incident Commander will be a Company Officer. The following command options define the Company Officer's direct involvement in tactical activities and the modes of command that may be utilized.

**Investigative Mode:** These situations generally require investigation by the initial arriving company while other units remain in a staged mode. The officer may go with the company to investigate while utilizing a portable radio, or they may remain stationary and assign other resources to support the company.

**Fast Attack Mode:** This mode is applied when quick, immediate action can prevent life loss or injury. These situations require immediate action to stabilize and require the Company Officer's direct involvement in the attack. In this mode, the Company Officer accompanies the crew to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Command may be passed to the next arriving officer, upon their arrival. Command shall not be passed to an officer who is not on scene.

Where fast intervention is critical, utilization of the portable radio will permit the Company Officer's involvement in the attack without neglecting Incident Commander's responsibilities. The Fast Attack mode can only be used for a rescue attempt or when 2 in 2 out is established. The Fast Attack mode should not last more than a few minutes and will end with one of the following:

The Fast Attack mode will end when:

- The situation is stabilized (e.g. rescue performed, fire confined, extinguishment)
- The situation is not stabilized and the first officer must switch to the command

mode. The Company Officer must withdraw to the exterior, establish an Incident Command Post and announce on the radio that the mode has changed to Command Mode

- Command is passed to the next arriving Company Officer who should remain outside and establish an Incident Command Post. The Company Officer must make a determination of how best to utilize the remainder of the crew based on the crew's capabilities.
- Command is transferred to a higher ranking officer. When a Chief Officer is assuming command, the Chief Officer may opt to return the Company Officer to his/her crew, or assign him to a subordinate position.

**Command Mode:** Many incidents, by virtue of their size, complexity, or potential for rapid expansion, require immediate formal command. In such cases, the Company Officer will initially assume an exterior, safe, and effective command position and maintain that position until relieved by a Higher Ranking Officer.

When the Company Officer selects the Command mode, the following options are available regarding the assignment of the remaining crew members:

- The Company Officer may place the company into action with two or more members under the supervision of a crew member, who will serve as the acting Company Officer and must carry a portable radio. The collective and individual capabilities and experience of the crew will regulate this action.
- The Company Officer may assign the crew members to work under the supervision of another Company Officer. The reassignment of crew members must be acknowledged by both company officers.
- The Company Officer may elect to assign the crew members to perform staff functions to assist him/her as the Incident Commander (Dedicated Incident Command Support Company)

A Company Officer establishing command has a choice of modes and degrees of personal involvement in the tactical activities, but continues to be fully responsible for the Incident Commander functions. The initiative and judgment of the Company Officer are of great importance. The modes identified are guidelines to assist the Company Officer in planning appropriate actions. The actions initiated should conform to one of the above mentioned modes of operation.

**Passing Command:** Command can be passed from a first arriving Company Officer to the next arriving Company Officer who is ON THE SCENE. This is indicated when the initial commitment of the first arriving company requires a full crew (i.e., high-rise or an immediate rescue situation) or the incident complexity prohibits the first arriving Company Officer from fulfilling the responsibilities of the

Incident Commander.

"Passing Command" to an officer not on the scene creates a gap in the command process and compromises incident management and safety. To prevent this "gap", command should not be passed to an officer who is not on the scene. It is preferable to have the initial arriving Company Officer continue to operate in the Fast Attack mode until command can be passed to an on-scene unit.

Should a situation occur where the second arriving Company or Chief Officer cannot locate or communicate with the IC engaged in the Fast Attack mode (after several attempts), they should assume command, announce their assumption of command, and initiate whatever actions are necessary to confirm the safety of the missing crew.

**Transfer of Command:** Command is transferred to improve the quality of the ICS organization. The transfer of command through various ranking officers must be predetermined by the local department's policy and procedures. The following guidelines outline the transfer of command process.

- The first fire department member arriving on the scene will establish command. This will normally be a Company Officer, but could be any fire department member up to and including the Fire Chief.
- The first arriving Company Officer will assume command after the transfer of command procedures have been completed (assuming an equal or higher ranking officer has not already assumed command)
- The first arriving Chief Officer should assume command of the incident following transfer of command procedures.

**Within the chain of command, the transfer of command should include the following:**

- The officer assuming command will communicate with the person being relieved. Face- to-face is the preferred method to transfer command. If face-to-face communication is not possible, radio communication is permissible.
- The person being relieved will brief the officer assuming command, indicating at least the following:
  - Situation status
  - Incident objectives and priorities (Incident Action Plan)
  - Current organization
  - Resource assignments
  - Resources enroute and/or ordered
  - Communications plan
  - Prognosis, concerns and related issues

- The person being relieved of command should review the tactical worksheet (ICS 201) with the officer assuming command. This sheet provides the most effective framework for command transfer as it outlines the location and status of personnel and resources in a standard form that should be well known to all members.
- The person being relieved of command will be reassigned to the advantage of the officer assuming command.
- Whenever a transfer of command occurs, the Incident Commander must announce the change of command on all radio frequencies being used for the incident.

**General Considerations:** The response and arrival of additional ranking officers on the incident scene strengthens the overall ICS organization. As the incident escalates, the Incident Commander should use these officers as needed.

A fire department's communications guidelines should include communications necessary to gather and analyze information to plan, issue orders, and supervise operations. For example:

- Assignment completed
- Additional resources required
- Unable to complete
- Special information

The arrival of a ranking officer on the incident does not mean that command has been transferred to that officer. Command is only transferred when the outlined transfer-of-command process has been completed.

Chief Officers and Staff Personnel should report directly to a designated location for assignment by the Incident Commander.

The Incident Commander has the overall responsibility of managing an incident. Simply stated, the Incident Commander has complete authority and responsibility for the incident.\* If a higher ranking officer wants to effect a change in the management of an incident, they must first be on the scene of the incident, then the transfer-of-command guideline must be used.

\*Anyone can effect a change in incident management in extreme situations relating to safety by notifying the Incident Commander and initiating corrective action.

**Mayday:** "Mayday" shall be used as the designator to identify when a member is in a life-threatening situation and in need of immediate assistance and can be declared by any member who becomes aware of a member who is in a life-threatening situation

and in need of immediate assistance. "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" shall be broadcast followed by clear text to identify the type of emergency "FIREFIGHTER/RESPONDER DOWN," "FIREFIGHTER/RESPONDER MISSING," or "FIREFIGHTER/RESPONDER TRAPPED," to all incident personnel.

When a "Mayday" condition is announced on the radio for an immediate condition for a responder, the IC shall make sure the "Mayday" is broadcast utilizing the distinctive emergency traffic alert tones and a plan is implemented to facilitate the immediate action to address the situation. (NFPA 1561 6.3.2.2, 2014 Edition).

Upon notification of a "Mayday situation, it is imperative that the Incident Commander remains in control of the entire incident and not become overly committed to the rescue activities. By establishing the Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) Group Supervisor early, it enables the Incident Commander to have the RIC Group Supervisor directly oversee the rescue operation of downed member(s). There are many operational procedures that need to occur in the event of a downed, missing, or trapped firefighter Mayday situation, along with mitigating the incident, which makes it overwhelming for the Incident Commander to handle both the rescue operation and ensure that the overall incident objectives are met.

**Emergency Traffic:** The term "Emergency Traffic" is used to clear radio traffic for a significant fire ground emergency condition. For example: "All units Emergency Traffic, we've had a building collapse".

- All radio traffic should cease on any channel where "Emergency Traffic" has been requested unless directly related to the "Emergency Traffic" situation.
- After the event has been reported to or announced by the Incident Commander, the Incident Commander should report the event to the dispatch center.
- Broadcast an emergency alert tone, if equipped, followed by a concise, clear text description of the emergency.
- At the conclusion of the "Emergency Traffic" situation, the Incident Commander should transmit "All Clear, resume normal radio traffic" to end the emergency.

## COMMAND STRUCTURE

It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to develop an organizational structure utilizing standard operating guidelines as soon as possible after arrival and implementation of initial tactical control measures. The size and complexity of the organizational structure will be determined by the scope of the emergency.

**Incident Command System Operations:** The ICS is the basic incident management system that should be used on any size or type of incident. The ICS organization is easily expandable as an incident increases in size and/or complexity.

Thus, the full establishment of the ICS should be viewed as an extension of the initial incident organization.

**ICS Organizational Development:** The following examples are guides in using the basic ICS organization for various size incidents:

Initial Response	1-5 Increments/First Alarm
Reinforced Response	Greater Alarm/ Second Alarm/Mutual Aid

**Initial Response:** The first arriving unit or officer will establish command until arrival of a higher ranking officer. Upon arrival of a higher ranking officer, they will be briefed by the on-scene Incident Commander. The higher ranking officer will then assume command. This transfer of command is to be announced. The officer being relieved of command responsibilities will be reassigned by the new Incident Commander.

**Reinforced Response** A reinforced response may be initiated when it is determined that the initial response resources will be insufficient to deal with the size or complexity of the incident.

**Command Organization:** The ICS organization must develop at a pace that stays ahead of the tactical deployment of personnel and resources. In order for the Incident Commander to manage the incident, they must first be able to direct, control, and account for the position and function of all resources. Building an ICS organization is the best support mechanism the Incident Commander can utilize to achieve the balance between managing personnel and incident needs. Simply put, this means:

Large scale and complex incidents = Large ICS organization

Small scale and "simple" incidents= Small ICS organization

The basic configuration of command includes three levels:

Strategic level -Overall direction of the incident

Tactical level - Assigns operational objectives

Task level - Specific tasks assigned to companies

The strategic level involves the overall command of the incident. The Incident Commander is responsible for the strategic level of the ICS organization. The Incident Action Plan should cover all strategic responsibilities, all tactical objectives, and all support activities needed during the entire operational period. The Incident Action Plan defines where and when resources will be assigned to the incident to

control the situation. This plan is the basis for developing an ICS organization, assigning all resources, and establishing tactical objectives. The strategic level responsibilities include:

#### OFFENSIVE or DEFENSIVE

These should be well defined in S.O.G.'s:

- Determine the appropriate strategy
- Establish overall incident objectives
- Set priorities
- Develop an Incident Action Plan
- Request and assign resources
- Predict outcomes and planning
- Assign specific objectives to tactical level units

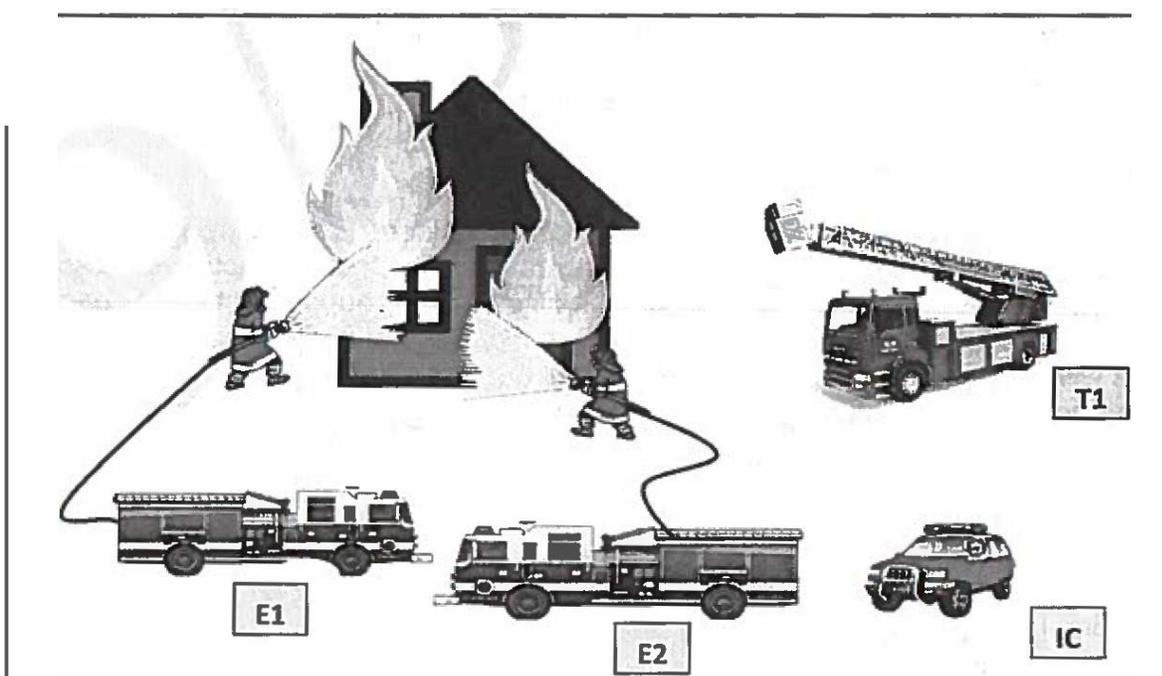
The tactical level directs operational activities towards specific objectives. Tactical level officers include Branch Directors, Division/Group Supervisors, who are in charge of specific resources. Tactical level officers are responsible for specific geographic areas or functions, and supervising assigned personnel. A tactical level assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments, within the boundaries of the overall plan and safety conditions. The accumulated achievements of tactical objectives should accomplish the strategy as outlined in the Incident Action Plan.

**Command Structure-Basic Organization:** The task level refers to those activities normally accomplished by individual companies or specific personnel. The task level is where the work is actually done. Task level activities are routinely supervised by Company Officers. The accumulated achievements of task level activities should accomplish tactical objectives.

#### **Examples:**

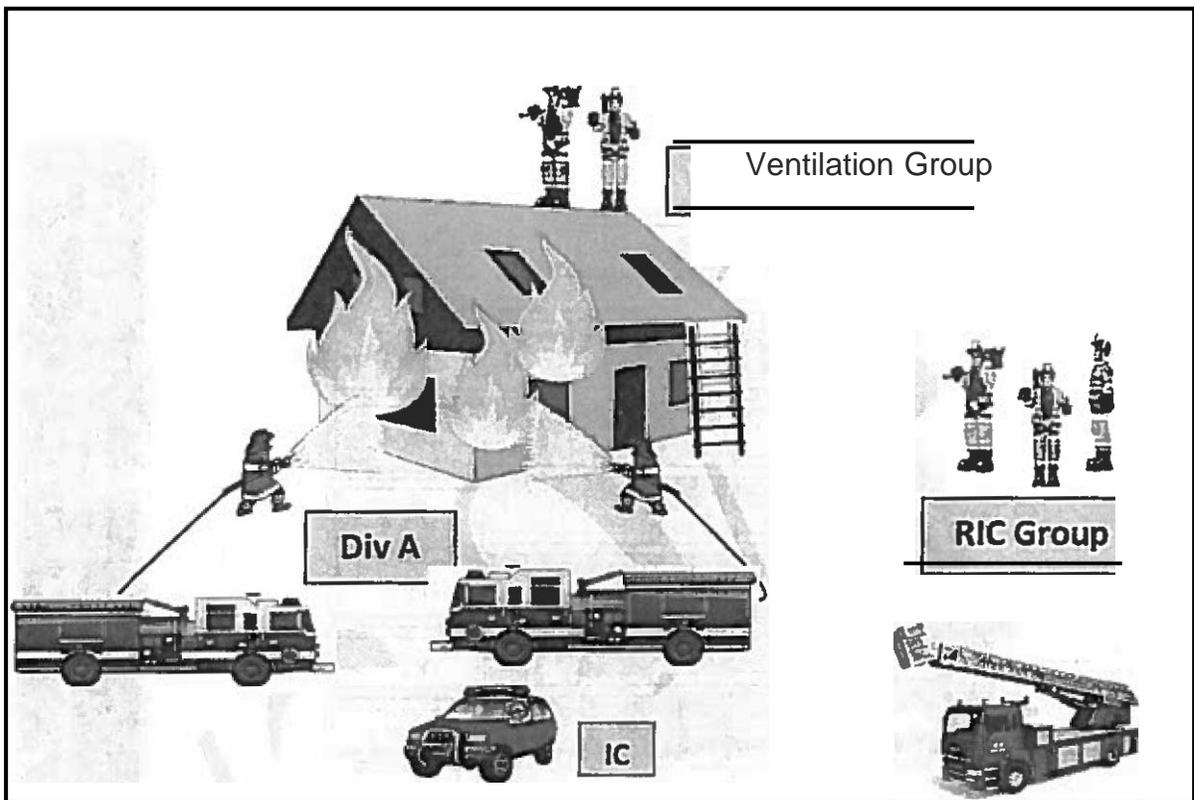
The most basic ICS organization combines all three levels of command (Strategic, Tactical, and Task). The Company Officer on a single engine response to a dumpster fire determines the strategy and tactics, and supervises the crew doing the task.

The basic structure for a "routine" incident, involving a small number of companies, requires only two levels of command (Strategic/Tactical and Task). The role of command combines the strategic and tactical levels. Companies report directly to the Incident Commander and operate at the task level.



**Command Structure (Division/Group)** The Divisions or Groups are tactical level management units that organize companies. Divisions represent geographic operations, and groups represent functional operations. The following examples illustrate the use of these terms:

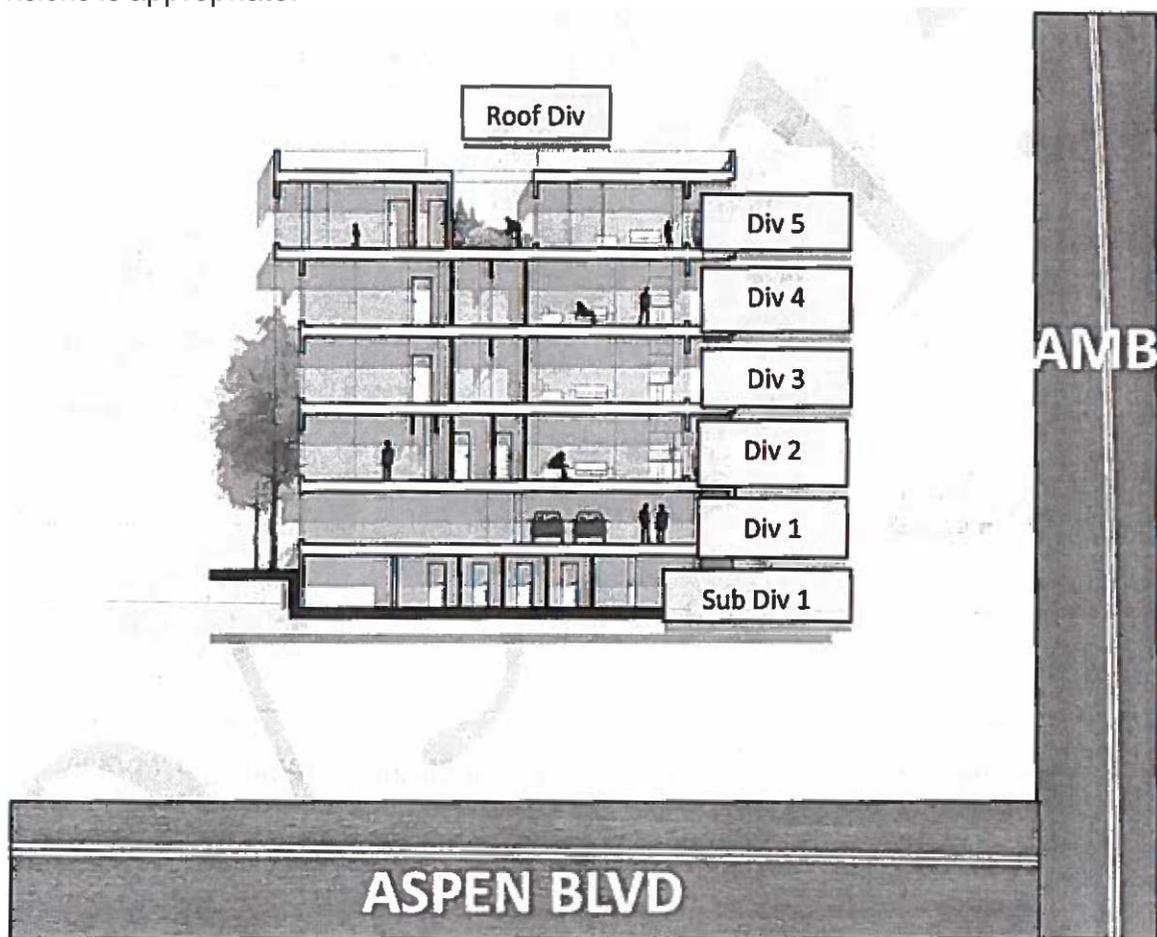
**Tactical Level Officers (Division/Group)**



As an incident escalates the Incident Commander should group companies to work in Division/Groups. A Division is the organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. In order to effectively use the Division terminology, a department must have a designated method of dividing an incident scene.

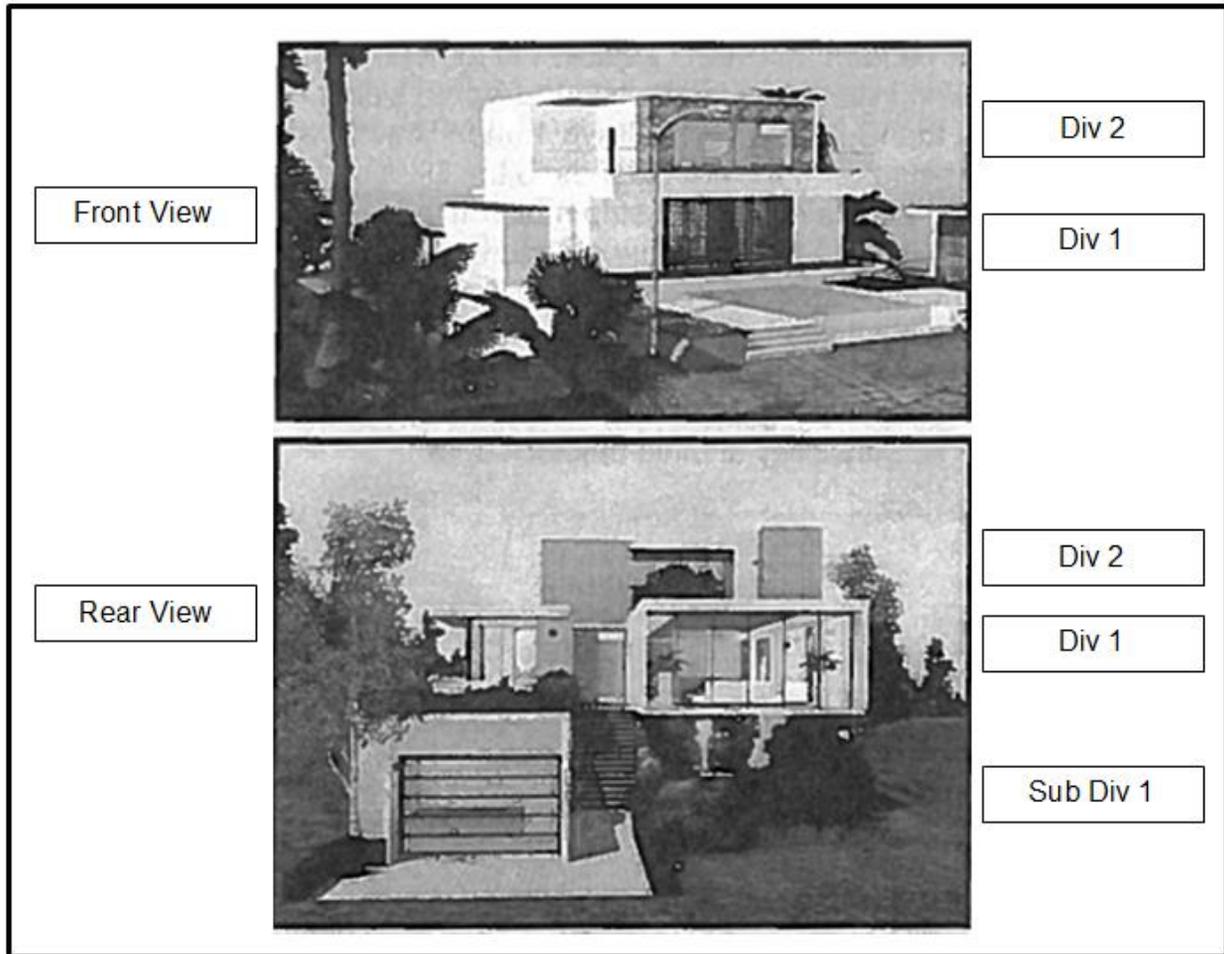
### **Division Designation Tactical Assignments for a Multi-Story Incident**

In multi-story occupancies, divisions will usually be indicated by floor number (Division 6 indicates sixth floor). When operating in levels below grade such as basements, the use of subdivisions is appropriate.



Divisions:

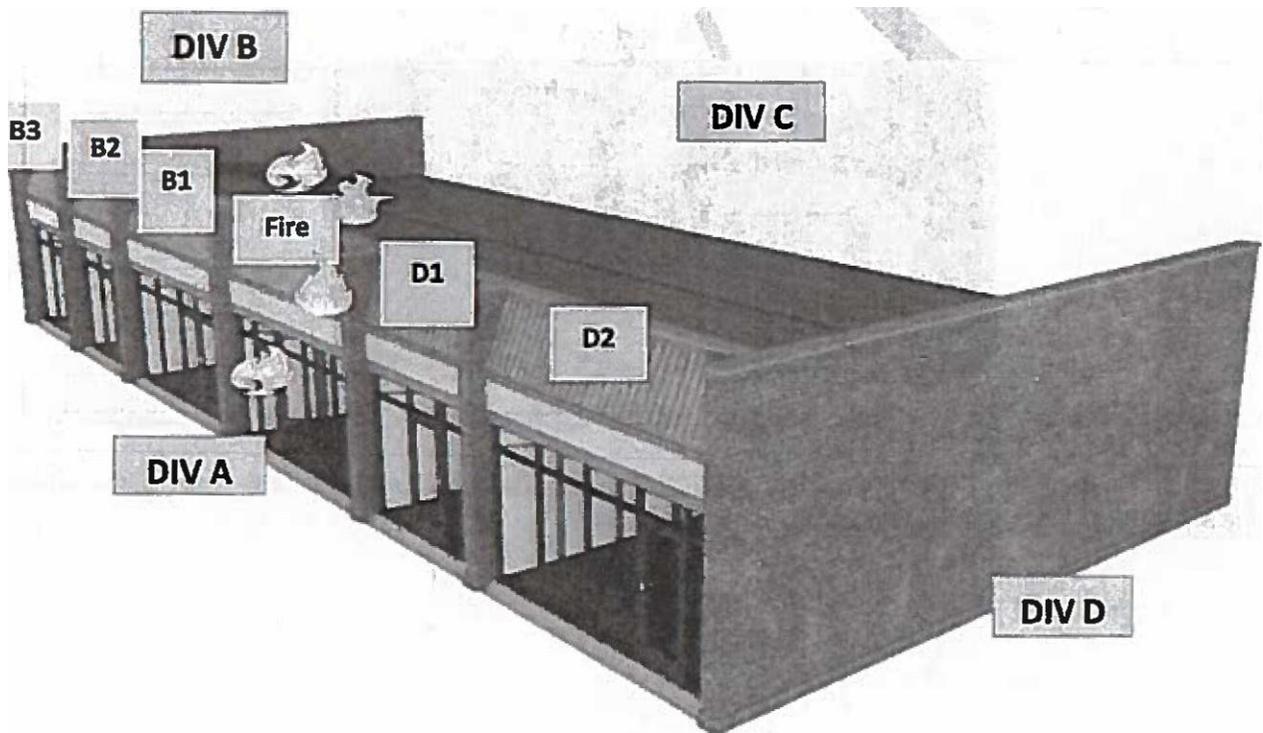
- Divisions are geographic area designators
- Use floor or level as designator.  
Example: If E-5 is assigned Division 2, he/she would be in charge of operations on the second above ground floor.



A structure can appear from the front as having fewer levels than it has. The illustration above emphasizes the importance of a 360 assessment.

## Tactical Assignments for a Multi-Unit Incident (Strip Mall)

In multi-Unit occupancies, exposures can be indicated by alpha letter identifier for the side of the extension followed by a number that starts adjacent to the unit on fire. For a one story strip mall where fire attack is being initiated on the Division A (Alpha) side, and fire is extending to the Division B (Bravo) side, the IC will start with Bravo 1, then Bravo 2 and so on to address units requiring assigned resources. If the fire extends to the Division D (Delta) side, the IC will start with Delta 1, then Delta 2. In a multistory strip mall with a fire on the second floor and a Division 2 is established, similarly to the one story structure, exposures to the Division Bravo side would be identified as Bravo 1, Bravo 2, and so on. Any exposure to the Division Delta side would be identified as Delta 1, Delta 2, and so on. The identifier for an exposure occupancy may be used for identification only and may not necessitate the assignment of an additional supervising Officer. The Incident Commander is responsible for clearly identifying areas of responsibility at multi-unit incidents.



### Division/Group Designation

A Division is that organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. The Division level is organizational between Single Resources, Task Force, or the Strike Team and the Branch. Groups are an organizational level responsible for a specified functional assignment at an incident. Examples are Salvage Group, Search and Rescue Group, Haz Mat Group, and Medical Group.

## **Command Structure: Division/Group, Basic Operational Approach**

The use of Divisions/Groups in the ICS organization provides a standard system to divide the incident scene into smaller subordinate management units or areas. Complex emergency situations often exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. Divisions/Groups reduce the span-of-control to more manageable smaller-sized units. Divisions/Groups allow the Incident Commander to communicate principally with these organizational levels, rather than multiple, individual Company Officers providing for effective command and incident scene organization. Generally, Division/Group responsibilities should be assigned early in the incident, typically to the first company assigned to a geographic area or function. This early establishment of Division/Group provides an effective Incident Command organization framework on which the operation can be built and expanded.

The number of Divisions/Groups that can be effectively managed by the Incident Commander varies. Normal span-of-control is three to seven. In fast moving, complex operations, a span-of-control of no more than five Divisions/Groups is indicated. In slower moving less complex operations, the Incident Commander may effectively manage more Divisions/Groups.

When the incident exceeds the span-of-control that the Incident Commander can effectively manage, the incident organization should be expanded to meet incident needs, by assigning Branches and/or Operations. The Operations Section is responsible for the Branches. Each Branch is responsible for several Divisions/Groups and should be assigned a separate radio channel if available.

Division/Group guidelines provide an array of major functions which may be selectively implemented according to the needs of a particular situation. This places responsibility for the details and execution of each particular function on a Division/Group.

When effective Divisions/Groups have been established, the Incident Commander can concentrate on overall strategy and resource assignment, allowing the Division/Group Supervisor to supervise their assigned units. The Incident Commander determines strategy and assigns objectives and resources to the Divisions/Groups. Each Division/Group Supervisor is responsible for the tactical deployment of the resources at their disposal, in order to complete the objectives assigned by the Incident Commander. Division/Group Supervisors are also responsible for communicating needs and progress to Incident Commander.

Divisions/Groups reduce the overall amount of radio communications. Most routine communications within a Division/Group should be conducted in a face-to-face manner between Company Officers and their Division/Group Supervisor. This process reduces unnecessary radio traffic and increases the ability to transmit critical radio communications.

The safety of firefighting personnel represents the major reason for establishing Divisions/Groups. Each Division/Group Supervisor must maintain communication with assigned companies to control both their position and function. The Division/Group Supervisor must constantly monitor all hazardous situations and risks to personnel. The Division/Group Supervisor must take appropriate action to ensure that companies are operating in a safe and effective manner.

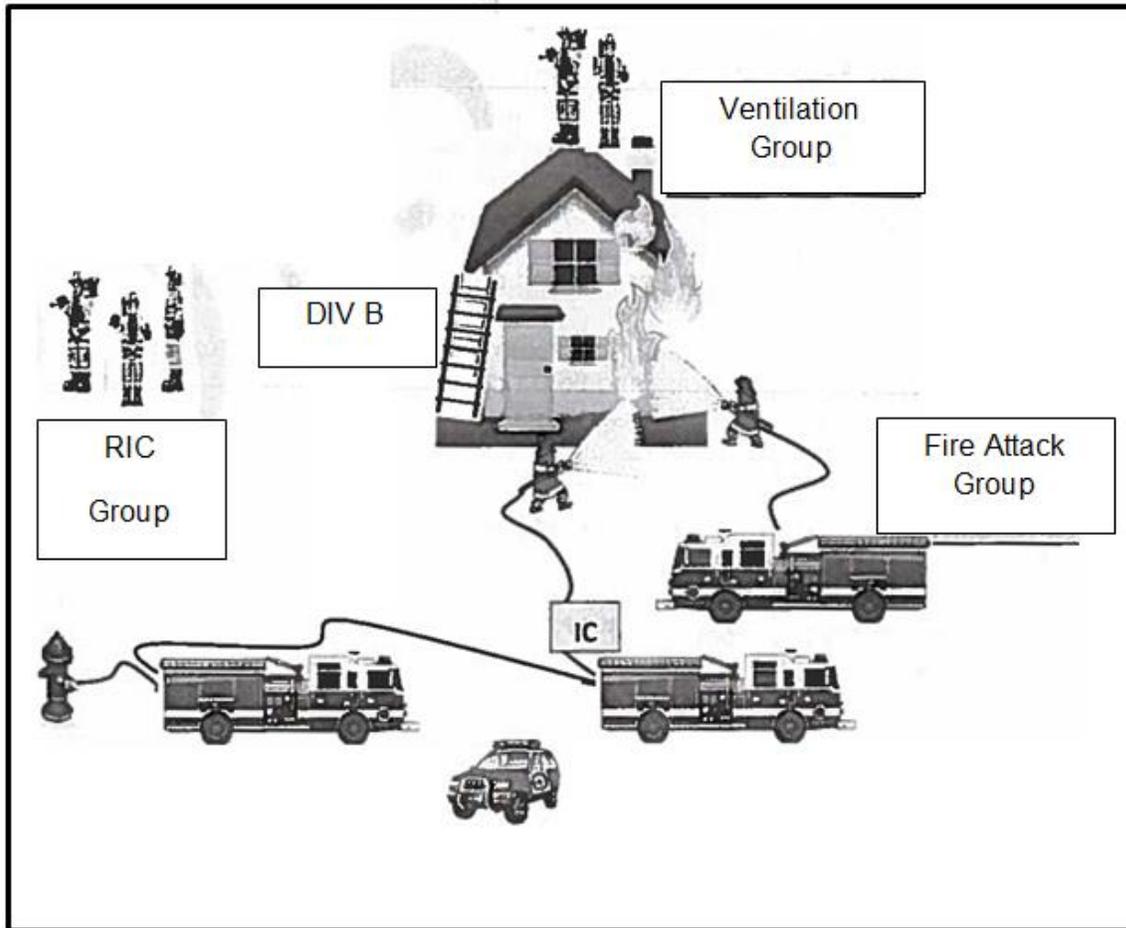
**The Incident Commander should begin to assign Divisions/Groups based on the following factors:**

- Situations that will eventually involve a number of companies or functions, beyond the capability of the Incident Commander to directly control. The Incident Commander should initially assign Division/Group responsibilities to the first companies assigned to a geographic area or function until qualified personnel are available.
- When the Incident Commander can no longer effectively manage the number of companies currently involved in the operation.
- When companies are involved in complex operations (Large interior or geographic area, hazardous materials, technical rescues, etc.).
- When companies are operating from tactical positions that the Incident Commander has little or no direct control over (i.e., out of sight).
- When the situation presents special hazards and close control is required over operating companies (i.e., unstable structural conditions, hazardous materials, heavy fire load marginal offensive situations, etc.).

When establishing a Division/Group, the Incident Commander will assign each Division/Group:

1. A supervisor
2. Tactical objectives
3. Communications
4. A radio designation (Roof Division, Division A, Salvage Group)
5. The identity of resources assigned to the Division/Group

NOTE: All personnel (including Division/Group Supervisors) operating in an IDLH must work in pairs-



### Division/Group Supervisor Guidelines:

- It will be the ongoing responsibility of the Incident Commander to assign Divisions/Groups as required for effective emergency operations. This assignment will relate to both geographic divisions and functional groups.
- The Incident Commander shall advise each Division/Group Supervisor of specific objectives. The Supervisor needs to understand what tasks need to be delegated, the purpose of the tasks and the end state of the tasks.
- The number of companies assigned to a Division/Group will depend upon conditions within that Division/Group. The Incident Commander will maintain accountability of all resources by tracking to which Division/Group they are assigned and the capability of that Division/Group to effectively direct operations. If a Division/Group Supervisor cannot control the resources within the Division/Group, they should notify the Incident Commander so that Division/Group responsibilities can be split or other corrective action taken. In most cases three to seven companies represent the maximum span-of-control for a Division/Group Supervisor.

- How the incident is divided is determined by the needs of the incident. This should be accomplished by assigning Divisions to geographic locations (i.e., Roof Division, Division A, etc.) and assigning functional responsibilities to Groups (i.e., Ventilation Group, Salvage Group, etc.).

The guideline for span-of-control with Divisions/Groups is three to seven. This applies to Operational Division/Group. Many of the functional responsibilities (Information, Safety, etc.) are pre-assigned to certain individuals and are driven by standard operating guidelines.

Regular transfer of command guidelines will be followed in transferring Division/Group responsibility.

In some cases, a Division/Group Supervisor may be assigned to an area/function initially to evaluate and report conditions and advise the Incident Commander of needed tasks and resources. The assigned officer will proceed to the Division/Group, evaluate and report conditions to the Incident Commander, and assume responsibility for directing resources and operations within his/her assigned area of responsibility.

The Division/Group Supervisor must be in a position to directly supervise and monitor operations. This will require the Division/Group Supervisor to be equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment for their area of responsibility. Division/Group Supervisors assigned to operate within the hazard zone must be accompanied by a partner.

Division/Group Supervisors will be responsible for and in control of all assigned functions within their Division/Group. This requires each Division/Group Supervisor to:

- Provide for life safety
- Complete objectives assigned by the Incident Commander.
- Account for all assigned personnel
- Ensure that operations are conducted safely, including air management.
- Monitor work progress.
- Redirect activities as necessary.
- Coordinate actions with related activities and adjacent Divisions/Groups.
- Monitor welfare of assigned personnel, and rehab personnel as needed.
- Request additional resources to support tactical objectives.
- Provide the Incident Commander with essential and frequent progress reports.
- Reallocate resources within the Division/Group.

The Division/Group Supervisor should be readily identifiable and maintain a visible position as much as possible.

The primary function of Company Officers working within a Division/Group is to direct the operations of their individual crews in performing assigned tasks. Company Officers will advise their Division/Group Supervisor of work progress, preferably face-to-face. All requests for additional resources or assistance within a Division/Group must be directed to the Division/Group Supervisor. Division/Group Supervisors will communicate with the Incident Commander.

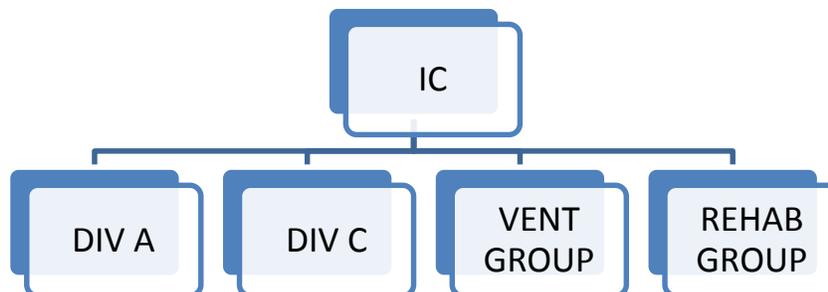
Through the chain of command, each Division/Group Supervisor will keep the Incident Commander informed of conditions, actions and needs through regular progress reports. These progress reports are also called CAN reports. The Division/Group Supervisor must prioritize progress reports to essential information only.

The Incident Commander must be advised immediately of significant changes, particularly those involving the ability or inability to complete an objective, hazardous condition, accidents, structural collapse or weakened structure members any safety concerns etc.

When a company is re-assigned from Staging or Rehab to an operating Division/Group, the name of the Division/Group and assigned radio frequency will be provided. The Division/Group Supervisor will be informed of which companies or units have been assigned by the Incident Commander. It is then the responsibility of the Division/Group Supervisor to contact the assigned company to transmit any instructions and safety concerns relative to the specific action requested.

Division/Group Supervisors will monitor the condition of the crews operating in their Division/Group. Relief crews will be requested in a manner to safeguard the safety of personnel and maintain progress toward the Division/Group objectives.

Division/Group Supervisors will ensure an orderly and thorough reassignment of crews to Responder Rehab. Crews must report to Rehab intact to facilitate accountability.



Organization chart with Divisions and Groups

## COMMAND STRUCTURE-EXPANDING THE ORGANIZATION

As a small incident escalates into a major incident, additional organizational support will be required. The Incident Commander can become quickly overwhelmed and overloaded with information management, assigning companies, filling out and updating the tactical worksheets, planning, forecasting, requesting additional resources, taking on the radio, and fulfilling all the other functions of command. The immediate need of the Incident Commander is support. As additional ranking officers arrive on the scene, the ICS organization may be expanded through the involvement of officers and staff personnel to fill Command and General Staff Positions.

Section and Unit level positions within ICS will be activated only when the corresponding functions are required by the incident.

The transition from the initial response to a major incident organization will be evolutionary and positions will be filled as the corresponding tasks are required.

During the initial phases of the incident the Incident Commander normally carries out these four section functions:

1. OPERATIONS
2. PLANNING
3. LOGISTICS
4. FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION

These comprise the General Staff within a fully expanded incident organizational structure.

**Expanding the Organization - Sections** Section level positions can be implemented at any time, based on the needs of the incident.

The **Operations Section** is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities, the tactical priorities, and the safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Chief uses the appropriate radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to the Branches and/or Divisions/Groups.

The Incident Commander may staff the Operations Section to reduce their span-of-control and thus transfer direct management of all tactical activities to the Operations Section Chief. The Incident Commander is then able to focus their attention on management of the entire incident rather than concentrating on tactical activities:

Roles and Responsibilities of the Operations Section:

- Provide for life safety
- Maintain Command and Control

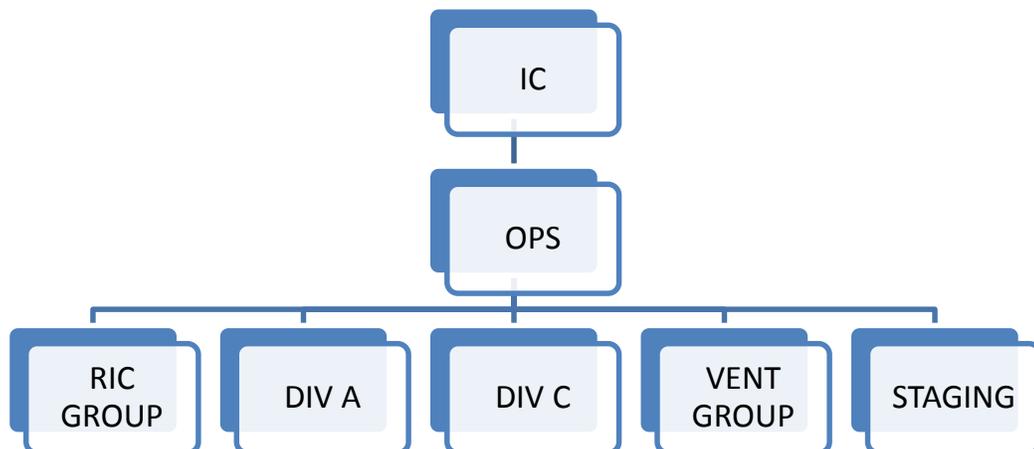
- Manage incident tactical activities
- Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander
- Implement the Incident Action Plan
- Assign resources to tactical level areas based on tactical objectives and priorities
- Assign Branches and Divisions/Groups as needed
- Provide tactical objectives for Divisions/Groups
- Control Staging and Air Operations
- Determine needs and request additional resources
- Consult with and inform other Sections and the Incident Command Staff as needed

Operations Section Chief: The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the direct management of all incident tactical activities and should have direct involvement in the preparation of the Incident Action Plan for the period of responsibility.

Staging Areas: Staging Areas are locations designated within the incident area which are used to temporarily locate resources that are available for assignment.

The incident scene can quickly become congested with emergency equipment if this equipment isn't managed effectively. For major or complex operations, the Incident Commander should establish a central Staging Area early and place an officer in charge of Staging. A radio designation of "Staging" is generally utilized.

In this expanded organizational structure, staging reports to the Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief may establish, move and discontinue the use of Staging Areas. All resources within the designated Staging Areas are under the direct control of the Operations Section Chief and should be immediately available.



Organization Chart with Operation Section Chief Assigned

## Expanding the Organization – Branches

Divisions/Groups: As previously discussed in this guideline, Divisions/Groups identify tactical level assignments in the command structure. As the span-of-control begins to be excessive, the incident becomes more complex or has two or more distinctly different operations (i.e., Fire, Medical, Evacuation, etc.), the organization can be further sub-divided into Branches.

Branches may be established on an incident to serve several purposes. However, they are not always essential to the organization of the Operations Section.

*In general, branches may be established for the following reasons:*

- Geographical
- Span of Control
- Functional
- Multi-Jurisdictional

The Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief should designate a Multi-Branch structure and allocate the Divisions/Groups within those Branches when the numbers of Divisions/Groups exceed the recommended span-of-control for the Operations Section Chief. In the following example the Operations Section Chief has one group and four Divisions reporting with two additional Divisions and one Group being added. At this point, a two-Branch organization should be formed.

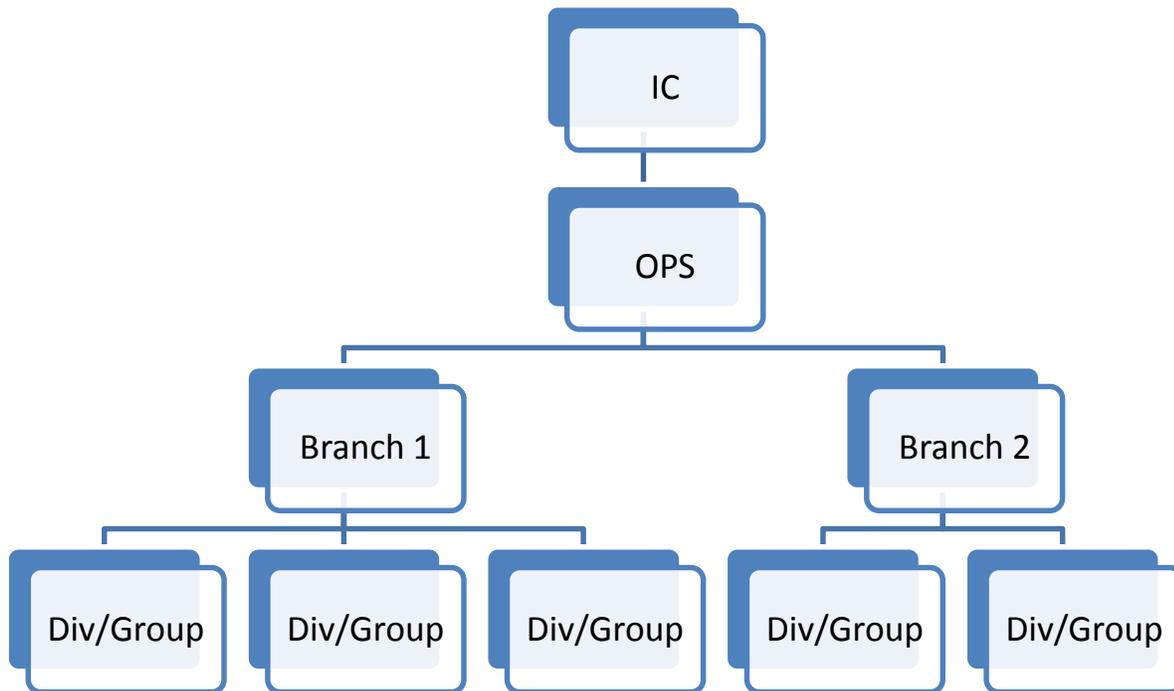
Branches should operate in their area of responsibility on separate radio channels and communicate to Operations on a different channel if possible. The radio designation of Branches should reflect the objective of the Branch when designating functional branches (i.e., Haz Mat Branch, Multi-Casualty Branch, etc.). Geographical Branches are designated numerically (i.e., Branch I, Branch II, Branch III, etc.). When Operations implements Branch Directors, the Division/Group Supervisors should be notified of their new supervisor. This information should include:

1. To what Branch the Division/Group is now assigned.
2. The radio channel on which the Branch (Division/Group) is operating.

Radio communications should then be directed from the Division/Group Supervisor to the Branch Directors – instead of Operations. Division/Group Supervisors will relay this information to the companies working in their tactical operating area.

Depending on the situation, the Branch Director may be located at the Incident Command Post or at operational locations. When located at the Incident Command Post, the Branch Director can communicate on a face-to-face basis with the Operations Section Chief and/or Incident Commander. When an incident encompasses a large geographic area, it may be more effective to have the Branch Director in tactical locations. When Branch Directors are sent to tactical positions they should immediately

implement command and control guidelines within their Branch. In these situations Operations must assign someone to monitor a "command channel"



**Organizational Structure:** The JCS organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based upon the kind and size of an incident. The organization's staff builds from the top down with responsibility and performance placed initially with the Incident Commander. As the need exists four separate Sections can be developed, each with several Units that may be established. The specific organizational structure established for any given incident will be based upon the management needs of the incident. If one individual can simultaneously manage all major functional areas, no further organization is required. If one or more of the areas requires independent management, an individual is named to be responsible for that area.

For ease of reference and understanding, personnel assigned to manage at each level of the organization will carry a distinctive organizational title:

- INCIDENT COMMANDER
- OFFICER
- CHIEF
- DIRECTOR
- SUPERVISOR
- LEADER
- MANAGER
- SINGLE RESOURCE

**Incident Commander:** Title that refers to the person responsible for management of overall incident operations.

**Officer:** Title that refers to a member of the Command Staff (Safety Officer, Public Information Officer, Liaison Officer).

**Chief:** Title that refers to a member of the General Staff (Planning Section Chief, Operations Section Chief, Finance Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief).

**Director:** Title that refers to the Positions of Branch Director that is in the Operations Section, or Logistics Section between the Divisions/Groups, and the Operations Section Chiefs (Branch Directors, Air Operations Branch Director, Service Branch Director).

**Supervisor:** Title that refers to the positions of Division/Group Supervisor that is in the Operations Section and lies between the Branch Director and Strike Team/Task Force Leader.

**Leader:** Title that refers to a position with supervision and management responsibility of either a group of resources (Strike Team or Task Force) or a unit, such as Ground Support, Medical, Supply, etc.

**Manager:** Title that refers to the lowest level of supervision within the Logistics Section: Equipment Manager, Base Manager, and Camp Manager. The only exception to this is the Staging Area Manager who reports directly to the Operations Section Chief.

**Single Resource:** Engine Company, Truck Company with a company officer and crew.

**The Incident Commander:** Role and Responsibilities after activation of an Operations Section Chief:

Once the Operations Section is in place and functioning, the Incident Commander's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning and other components of the incident. This focus is to look at the "big picture" and the impact of the incident from a broad perspective. The Incident Commander should provide direction, advice, and guidance to the Command and General Staff in directing the tactical aspects of the incident. Roles and Responsibilities include:

- Review and evaluate the plan, and initiate any needed changes
- Provide ongoing review of the overall incident (THE BIG PICTURE)
- Select priorities
- Stage Command and General Staff functions as necessary
- Provide direction to the Command and General Staff
- Review the organizational structure, initiate change or expansion to meet

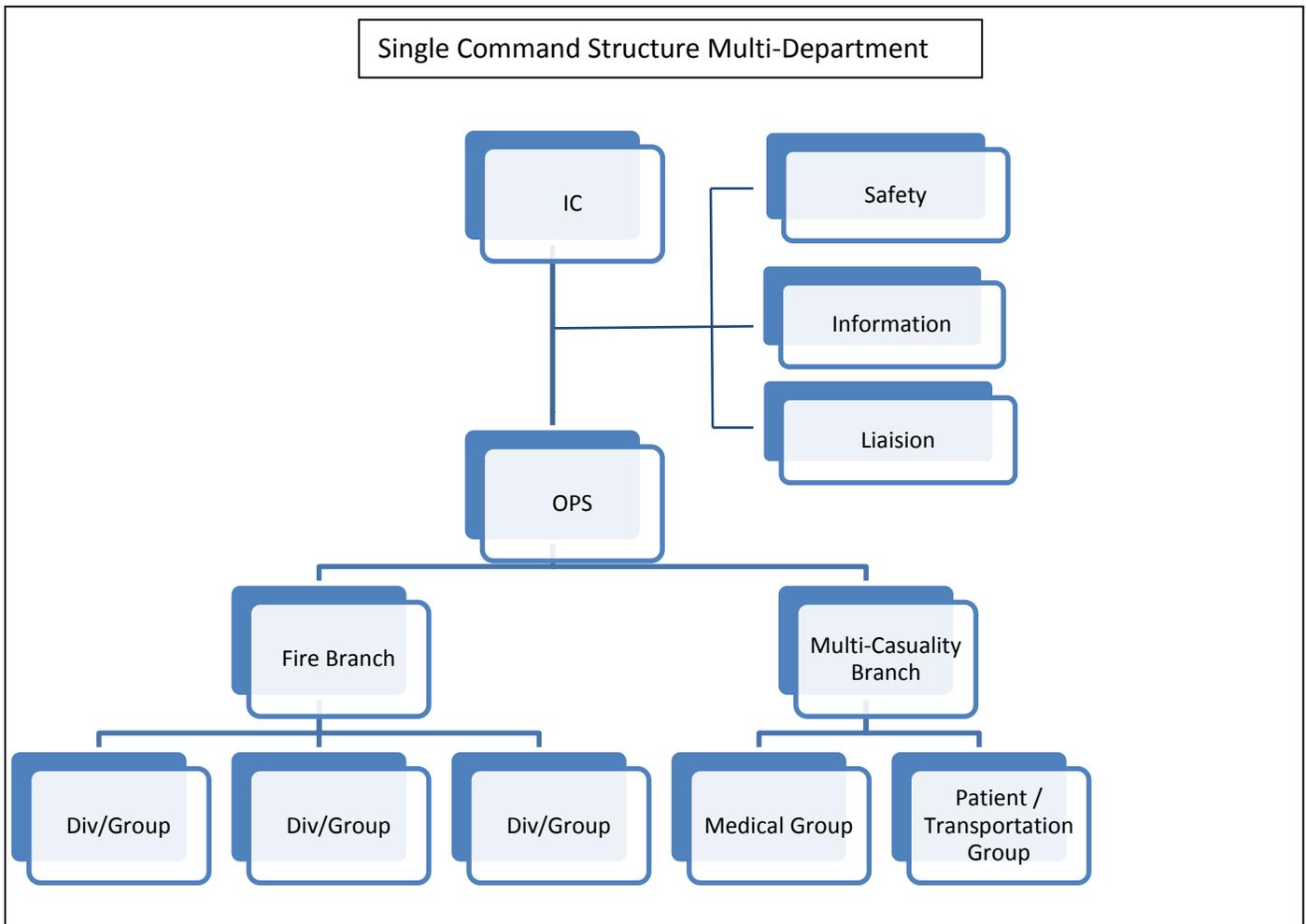
incident needs

- Establish liaison with other internal agencies and officials, outside agencies, property owners and/or tenants

**Command Staff:** Command staff positions are established to assume responsibility for key activities that are not a part of the line organization. Three specific staff positions are identified:

- Safety Officer
- Public Information Officer
- Liaison Officer

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



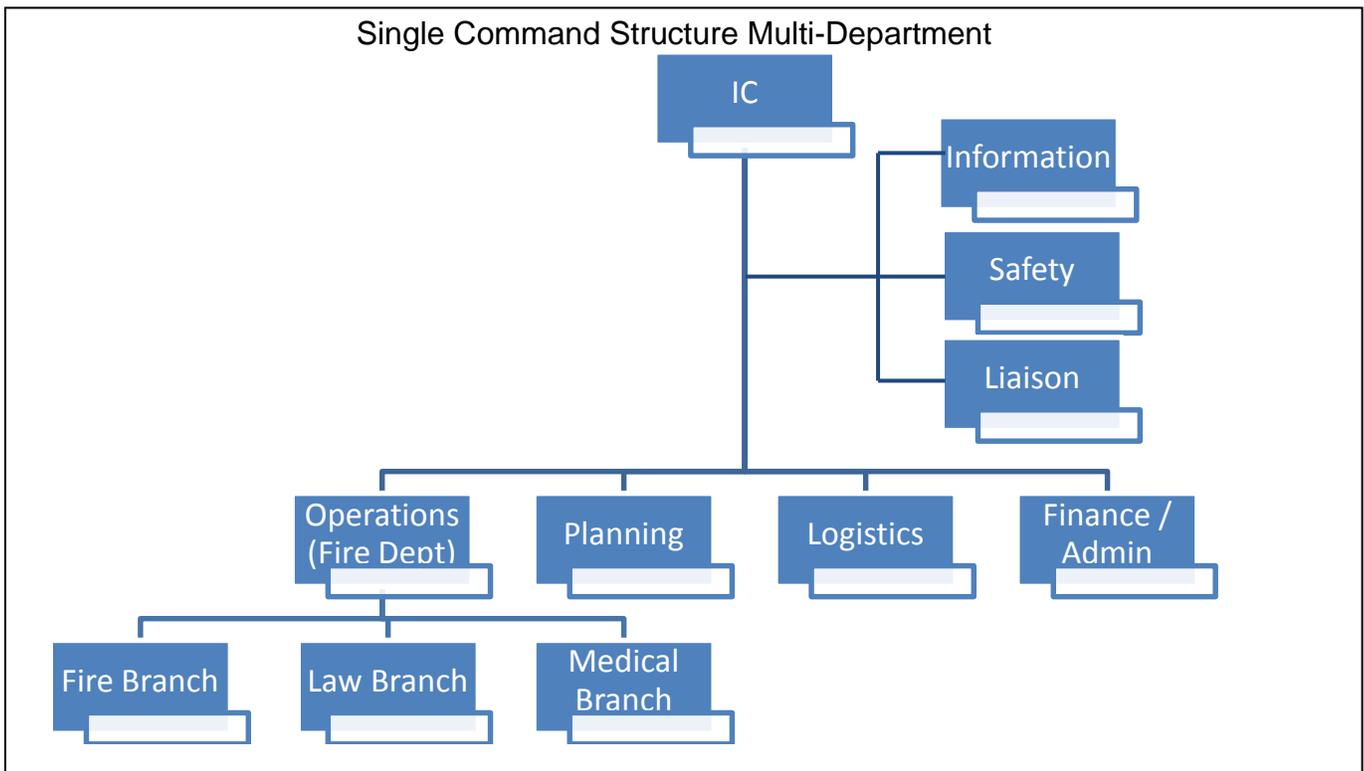
**Command- Single and Unified:** The Incident Commander is responsible for overall management of the incident. Command also includes certain staff functions. The command function within the ICS may be conducted in two general ways:

- Single Command
- Unified Command

**Single Command - Incident Commander:** Within a jurisdiction in which an incident occurs and when there is no overlap of jurisdictional boundaries involved, a single Incident Commander will be designated by the jurisdictional agency to have overall management responsibility for the incident.

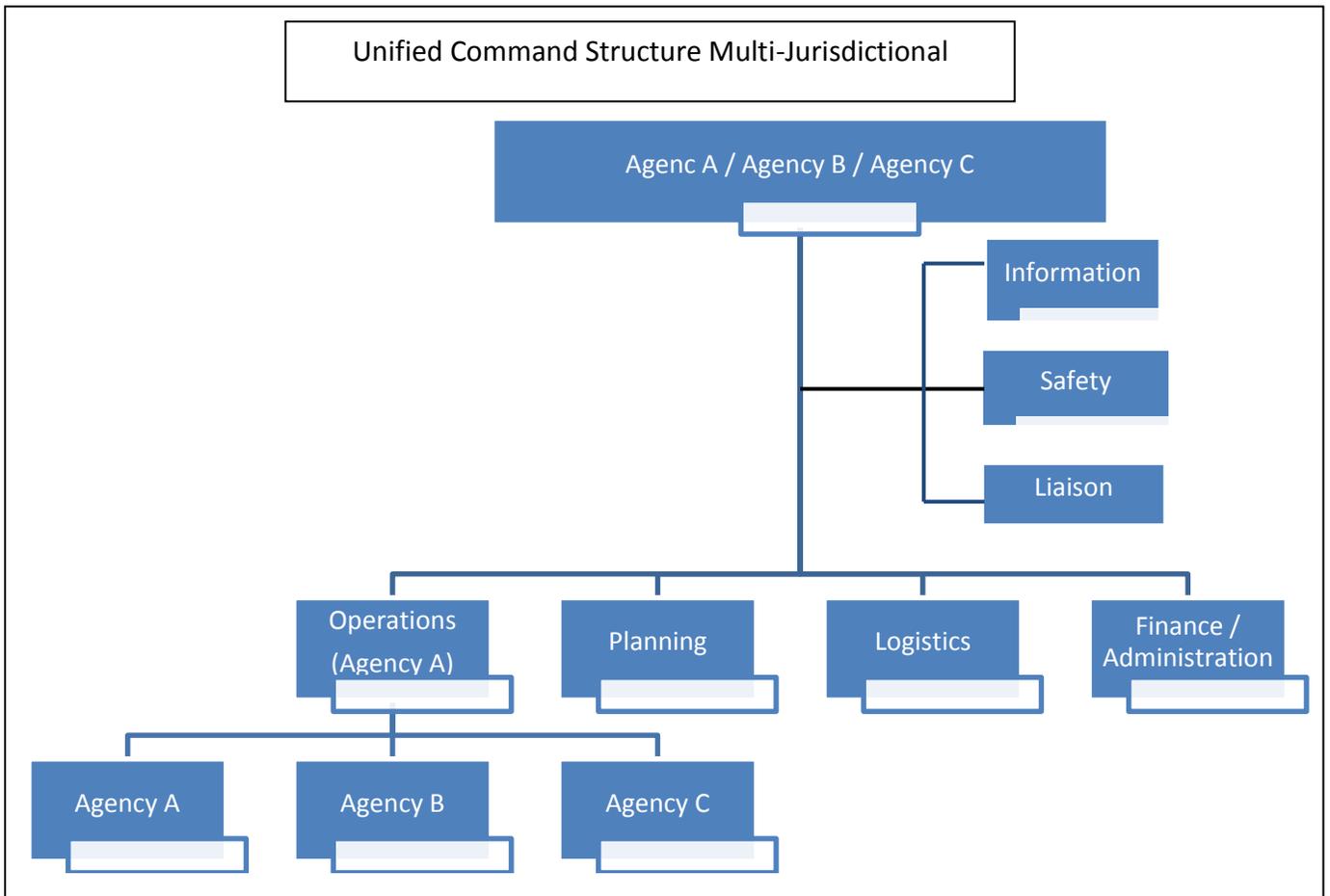
The Incident Commander will prepare incident objectives that, in turn, will be the foundation upon which subsequent action planning will be based. The Incident Commander will approve the final action plan and approve all requests for ordering and releasing of primary resources. The Incident Commander may have a deputy. The deputy will have qualifications equal to the IC and be delegated authority when acting in the IC's absence.

In an incident with a single jurisdiction where the nature of the incident is primarily a responsibility of one agency; e.g., fire, the deputy may be from the same agency. In a multi-jurisdictional incident or one which threatens to be multi-jurisdictional, the deputy role may be filled by an individual designated by the adjacent agency. More than one deputy could be involved. Figure depicts an incident with Single Incident Command authority:



**Unified Command:** In a Unified Command Structure, the individuals designated by their jurisdictions or by different agencies within the same jurisdiction must determine priorities, incident objectives and strategies. The determination of which agency or department the Operations Section Chief represents must be made by mutual agreement of the Unified Command.

The incident is totally contained within a single jurisdiction, but more than one department or agency shares management responsibility due to the nature of the incident or the kinds of resources required; i.e., a passenger airliner crash. Fire, medical, and law enforcement all have immediate but diverse objectives. An example of this kind of Unified Command structure is depicted below:



**Single/Unified Command Differences:** The primary differences between the Single and Unified Command structures are:

- In a Single Command structure, a single Incident Commander is solely responsible, within the confines of their authority, to establish objectives and overall management strategy associated with the incident. The Incident Commander is directly responsible for follow-through to ensure that all functional area actions are directed toward accomplishment of the strategy. The implementation of planning required to effect operational control will be the responsibility of a single individual (Operations Section Chief) who will report directly to the Incident Commander.
- In a Unified Command structure, the individuals designated by their jurisdictions or by departments within a single jurisdiction must jointly determine objectives, strategy and priorities. As in a Single Command structure, the Operations Section Chief will have responsibility for implementation of the plan. The determination of which agency or department the Operations Section Chief represents must be made by mutual agreement of the Unified Commanders. It may be done on the basis of greatest jurisdictional involvement, number of resources involved, by existing statutory authority or by mutual knowledge of the individual's qualifications.

## APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Agency Representative:** Individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated full authority to make decisions on all matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident. Agency Representatives report to the Incident Liaison Officer.

**Allocated Resources:** Resources dispatched to an incident that have not yet checked in with the Incident Commander.

**Ambulance:** A Ground vehicle providing patient transport capability, specified equipment capability, and personnel (basic life support ambulance or advanced life support ambulance, etc.).

**Assigned Resources:** Resources checked in and assigned work tasks on an incident.

**Assisting Agency:** An agency directly contributing suppression, rescue, support, or service resources to another agency.

**Available Resources:** Resources assigned to an incident and available for an assignment.

**Branch:** That organizational level having functional/geographic responsibility for major segments of incident operations. The Branch level is organizationally between Section and Division/Group.

**Buddy System:** Two individuals working as a team in the hazard area and two individuals present outside this hazard area for assistance or rescue at emergency operations where entry into the danger area is required. The standby members shall be responsible for maintaining a constant awareness of the number and identity of members operating in the hazardous area, their location and function, and time of entry. The standby members shall remain in radio, visual, voice or signalline communications with the team (NFPA 1500 6-4.4).

**CAN Report:** A field report from personnel operating on the fire ground to Command that includes three elements:

C - Conditions	(Current fire conditions)
A - Actions	(A description of the actions that they are taking)
N - Needs	(A request for any resource needs)

**Clear Text:** The use of plain English in radio communications transmissions. No Ten Codes or agency specific codes are used when using Clear Text.

**Command Post (ICP):** That location at which primary incident command functions are executed, usually co-located with the Incident Base.

**Command Staff:** The Command Staff consists of the Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer who report directly to the Incident Commander.

**Command:** The act of directing, ordering, and/or controlling resources by virtue of explicit legal, agency, or delegated authority.

**Company Officer:** The individual responsible for command of a Company. This designation is not specific to any particular fire department rank (may be a Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, or Chief Officer if responsible for command of a single Company).

**Company:** A ground vehicle providing specified equipment capability and personnel (Engine Company, Truck Company, Rescue Company, etc.).

**Cooperating Agency:** An agency supplying assistance other than direct suppression, rescue, support, or service functions to the incident control effort (Red Cross, law enforcement agency, utility company, etc.).

**Crew:** A specific number of personnel assembled for an assignment such as search, ventilation, or hose line deployment and operations. The number of personnel in a crew should not exceed recommended span-of-control guides (three to seven). A Crew operates under the direct supervision of a Crew Leader.

**Director:** ICS title for individuals responsible for command of a Branch.

**Dispatch Center:** A facility from which resources are directly assigned to an incident.

**Division:** That organization level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. The Division level is organizational between Single Resources, Task Force, or the Strike Team and the Branch.

**Emergency Traffic:** "Emergency traffic" shall be used as a designator to clear the radio traffic for an emergency affecting the incident and can be declared by any member who becomes aware of an emergency affecting the incident. When a member declares "emergency traffic" that person shall use clear text to identify the type of emergency, change in conditions, or tactical operations. Once the emergency is concluded, the IC shall transmit the message "all clear, resume radio traffic" to end the emergency situation or to re-open the radio channels to communication after announcing the emergency message.

**Engine Company:** A ground vehicle providing specified levels of pumping, water, hose capacity and personnel.

**Finance Unit:** Responsible for all costs and financial actions of the incident. Includes the Time Unit, Procurement Unit, Compensation/Claims Unit, and the Cost Unit.

**Flow Path:** The movement of heat and smoke from the higher pressure within the fire area to all lower air pressure areas both inside and outside of a fire building.

**General Staff:** The group of incident management personnel comprised of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance Section Chief.

**Group:** That organizational level having responsibility for a specified functional assignment at an incident (ventilation, salvage, water supply, etc.).

**Incident Action Plan (IAP):** The strategic goals, tactical objectives, and support requirements for the incident. All incidents require an action plan. For simple incidents, the action plan is not usually in written form. Large or complex incidents will require that the action plan be documented in writing.

**Incident Clock:** The fire department communications center should start an incident clock for working structure fires or hazardous materials incidents, or when other conditions appear to be times sensitive or dangerous. The dispatch center shall notify the incident commander at predetermined incremental time periods that resources have been on the incident until the fire is knocked down or the incident becomes static. The incident commander shall be permitted to cancel the incident clock notification through the fire department communications center based on the incident conditions.

**Incident Command System (ICS):** An Incident Management System with a common organizational structure with responsibility for the management of assigned resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertaining to an incident.

**Incident Commander (IC):** The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations.

**Information Officer:** Responsible for interface with the media or other appropriate agencies requiring information direct from the incident scene. Member of the Command Staff.

**Initial Attack:** Resources initially committed to an incident.

**Ladder Company:** See Truck Company.

**Leader:** The individual responsible for command of a Task Force, Strike Team, or Functional Unit.

**Liaison Officer:** The point of contact for assisting or coordinating agencies. Member of the Command Staff.

**Logistics Section:** Responsible for providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident. Includes the Communications Unit, Medical Unit, and Food Unit within the Service Branch and the Supply Unit, Facilities Unit, and Ground Support Unit within the Support Branch.

**Mayday:** "Mayday" shall be used as the designator to identify when a member is in a life-threatening situation and in need of immediate assistance and can be declared by any member who becomes aware of a member who is in a life-threatening situation and in need of immediate assistance. The incident commander shall conclude the "Mayday" by transmitting "Mayday cleared, resume normal radio traffic."

**Officer:** The Command Staff positions of Safety, Liaison, and Information. Operational Period: The period of time scheduled for execution of a given set of operations actions as specified in the Incident Action Plan. -

**Operations Section:** Responsible for all tactical operations at the incident. Includes up to 5 Branches, 25 Divisions/Groups, and 125 Single Resources, Task Forces or Strike Teams.

**Out-of-Service Resources:** Resources assigned to an incident but unable to respond for mechanical, rest, or personnel reasons.

**Planning Section:** Responsible for the collection, evaluation, dissemination, and use of information about the development of the incident and the status of resources. Includes the situation, Resource, Documentation, and Demobilization Units as well as Technical Specialists.

**Rescue Company:** A ground vehicle providing specified rescue equipment, capability, and personnel.

**Resources:** All personnel and major items of equipment available, or potentially available, for assignment to incident tasks on which status is maintained.

**Responder Rehab (Rehabilitation):** That function and location that shall include medical evaluation and treatment, food and fluid replenishment, and relief from extreme climatic conditions for emergency responders, according to the circumstances of the incident.

**Rapid Intervention Crew/Company (RIC):** A crew or company designated to standby in a state of readiness to rescue emergency personnel.

**Safety Officer:** Responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards, unsafe situations, and developing measures for ensuring personnel safety. Member of the Command Staff.

**Section:** That organization level having functional responsibility for primary segments of incident operations, such as: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. The Section level is organizationally between Branch and Incident Commander.

**Section Chiefs:** Title that refers to a member of the General Staff (Planning Section Chief, Operations Section Chief, Finance/Administration Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief).

**Single Resource:** An individual Company or Crew.

**Staging Area:** That location where incident personnel and equipment are assigned on an immediately available status.

**Strategic Goals:** The overall plan that will be used to control the incident. Strategic goals are broad in nature and are achieved by the completion of tactical objectives.

**Strike Team:** Five (5) of the same kind and type of resources with common communications and a leader.

**Supervisor:** Individuals responsible for Command of a Division/Group.

**Tactical Objectives:** The specific operations that must be accomplished to achieve strategic goals. Tactical objectives must be both specific and measurable. Tactical level operations are typically handled at the Division/Group level or below.

**Task Force:** A group of any type and kind of resources with common communications and a leader assembled for a specific mission (not to exceed five resources).

**Technical Specialists:** Personnel with special skills who are activated only when needed. Technical Specialists may be needed in the areas of fire behavior, water resources, environmental concerns, resource use, and training. Technical Specialists report initially to the Planning Section but may be assigned anywhere within the ICS organization at structure as needed.

**Truck Company:** A ground vehicle providing an aerial ladder or other aerial device and specified portable ladders and equipment capability and personnel

**Unit:** That organization element having functional responsibility for a specific incident's Planning, Logistics, or Finance/Administration activity.

**Water Tender:** Any ground vehicle capable of transporting specified quantities of water.

## Appendix B – Integrated Communications

Communications at the incident are managed through the use of a common communications plan and an incident-based communications center established solely for the use of tactical and support resources assigned to the incident. All communications between organizational elements at an i11cident should be in plain English ("clear text"). No codes should be used and all communications should be confined only to essential messages. The Communications Unit is responsible for all communications planning at the incident. This will include incident- established radio networks, on-site telephone, public address, and off-incident telephone/microwave/radio systems.

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

Command Frequency	This net should link together: Incident Command, key staff members, Section Chiefs, Division and Group Supervisors.
Tactical Frequency	There may be several tactical nets. They may be established around agencies, departments, geographical areas, or even specific functions. The determination of how nets are set up should be a joint Planning/Operations function. The Communications Unit Leader will develop the plan.
Support Net	A support net will be established primarily to handle status-changing for resources as well as for support requests and certain other non-tactical or command functions.
Air to Ground Net	An Air to Ground tactical net may be designated or regular tactical nets may be used to coordinate Air to Ground traffic.
Air-to-Air Net	Air-to-air nets will normally be pre-designated and assigned for use at the incident.

## **Appendix C - Sample Tactical Worksheets**

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Sample 1 – Front Side

Single Story Structure

Time / Alarm	Address	Unit No.	Inc. No.	Date
Time / Scene	Occupancy-Size/Type		Property Loss	
First Scene	DBA/Occupant Telephone		Contents Loss	
Agent Appl.	Owner Telephone		Civ. Inj.	Civ. Fatal.
Knockdown	Owner Address		F.D. Inj.	F.D. Fatal.

ENR.	ONS	Assignment	AVI

Assignments	
IC	Plans
Operations	Logistics
Lobby	Staging
Base	

Media Contact	Helicopters	Heavy Utility
ICP and Base Location	Helicopter Support	Public Utilities
Law Enforcement	Tractors	Communications
Emergency Air	Command Unit	Food Service
Chief Officers	Liaison	Weather
EMS	Mobile Lab	Arson Unit
Rescue Ambulance	Foam Carrier	
PIO	Emergency Lighting	

## Resource and Situation Status Record

Sample 1 – Back Side

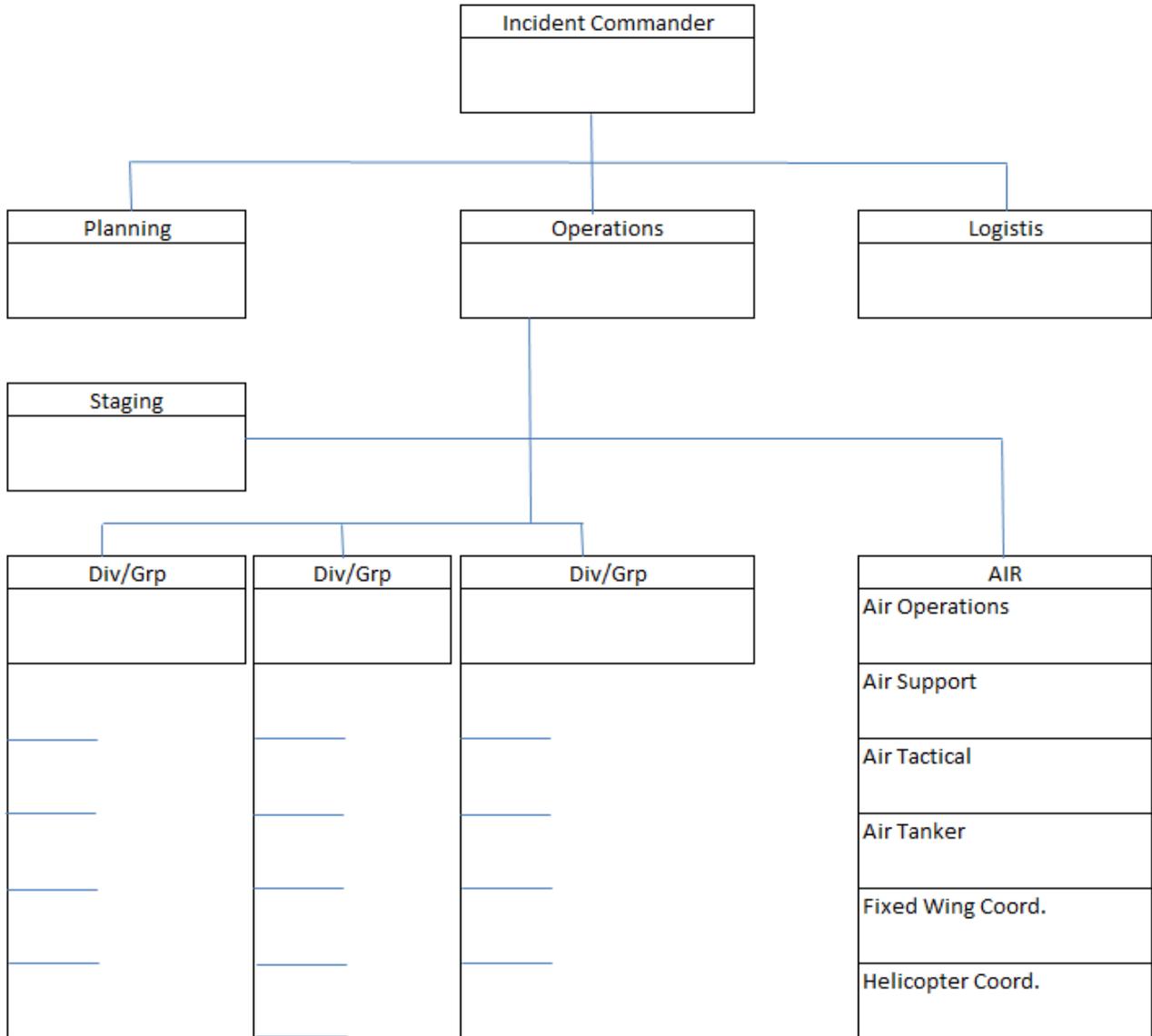
Multi-Story Structure

Time / Alarm		Address		Unit No.	Inc. No.		Date
Time / Scene		Occupancy-Size/Type			Property Loss		
First Scene		DBA/Occupant Telephone			Contents Loss		
Agent Appl.		Owner Telephone			Civ. Inj.		Civ. Fatal.
Knockdown		Owner Address			F.D. Inj.		F.D. Fatal.
ENR.	ONS	Assignment	AVI	Situation		Resources	
						[ ]	
						[ ]	
						[ ]	
						[ ]	
				Assignments			
				IC		Plans	
				Operations		Logistics	
				Lobby		Staging	
				Base			
Media Contact		Rescue/Evacuation		Salvage			
ICP and Base Location		Recon		Communications			
Law Enforcement		Helicopters		Public Utilities			
Emergency Air		Ventilation		Food Service			
Chief Officers		Air Conditioning		Investigation Unit			
EMS		Stairwells		Safety Officer			
Rescue Ambulance		Elevators					
PIO		Standpipe Supply					

<b>INCIDENT BRIEFING</b> ICS 201 5/94	1. Incident Name	2. Date Prepared	3. Time Prepared
4. Map Sketch			



6. Current Organization





## Appendix D - Tactical Priorities and Strategic Objectives

Scientific studies conducted by the International Society of Fire Service Instructors and Underwriters Laboratories have shown that structure fires today are more volatile than in years past due to an increase in synthetics used in furnishings, lightweight building construction and energy efficient features in structures. These new fuels and construction techniques have challenged the fire service to reevaluate how it extinguishes structure fires.

The acronym **SLICERS** was created to guide initial engine company operations. It is effective as an initial attack sequence for the initial arriving officer to determine tactical priorities. As the command officer arrives, **RECEO-VS** is an effective acronym to use for overall strategic objectives guiding the incident.

### **SLICERS**

The first five actions are sequential:

**Size up:** Consists of three components. The first component is all of the information the Incident Commander had prior to the incident (weather conditions, staffing, pre-fire plan information, etc.) The second component is the information garnered when the Incident Commander arrives on scene and conducts a 360 walk around. These may include type of occupancy, visual smoke and fire, reports of victims, etc. The final component recognizes that size up is a continuous process throughout the incident.

**Locate the fire:** The location of the fire, as well as the location of super-heated gasses produced by the fire, needs to be determined. An effective tool to help locate the fire is with the use of a thermal imaging camera if available.

**Identify and control flow path:** If a flow path is identified, attempt to control it by controlling the door or window. Forcible entry openings should be considered as ventilation. Simply opening the door can cause increases in temperatures inside the fire building. If a flow path is not present, don't create one until resources are properly positioned.

**Cool the space from safest location:** Early application of water is important to reduce the thermal threat to firefighters. Water has shown to improve the conditions to the fire building for the occupants and firefighters. Given the information from the size-up, location of fire and flow path, a decision is made on where and how to cool the super-heated area of the building. The water may be applied from the exterior if appropriate, or interior application may be needed to cool the heated compartments (large building, attic fires).

**Extinguish the fire:** Completely extinguish the fire with direct water application.

The final two actions are actions of opportunity and can be taken at any point during operations:

**Rescue:** At any time in an incident, personnel may have an opportunity to remove trapped or endangered occupants. A challenge often seen with departments operating with limited staffing may be arriving on scene with active fire and a known rescue situation and the need to make a decision on which tactic is a priority; protect the occupants, remove them from the structure, or knock down the fire threat to remove the hazard. An option to use in this scenario could be to utilize the pump operator to reduce the thermal threat, while the officer and firefighter work to remove the trapped occupants based on a Vent-Enter-Isolate-Search technique. In order to do this, a window is assessed based on possible location of victims, smoke conditions, etc. The window is ventilated by forcible entry the firefighter enters the room and immediately closes the room door to isolate and control the flow path and conduct a search.

**Salvage:** Personnel should use compartmentalization to control fire spread and smoke when possible. Proper water application and removal of property from the structure also increases salvage.

## **RECEO-VS**

RECEO-VS continues to be effective from a command perspective to recall incident priorities after the initial engine company's actions to ensure rescue has been made, exposures managed, and extinguishment taken place. The ventilation and rescue components can be accomplished at any time that a need or opportunity arises.

**Rescue:** Human life is the most important consideration at an incident. Tactics such as extinguishment, Vent-Enter-Isolate-Search, door control may be tactics employed towards protecting people, but the strategy is rescue.

**Exposure Protection:** Preventing a fire from spreading to uninvolved buildings or separate units. After determining that no people are inside a fire building, initial efforts may be the protection of nearby buildings.

**Confinement:** Preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved portions of the building. A common example is a strip mall with a common attic. Tactics must be employed to stop the fire from spreading throughout the building via the attic or other corridors of travel.

**Extinguishment:** This is simply putting water on the fire. The proper method of extinguishment is incident driven. The size of the fire; the site type and age of the construction; the contents of the occupancy must all be considered when determining the tactics for extinguishment.

**Overhaul:** Ensuring that the fire is completely out is the purpose of overhaul. This is a dangerous aspect of the incident. Personnel are more relaxed, tired and perhaps less alert. Danger of collapse is an issue during the overhaul portion of the incident. Dangerous gasses are still present and personnel may be tempted to remove their breathing apparatus. Also, if an investigator has been requested for the incident, it is imperative the overhaul process is coordinated with the investigator so that important evidence is not destroyed.

**Ventilation:** Ventilation may need to occur at any time in the incident, for different reasons and may utilize different tactics.

**Salvage:** After the preservation of life, the conservation of property is one of the most important tenets of the fire service-yet often overlooked. Salvage operations include, but are not limited to, the removal of property from the structure and the protection of property from water damage. Prior to leaving the incident, crews should consider actions that can be taken to protect the property from weather and intruders.