



## CHAPTER 5

# Incident Command System

# Fire Fighter II Objectives

- Describe the characteristics of the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Explain the organization of the ICS.
- Function within an assigned role within the ICS.



# Fire Fighter II Objectives

- Organize and coordinate an ICS until command is transferred.
- Transfer command within an ICS.



# Introduction

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- ICS should be used for all operations and training.
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
  - Defines standards and guidelines nationally
  - Variations exist.
  - Every fire fighter must know local procedures thoroughly.

# History of ICS

- Pre-1970s
  - Every fire department had its own methods of incident management.
  - Organization often depended on the style of the chief on duty.
  - Such an approach did not work well with other units or mutual aid companies.



# History of ICS

- 1970s
  - FIRESCOPE
    - Developed first standard ICS
  - Fire-ground command system (FGC)
    - Initially developed for day-to-day department incidents



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# History of ICS

- 1980s
  - FIRESCOPE ICS adopted by all federal and most state wildland firefighting agencies
  - Several federal regulations and consensus standards adopted
- Present
  - ICS is best of ICS and FGC.

# Characteristics of the ICS

- Recognized jurisdictional authority
- Applicable to all risk and hazard situations
- Applicable to day-to-day operations
- Unity of command
- Span of control
- Modular organization



# Characteristics of the ICS

- Common terms
- Integrated communications
- Consolidated incident action plans
- Designated incident facilities
- Resource management

# Jurisdictional Authority

- Identification at smaller incidents is usually not a problem.
- Unified command used when there are overlapping responsibilities
- Single command
- Incident action plan (IAP)

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# All-Risk/All-Hazard System

- ICS works equally well at all types of incidents.
  - Emergencies
  - Nonemergency events



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# Everyday Applicability

- ICS can be used for everyday operations.
- Regular use of ICS builds familiarity with procedures and terms.



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# Unity of Command

- Each person has only one supervisor.
- All orders and assignments come from that supervisor.
- Best qualified person should be assigned at the appropriate level.



# Span of Control

- The maximum number of subordinates a supervisor can have
- In most situations, three to seven is the most one person can manage.
- In ICS, span of control should be limited to five.

# Modular Organization

- ICS is designed to be flexible and modular.
- Not every component must be used.
- Additional components can be added as needed.

# Common Terms

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- Terms are common and consistent within and among agencies in the ICS.
- Common terms eliminate confusion.
  - Each word has a single definition.
  - No two words mean the same thing.

# Integrated Communications

- Communications supported up and down the chain of command
- Messages must move efficiently through the system.



# Consolidated Incident Action Plans

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- Everyone follows one overall plan.
- May be developed by the incident commander alone at small incidents
- Developed in collaboration with all agencies involved on larger incidents





# Designated Incident Facilities

- Assigned locations
  - Incident command post
  - Rehabilitation sector
  - Casualty collection point
  - Treatment area
  - Base of operations
  - Helispot

# Resource Management

- Standard system of assigning and tracking resources involved on the incident
- Staging area
  - Large-scale incidents
  - Close to incident
  - Units held in reserve
- Personnel are the most vital resource

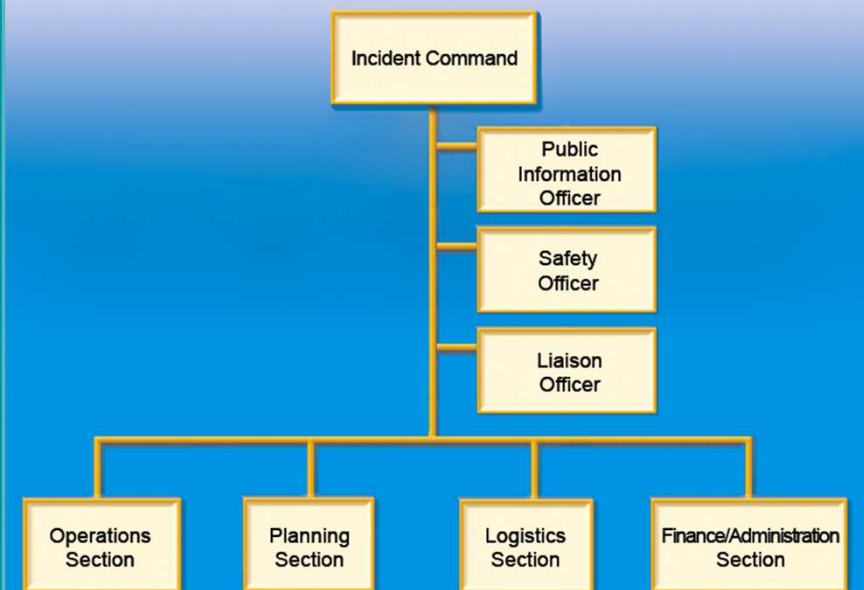
# The ICS Organization

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- Positions are staffed as needed.
- IC position must be filled at every incident.

## ICS Organizational Chart



# Command

- The incident commander is ultimately responsible for managing the incident.
- Command is established when the first unit arrives on the scene as is maintained until the last unit leaves the scene.



# Unified Command

- Used when agencies overlap
- Representatives from each agency cooperate to share command authority.



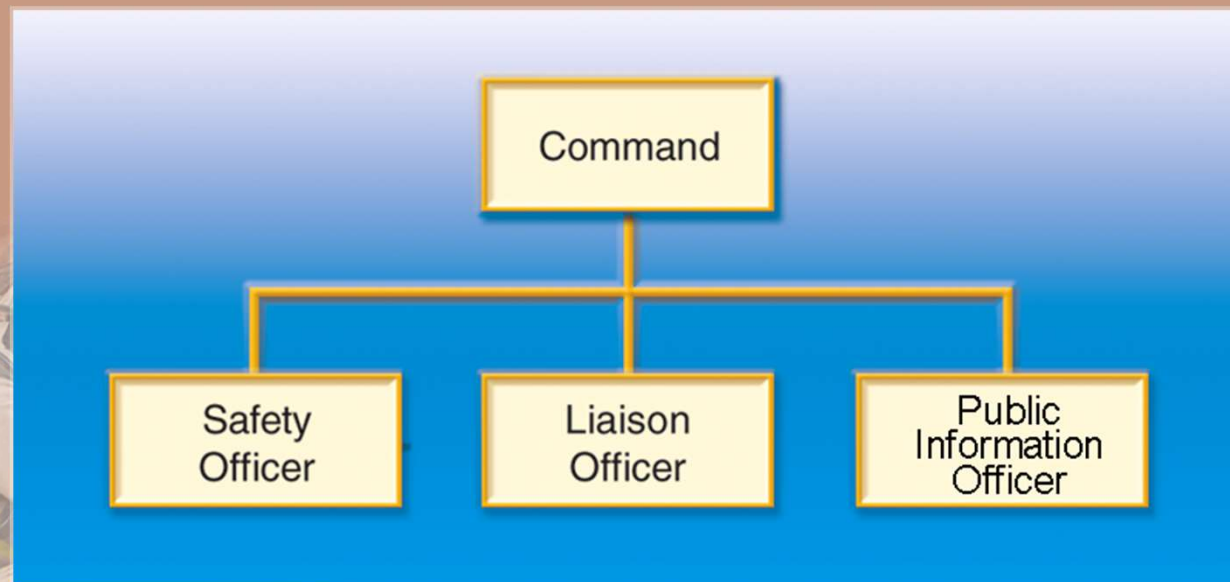


# Incident Command Post

- Headquarters location for the incident
- Should be in a nearby, protected location
  - Enables command staff to function without distractions or interruptions

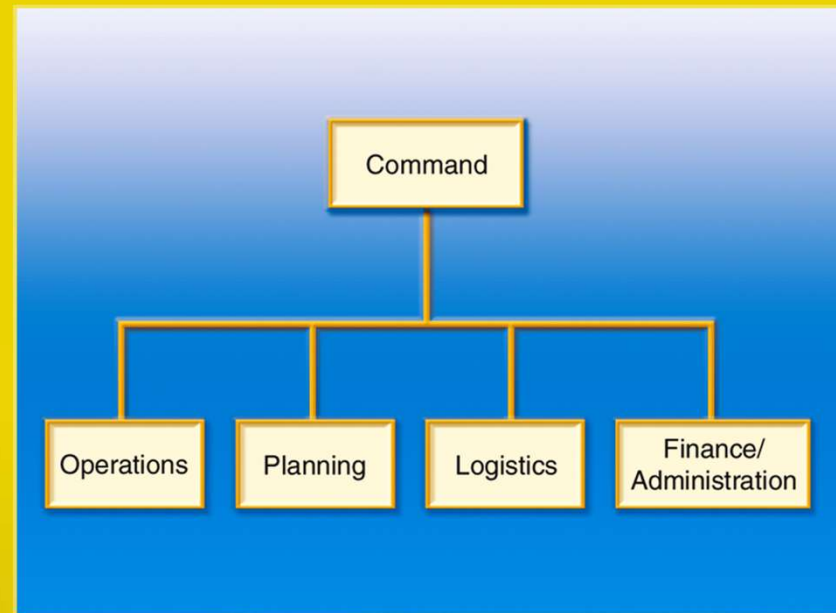
# Command Staff

- Safety officer
- Liaison officer
- Public information officer



# General Staff Functions

- Four section chiefs for the major ICS components:
  - Operations
  - Planning
  - Logistics
  - Finance/ administration



# Operations

- Responsible for all actions that are directly related to controlling the incident
  - Fire suppression
  - Rescue
  - Emergency medical services
  - Conducted in accordance with an IAP

# Planning

- Responsible for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information relevant to the incident
- Also responsible for developing and updating the IAP

## The Planning Section of ICS

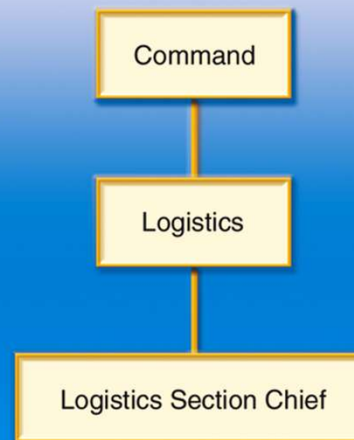




# Logistics

- Responsible for providing supplies, services, facilities, and materials during the incident

## The Logistics Section of ICS



# Finance/Administration

- Responsible for accounting and financial aspects of an incident
- Responsible for any legal issues that may arise
- Not staffed at most incidents

## The Finance/Administration Section of ICS



# Standard ICS Concepts and Terms

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- One of the strengths of the ICS is its use of standard terms.
  - Specific terms apply to various parts of an incident organization.
  - Understanding these basic terms is the first step in understanding the system.

# Single Resources and Crews

- Single resource
  - A vehicle and its assigned personnel
- Crew
  - Groups of fire fighters working without apparatus

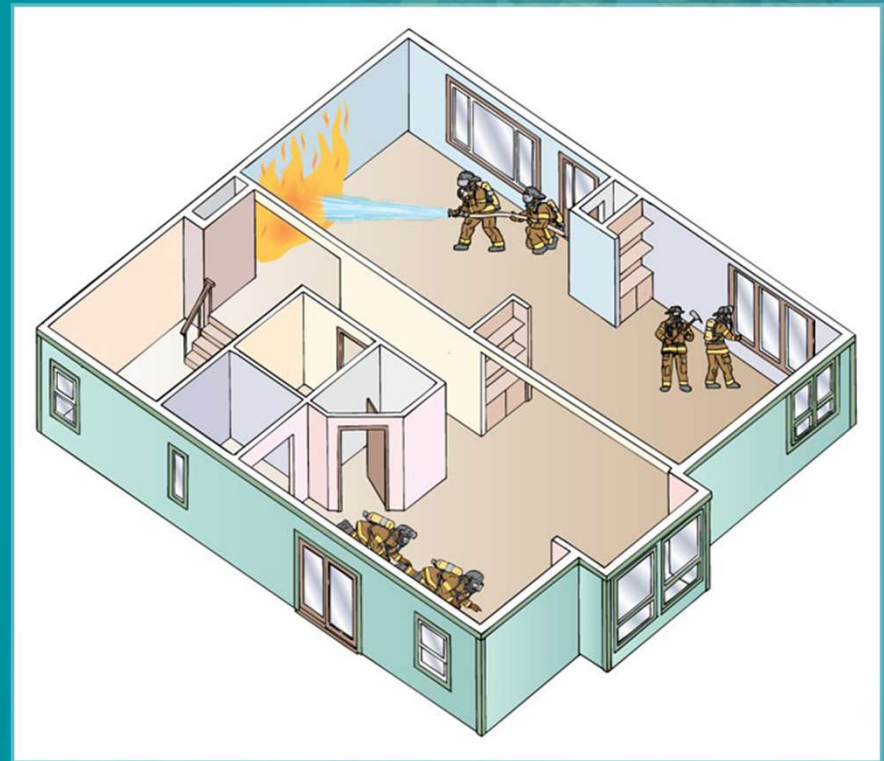


# Divisions and Groups

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- Division
  - Geographic
- Group
  - Functional





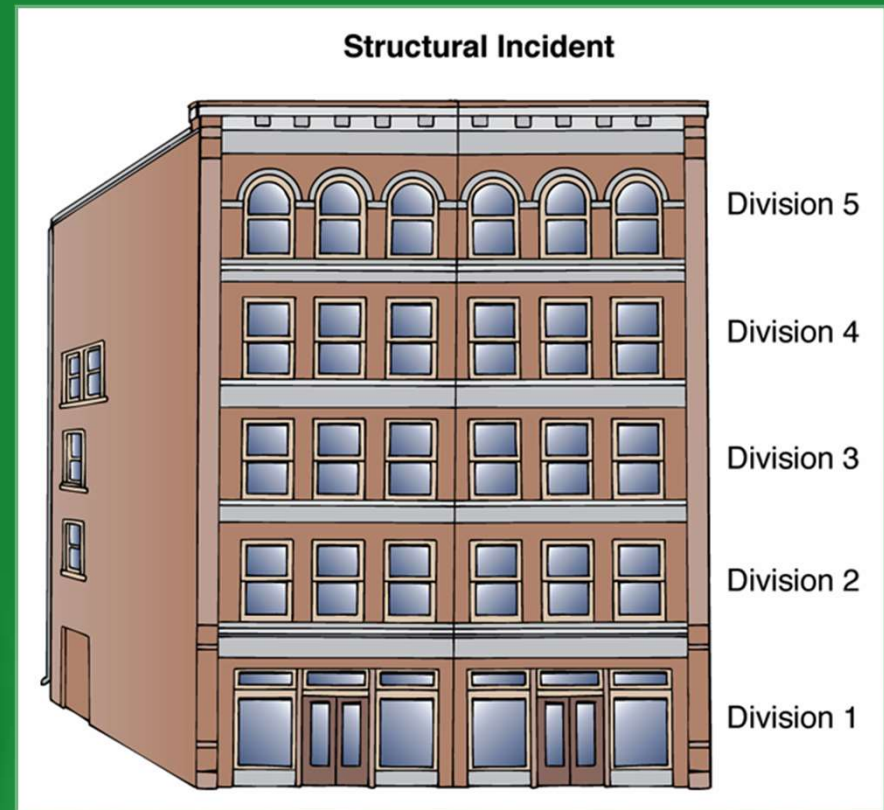
# Branches

- Higher level of combined resources working on a particular aspect of the overall emergency
- A branch director can oversee several divisions and/or groups.



# Location Designators

- Identify different parts of a fire scene
  - Sides
  - Exposures
  - Floors



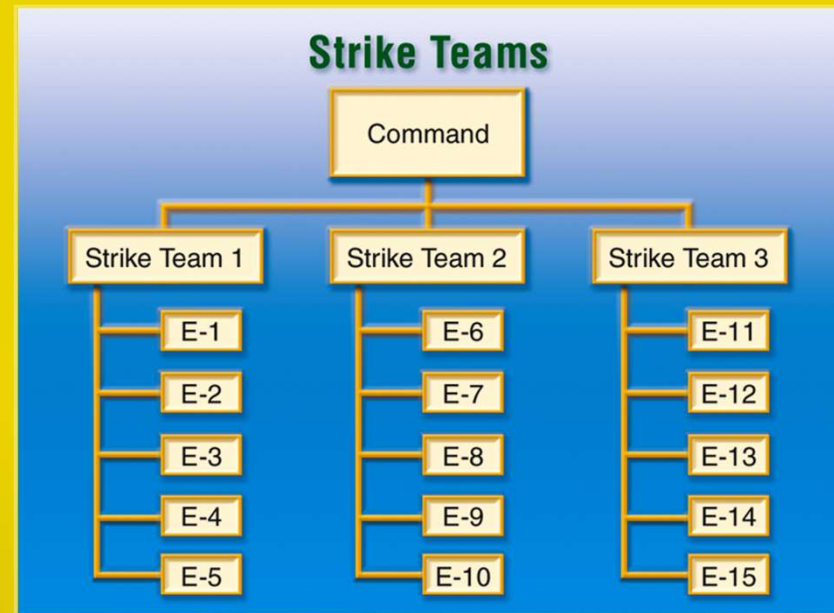
# Task Forces and Strike Teams

- Groups of single resources assigned to work together
- Task force
  - Up to five single resources of any type



# Task Forces and Strike Teams

- Strike team
  - Five units of the same type working on a common task or function



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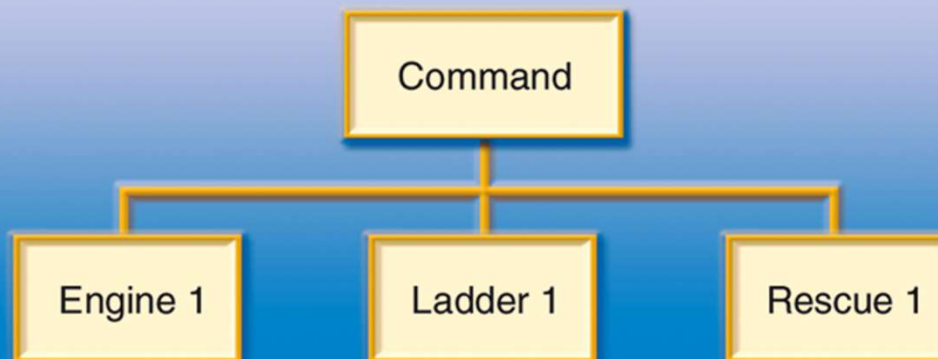
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# Implementing ICS

- Modular design allows organization to expand based on needs.
- Tasks are defined in advance.

## Small-Scale ICS Command Structure





# Implementing ICS

- Most frequently used components:
  - Divisions
  - Groups



# Standard Position Titles

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- Clarify roles within the ICS organization
- Title includes functional/geographic area, followed by designator.

# Standard Position Titles

TABLE 5-1

Levels of an ICS Organization

ICS Level	ICS Function/Location	Position Designator
Command	Command and control	Incident Commander
Command staff	Safety, liaison, information	Officer
General staff	Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration	Section Chief
Branch	Varies (e.g., EMS)	Director
Division/group	Varies (e.g., Division A)	Supervisor
Unit/crew/strike	Varies (e.g., Rehab)	Leader
Team/task force		(Company officer)



# Working Within the ICS

- Every fire fighter must understand the ICS and his or her role within it.
- Three basic components:
  - Someone is in command of every incident.
  - You always report to one supervisor.
  - The company officer reports to the incident commander.

# Responsibilities of First-Arriving Fire Fighters

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- ICS organization is built around the units that take initial action.
- Company officers need to assume command until relieved by a higher-ranking officer.



# Establishing Command

- The officer of the first-in unit is in command.
- This is formally announced on the radio.
- An initial report should be given as well.

# Confirmation of Command

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- Initial radio report lets everyone know that command has been established.
- An incident identifier should be chosen.

# Transfer of Command

- One person relinquishes command.
- Current situation status report is given to the new incident commander.
- Information transfer must be complete and accurate.



# Situation Status Report Information

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- Tactical priorities
- Action plans
- Hazardous conditions
- Accomplishments
- Assessment of effectiveness
- Current status of resources

# Command Transfer Rationale

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- Transfer of command determined by a variety of factors:
  - Complexity of the incident
  - Officer's level of experience
  - Involvement of multiple agencies



# Summary

- ICS provides a standard, professional, and organized approach to managing emergency incidents.
- All emergency operations and training exercises should be run using ICS.
- All functions in the ICS must be addressed at every incident.

# Summary

- On smaller incidents, this may only require one person to handle all functions.
- The incident commander has ultimate responsibility to manage the incident.
- All fire fighters must understand the ICS and what their role in an ICS is.