

NIMS/ICS Study Guide

The FEMA Website

This guide was developed to be used in conjunction with the online NIMS and ICS classes. To attend each class, navigate to the FEMA website (you can use the links below) and find the section called TAKE THIS COURSE on the right side of the web page. You may choose either option.

TAKE THIS COURSE

- ▶ [Option 1: Interactive Web-based Course](#) - *EMI learning site*
- ▶ [Option 2: Interactive Web-based Course](#) - *Host Site*

ICS 100 <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp>

ICS 200 <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is200.asp>

ICS 700 <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>

After completing the online course, review this study guide carefully. Once you are satisfied that you are familiar with the material presented here, go back to the appropriate website, and take the end of course examination. The link is also on the right side of the page, below the additional resources section.

TAKE FINAL EXAM

- ▶ [Take Final Exam](#)

Whether you pass or fail, you will be notified by an email message. If you pass, do not delete the message you receive, it contains your course completion certificate. Please ensure that you print a copy of the course completion certificate for your own records. Additionally, you will need to provide your squadron's Emergency Services officer (ESO) with a copy of your course completion certificate so she/he can put it in your CAP form 114 and update your eServices on-line records.

If you have problems retrieving your certificate from the email you received, contact your ESO.

The National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a flexible framework that applies to all phases of incident management regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity.

One of the chief benefits of NIMS is that it is applicable across jurisdictions and functions.

NIMS ensures that all personnel possess a minimum level of training, experience, fitness, capability, and currency by establishing certification and credentialing standards for key personnel.

NIMS standards for communications and information management are based on the principle that a common operating picture is required to ensure consistency among all who respond.

The NIMS Integration Center

The NIMS Integration Center was developed to:

- Facilitate definitions of general training requirements and approved courses
- Maintain and Manage national-level preparedness standards.
- Approve and review lists of equipment meeting national standards for interoperable equipment used by other jurisdictions.

The Incident Command System (ICS)

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a proven incident management system that is based on organizational best practices. ICS is used to manage incidents such as fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and acts of terrorism. However, ICS can be used in the planning and operation of an annual city celebration, including a parade and fair.

Designers of the system recognized early that ICS must allow personnel from a variety of agencies to meld rapidly into a common management structure.

Ensuring safe work practices is a top priority within the ICS common leadership responsibility.

Management by Objectives

ICS is managed by objectives. Objectives are communicated throughout the entire ICS organization through the incident planning process. Management by objectives includes:

- If the incident is outside the Incident Commander's home jurisdiction.
- When the incident scope is complex or beyond existing authorities.
- If required by law or procedures.

Terminology and Communications

Common terminology is used to ensure efficient and clear communication throughout ICS operations.

Formal communication must be used when:

- Receiving and giving work assignments.
- Requesting support or additional resources.
- Reporting progress of assigned tasks.

Other information concerning the incident or event can be passed horizontally or vertically within the organization without restriction. This is known as informal communication.

The use of common terminology for ICS position titles helps to reduce confusion between a person's position on an incident and his/her day to day position.

There is no correlation between the ICS organization and the administrative structure of any single agency or jurisdiction. This is because confusion between agency position titles/organizational structures, and the ICS structure needs to be avoided.

Using specific ICS position titles allows ICS positions to be filled with the most qualified individuals rather than being filled just by rank alone.

Span of Control

Span of Control pertains to the number of individuals or resources one incident supervisor can effectively manage. Span of Control may vary from 3 to 7. Optimum Span of Control is 5
- Span of control is accomplished by organizing resources in Teams, Divisions, Groups, Branches, and sections.

Unity of Command

Unit of Command means that an individual will be assigned to only one supervisor.

Delegation of Authority

The process of granting authority to carry out specific functions is called a delegation of authority. Ideally, this authority will be granted in writing. Whether it is granted in writing or verbally, the authorities granted remain with the Incident Commander until such time as the incident is terminated, or a relief shift Incident Commander is appointed.

- When issued, a delegation of authority should specify when the authority ends

Example: An emergency manager may already have the authority to deploy response resources to a small flash flood; A fire chief probably has the authority (as part of the job description) to serve as an Incident Commander at a structure fire.

ICS Positions/Titles

<u>Primary Position</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Support Position</u>
Incident Commander	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
General Staff (Section)	Chief	Deputy
Branch	Director	Deputy
Division/Group	Supervisor	N/A
Strike Team/Force	Leader	N/A
Unit	Leader	Manager
Single Resource	Unit	N/A

The ICS organizational structure should include only the functions and positions needed to achieve the incident objectives. Example: If a Section Chief is not required or assigned, a unit leader would report directly to the Incident Commander.

The Incident Commander

A basic ICS principle is that the first Incident Commander is responsible until the authority is delegated to another person.

Upon arriving at an incident, a higher ranking incident commander will either assume command, maintain command as is, or reassign command to a third party.

The Incident Commander is the one position that is always staffed in ICS applications.

During small level incidents, the Incident Commander may assume all of the duties of the Command and General staff.

If a person is assigned or assumes the role of Deputy Incident Commander, he/she must have the same credentials and training as the Incident Commander. This rule follows for all ICS duty positions.

When command is transferred, all personnel with a need to know should be told the effective time and date of the transfer.

The Command Staff

The Command Staff includes the Public Information officer, Safety officer, and Liaison officer.

The Liaison Officer serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assigned to an incident.

The Safety Officer monitors safety condition and develops measures for assuring the safety of all assigned personnel.

The Public Information Officer serves as the conduit between internal and external stakeholders, including the media, or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event.

Public Information Officers operating within the parameters of a Joint Information System, establishes policies, procedures, and protocols for gathering and disseminating information.

The General Staff

If required, the Incident Commander may decide to delegate authority to increase the performance of: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. Personnel assigned to these positions are designated as the General Staff.

The General Staff consists of the: Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief.

The Operations section is responsible for determining the tactics for an incident. The Operations Section Chief conducts tactical operations, develops the tactical objectives and organization, and directs all tactical resources. Resources assigned to Staging Areas fall under the Operations Section Chief.

The Finance/Administration Section Chief prepares and documents the incident action plan, collects and evaluates information, maintains resource status and maintains documentation for incident records. Additionally, the Finance/Administration section is responsible for:

- Handling claims related to property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident.
- Manages costs related to the incident and provides accounting, procurement, time recording and cost analyses.

The Logistics Section Chief is responsible for ensuring that assigned personnel are fed and have communications, medical support, and transportation as needed to meet the operational objectives.

Other Staff

Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. Groups are located between Branches (when activated) and Resources in the Operations Section.

Branches are established either geographically or functionally.

Units are that organizational element having functional responsibility for a specific incident

planning, logistics, or finance activity.

Example: A Medical unit, if assigned, is responsible for the development of the Medical Plan, obtaining medical aid, and transportation of ill and injured incident personnel.

The Information and Intelligence function includes not only national security or other types of classified information but also other operational information, such as risk assessments, medical intelligence (i.e., surveillance), weather information, geospatial data, structural designs, toxic contaminant levels, and utilities and public-works data, that may come from a variety of different sources. Regardless of how it is organized, the information and intelligence function is also responsible for developing, conducting, and managing information-related security plans and operations as directed by the Incident Action Plan.

The Information and Intelligence function may be organized:

- Within the Command Staff
- As a unit within the Planning Section
- As a Branch within the Operations Section
- As a separate General Staff Section

ICS Form 201, Incident Briefing Form

ICS form 201 contains status information for briefing the incoming Incident Commander or team, or other resources. It is an eight-part form that provides an Incident Command/Unified Command with status information that can be used for briefing incoming resources, an incoming Incident Commander or team, or an immediate supervisor.

Occasionally, the ICS Form 201 serves as the initial Incident Action Plan (IAP) until a Planning Section has been established and generates, at the direction of the Incident Commander, an IAP.

The ICS Form 201 is also suitable for briefing individuals newly assigned to the Command and General Staff.

Incident Action Plan (IAP)

Every incident must have a verbal or written Incident Action Plan (IAP). The purpose of this plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with direction to take actions, based on the objectives identified in the plan during the operational period.

- Incident Action Plans contains objectives reflecting the overall incident strategy and specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period.
- Incident Action Plans depend on management by objectives to accomplish response tactics.

Corrective Action Plan

A Corrective Action Plan is based on lessons learned from actual incidents.

Operational Periods

An Operational Period is a period of time scheduled for the execution of a given set of operation actions specified in the Incident Action Plan. Operational Periods can be of various lengths, although FEMA usually uses 24 hours as its Operational Period.

The operational period briefing sets forth the specific tasks, reporting relationships, and expectations for the support staff.

The Operational Period Briefing is facilitated by the Planning Section Chief and follows a set agenda. A typical briefing includes the following:

- Current Situation and Objectives
- Safety Issues and Emergency Procedures
- Work Tasks
- Facilities and Work Areas
- Communications Protocols
- Supervisory/Performance Expectations
- Process for Acquiring Resources, Supplies, and Equipment
- Work Schedules
- Questions or Concerns

Other Briefings

There are three types of briefings/meetings used in ICS: staff level, field level, and section level.

- Staff-level briefings are delivered to resources assigned to nonoperational and support tasks at the Incident Command Post or Base.
- Field-level briefings are delivered to individual resources or crews who are assigned to operational tasks and/or work at or near the incident site.
- Section-level briefings are delivered to an entire Section and include the Operational Period Briefing.

Incident Facilities

The Incident Command Post is the location where the primary command functions are executed. It is positioned outside of the present and potential hazard area, but close enough to the incident to maintain command.

An Incident Base is where the primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered. It is the location where personnel and equipment are kept while waiting for tactical assignments. The Incident Command Post may be collocated with the Incident Base. There is only one Incident Base per incident.

A Camp is a location where resources may be kept to support incident operations if a Base is not accessible to all resources. Camps are temporary locations within the general incident area which are equipped and staffed to provide sleeping, food, water, and sanitary services to incident personnel.

A Staging Area is a temporary location where equipment, personnel, and resources are awaiting a tactical or operational assignment. Staging Areas are managed by the Operations Section Chief.

An Incident Communications Center is the location of the Communications Unit and the Message Center.

A Helibase is the location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted. Helibases are generally used on a more long-term basis and include services like fueling and maintenance.

A Helispot is for temporary locations at the incident, where a helicopter can safely take off and land.

An Emergency Operations Center is a pre-designated facility (such as the State EOC), established by an agency or jurisdiction to coordinate the overall agency or jurisdictional response and support

to an emergency. Emergency Operations Centers may support multi-agency coordination and joint information activities.

Area Commands

An Area Command oversees the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System Organization. Area Commands have the responsibility to set the overall strategy and priorities, allocate critical resources based on priorities, ensure that incidents are properly managed, and ensure that objectives are met and strategies followed. An Area Command organization does not include an Operations Section because operations are conducted on-scene.

Example: A Public Health emergency that are not site specific is a good use for an area command.

Unified Commands

A Unified Command is a unified team effort which allows all agencies with responsibility for the incident, either geographical or functional, to manage an incident by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

Example: A hazardous materials spill in which more than one agency has responsibility for the response is a good use for a unified command.

Joint Information Centers (JICs)

When a Joint Information Center (JIC) is established as part of a unified command, agencies or organizations contributing to joint public information management retain their organizational independence.

When multiple JICs are established, all JICs must communicate and coordinate with each other on an ongoing basis using joint information system protocols.

Agencies

An Agency is a division of government, or nongovernmental organization that offers a particular kind of assistance. There are two types of agencies; Assisting Agencies and Cooperating Agencies.

- An Assisting Agency is defined as an agency or organization providing personnel, services, or other resources to the agency with direct responsibility for incident management.
- A Cooperating Agency is an agency supplying assistance other than direct operational or support functions or resources to the incident management effort.

Don't get confused between an Assisting Agency and a Cooperating Agency. An Assisting Agency has direct responsibility for incident response, whereas a Cooperating Agency is simply offering assistance.

Representatives from assisting or cooperating agencies and organizations coordinate through the Liaison Officer.

Multi-Agency Coordination Systems

One key responsibility of multi-agency coordination systems is to make resource allocation decisions based on incident priorities.

Preparedness

One responsibility of preparedness organizations at all levels is to establish guidelines and protocols for resource management.

Resources and Resource Management

Resource managers use established procedures to track resources continuously from mobilization through demobilization.

Resource typing involves the categorizing of resources based on performance. Typing resources also allows managers to make better resource ordering decisions by describing the size, capability, and staffing qualification of a specific resource.

A Single Resource is defined as an individual, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew, or team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an incident. An example of this is: A single ground team, or an aircrew.

Requests for items that the incident commander cannot obtain locally must be submitted through the multi-agency coordination entity.

Mutual Aid Agreements

Mutual aid agreements and emergency management assistance compacts help to facilitate the timely delivery of assistance during incidents.

Incident Check-In

Incident Check in officially logs you in at the incident. The check-in process also:

- Ensures personnel accountability
- Tracks resources
- Prepares personnel for assignments and reassignments
- Organizes the demobilization process
- Aids in locating personnel in case of an emergency

After check-in, you should locate your incident supervisor and obtain your initial briefing.

Strike Team and Task Force

- A Strike Team is a specified combination of the same kind and type of resources, with common communications and a Leader. Example: Several ground teams
- A Task Force is a combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need, with common communications and a Leader.