



# Long Beach ARES ICS-100 Training Overview

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## Introduction to ICS

The Incident Command System (**ICS**) is a management concept that can be used to manage almost any event, whether an emergency incident, a public service activity, or another project of any kind. It can be used equally well for both small and large situations, and it can grow or shrink in size as the needs of the situation require. ICS consists of a philosophy, a set of rules, and a way of organizing an incident, and it has a number of features:

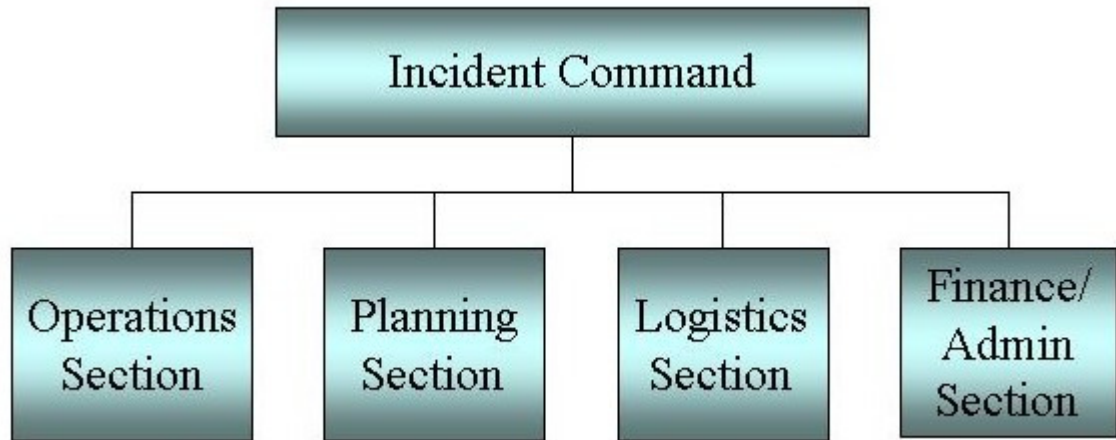
- Organizational Structure
- Span of Control Rules
- Organizational Responsibilities
- Incident Facilities

## ICS Organizational Structure

Every incident, event, or project has certain common management activities that must take place. The Incident Command System is built around five major management functions:

- **Command:** Be in Charge
- **Operations:** Do the Work
- **Planning:** Get & Give Information
- **Logistics:** Provide the Tools & People
- **Finance/Administration:** Pay for Everything

On small incidents, these major activities could all be managed by one person who is functioning as the Incident Commander. Large incidents usually require that these functions be set up as separate Sections within the organization.



Each of these ICS Sections can be sub-divided as needed, so that the entire ICS organization grows or shrinks to meet the needs of the incident. The following table shows typical units that may be added under each of the sections in the ICS organization.

<b>Operations Section</b>	<b>Planning Section</b>	<b>Logistics Section</b>	<b>Finance Section</b>
Staging Areas Branches Divisions Groups Strike Teams Task Forces Single Resources	Resources Unit Situation Unit Documentation Unit Demobilization Unit	Communications Unit Medical Unit Food Unit Supply Unit Facilities Unit	Cost Unit Time Unit Procurement Unit Compensation Unit Claims Unit

ARES/RACES communicators could be assigned anywhere they are needed in the ICS command structure. Radio operators are considered resources that are requested by the Incident Commander and ordered by the Logistics Section. They could potentially be deployed to support Operations Section communication needs, Planning Section intelligence gathering, or Logistics Section communication requirements.

Wherever ARES/RACES communicators are assigned, they need to realize that their services are under the control of the overall ICS organization. You might say that these radio operators "give up" their specific ARES or RACES affiliations to become assigned resources in the Incident Command structure. They serve the needs of the Incident Commander and are accountable to him for the performance of their duties. Failure to yield "out-of-incident" organizational affiliation or control can result in failures in responding to the incident -- in fact, this is why the Incident Command System was developed in the first place.

## ICS Span of Control Rules

Span of Control is the "Golden Rule" of ICS, and it determines *how many organizational elements can be directly managed by a single individual*. Span of Control may vary between three and seven, and a ratio of one-to-five reporting elements is recommended. If the number of reporting units fall outside of the range between **3** and **7**, the organization should be expanded or consolidated accordingly.

As more resources are applied to an incident, there is a corresponding need to expand the number of individuals managing those resources. When more resources are added to the organization, another layer of management may be needed to maintain proper *span of control*. The incident may be organized geographically using Divisions, or it may be organized functionally using Groups, or there may be a need to add one or more Branches to the organization to maintain an effective *span of control*. The goal is to keep the organization as simple as possible, but not to overextend the *span of control*.

## **Organizational Responsibilities**

The basic organizational guideline of ICS is that *the person at the top of the organization is responsible until he delegates that authority to another person*. Each of the major functional elements of the organization are discussed below.

### **Incident Command**

The Incident Commander is the person in charge at the incident and must be fully qualified to manage the incident. There is never a time when there is no Incident Commander since leadership, accountability, and ultimate responsibility must always be present. The Incident Commander sets objectives and priorities for handling the incident, and he has the overall responsibility for decision-making at the incident.

As an incident grows in size or complexity, a more highly skilled Incident Commander may be required and assigned by the jurisdiction or agency that is responsible for handling the incident. The Incident Commander may have one or more deputies and he may also assign personnel for both a Command Staff and a General Staff. The Command Staff includes the Public Information Officer, the Safety Officer, and the Liaison Officer. The General Staff consists of the Section Chiefs for the organizational sections that have been activated: the Operations Section Chief, the Planning Section Chief, the Logistics Section Chief, and the Finance Section Chief.

### **Operations Section**

The Operations Section conducts all of the tactical operations for handling an

incident. In carrying out the Incident Action Plan it develops tactical objectives, establishes the operations organization, and directs all operational resources. The Operations organization usually develops and expands as the tactical needs of the incident require. As more and more resources are assigned to handle the incident there is usually a need to expand supervision. Normally this is done by breaking the Operations organization into geographical Divisions or functional Groups. There are times when another layer of supervision may be required, and so a Branch is created to manage several Divisions, Groups, or Units.

### **Planning Section**

The Planning Section develops the Incident Action Plan needed to accomplish the Incident Commander's objectives. It also serves a very important intelligence-gathering function by collecting and evaluating information about the incident and maintaining the current status of all incident resources.

### **Logistics Section**

The Logistics Section serves the needs of the ICS organization itself by providing all of the resources and services that are required to meet the needs of the incident. Upon request, it obtains and maintains the essential personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies for the organization.

### **Finance/Administration Section**

The Finance and Administration Section monitors costs related to the incident, provides accounting and procurement services, as well as time recording and cost analysis.

## **Incident Facilities**

Facilities are established depending on the type and complexity of the incident or event. It is important to know the names and functions of the major facilities. Incident facilities are typically known by Tactical Call Signs which are used to uniquely identify each facility.



### **Incident Command Post (ICP):**

Every incident or event must have some form of Incident Command Post. This is the location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident

activities.



### Staging Area:

The staging area(s) are the locations where resources are kept while they wait to be assigned. Most large incidents will have a staging area, and a Staging Area Manager will manage all resources in the resource pool located there.



### Base:

The base is the location at the incident where primary service and support activities are performed (such as eating, sleeping, and maintenance activities). There will only be one base for each incident, and not all incidents will have a base.