Organization
Sixth Function of Command  – 1st Edition 2009

Las Vegas Fire & Rescue
Incident Command Training

Command Function #6

Major Goal

“THE INCIDENT COMMANDER WILL DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE INCIDENT COMMAND ORGANIZATION.”

Objectives

- Describe organizational system requirements
- Identify the three basic organizational levels
- Describe the role and advantages of Divisions/Groups
- Define the role of Division/Group Supervisors
- Identify the role of Branches and Branch Directors
- Describe the role of the Command Team
- Identify the four sections of ICS and their primary responsibility
- Demonstrate how an Incident Commander connects the various Division/Groups and stays connected
- Explain the role of Incident Commander in incident safety

Competencies

- NFPA 1500
  - 6-1.5(f) – Develop an effective incident organization by managing resources, maintaining an effective span of control, and maintaining direct supervision over the entire incident, and designate supervisors in charge of specific areas or functions.
  - 6-3.3.1 – The Incident Commander shall maintain an awareness of the location and function of all companies or units at the scene.
Overview

- **Organization** – the IC is ultimately responsible for everything that happens on the incident scene until he delegates it to another person. We must have a system in place that allows the IC to decentralize the scene into smaller, more manageable work units. The organization function represents the system we use to actually structure the management of incident scene resources.

Effective incident scene organizations are a product of all the participants coming to an agreement on how they will operate and what their assigned roles are at the scene. The majority of incident management problems can be traced back to some type of strategic and organizational mistake.

- **Brief history and evolution of ICS** – in the early command system development days, the words incident scene organization conjured visions of large ICS organizational charts. The initial reaction of many responders was that units would not be assigned until all the different boxes got filled. The ICS experts dismissed these changes as resistant behaviors and as the typical reaction to a new system. They reasoned correctly that you could not manage any incident on experience, SOGs, and training alone. You need some type of management system to assure that the incident objectives were organized and met. Both sides compromised and produced a more effective application of ICS to smaller local events.

- **Results of the 35-year ICS experiment**
  - Well organized events will always produce better outcomes than their unorganized counterparts, as it pertains to fire loss, firefighter safety, and basic customer service.
  - Any local organizational system that requires initial responders to significantly delay the initial incident stabilization, in order to implement the organization, will fail. The key to building a successful organization is to match the size of the organization with the number of resources operating at the scene and the profile of the incident problem.
  - Experience has shown that we should develop an effective incident management structure from the very beginning of operations. Being well organized, well placed, and well commanded is the quickest way to mitigate the incident.
  - No command system will effectively compensate for lack of basic competence. Effective incident operations require experienced, skillful participants on every level who have the professional capability to effectively assume their ICS role.
• **System requirements** – The incident scene organization must:
  • Be put into action the moment we are dispatched
  • Expand at a pace that matches the deployment of required resources
  • Be designed around our local limitations and capabilities
  • Be used on every incident
  • Have a place for mutual/auto aid agencies to fit into the unified command

**Function 6**

**Organization**

**Major Goal**

“THE INCIDENT COMMANDER WILL DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE INCIDENT COMMAND ORGANIZATION.”

**IC CHECKLIST:**

☐ Quickly develop an incident organization to keep everyone connected

☐ Match and balance the command organization to the size/structure/complexity of the incident

☐ Forecast and establish Divisions/Groups

☐ Accomplish effective delegation and span of control management with early Division/Group assignments

☐ Correctly name Divisions/Groups

☐ Assign, brief, and provide objectives to Division/Group Supervisors

☐ Limit units assigned to Divisions/Groups to five when possible

☐ Allocate resources to Divisions/Groups

☐ Build a Command Team

☐ Build outside agency liaison

☐ Operate on the strategic level and support tactical/task level

☐ Evaluate progress reports, assist, and coordinate Division/Group activities
Implement management sections and branches to provide support

Allow yourself to be supported

IC CHECKLIST:

Quickly develop an incident organization to keep everyone connected

- **Incident organization characteristics** - The IC performs the first five functions of command to take control and get the operation going. He arrives, establishes command, evaluates the situation, decides on a strategy, develops an Incident Action Plan, and deploys the correct resources. The IC accomplishes this within the first few minutes on scene. How the IC maintains control of these units is by creating a standard incident organization. This organization must match the complexity of the incident and have the following characteristics:
  - Be able to get started instantly at every incident
  - Have three standard levels: Strategic (IC), Tactical (Division/Group), Task (Companies)
  - Use Divisions/Groups to manage areas and functions
  - Be able to expand quickly to match the incident profile

- **Assign Divisions/Groups early** - The IC should initially assign key tactical positions as Divisions/Groups. This will immediately delegate responsibility to other officers and divide the incident into smaller parts. Division/Group supervisors become the IC’s eyes and ears in other locations. If the incident escalates, these positions should be upgraded to Chief Officers, if possible.

Complex emergency situations often exceed the capability of one officer to effectively manage the entire operation. The Incident Commander should assign companies to work in Divisions and Groups. Divisions/Groups reduce the span of control to more manageable units. Divisions/Groups allow the IC to communicate with Division/Group Supervisors, rather than multiple individual company officers. The early establishment of Divisions/Groups provides an effective incident command organization framework upon which the operation can be built.
- **Company Officers Division/Group Supervisor** - Company officers who are initially assigned to Divisions/Groups must supervise their crews and assist with carrying out task level activities. They are not in a good position to manage entire Division/Group operations, but they provide us with the best chance at getting the initial operations up and running. When the resource requirements or the hazard level escalates, the IC upgrades the Division/Group Supervisor position by transferring it to a person whose sole function is to be a supervisor and not a working company officer.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- Check and balance the command organization to the size/structure/complexity of the incident

In many cases, the initial IC and Division/Group Supervisors quickly solve the incident problem and the incident management system does not escalate beyond that level. When the incident does escalate beyond the control capabilities of the first alarm units, it is time for the IC to begin reinforcing and expanding the command organization. This should be a regular and ongoing part of the incident management system.

The IC must always operate in a mode where he can manage the position and function of all assigned resources. The command organization must be able to at least match and pace the deployment of companies and personnel.

- **One or two-unit responses** – The vast majority of our calls are one or two-unit calls for service. These include EMS calls, service calls, MVA, dumpster, vehicle, and vegetation fires. For responses of less than three resources, a formal command declaration is not required, it is assumed. Orders, directions, and objectives are very straightforward and are generally given face-to-face. Once the officer determines that his single company can handle the incident, he will simply supervise his crew and they will take care of what should be done. If additional resources above two units are responding, a brief initial report may be given.

- **First Alarm Responses** – House fires, apartment fires, and small commercial structures fall in this category. The incident organization begins when the first arriving unit gives their Brief Initial Report and establishes command. The first arriving officer goes directly to the fire scene and all other units go to Level I Staging. This gives the IC time to take initial action, formulate an Incident Action Plan, and get a closer look at the problem. When the IC decides what to do tactically, he calls crews forward and gives them their assignments. Typically, these incidents have between three to seven assignments.
• **Large-scale incidents** – Operations that will require a second alarm or greater are in this category. Due to the large nature of these incidents, the initial IC is at a great disadvantage because of his limited information. Early decisions and actions will be based on very limited evaluation. The IC should focus on getting initial crews assigned, organize the scene for growth, and obtain information on conditions. For example, there is a significant fire in one occupancy of a strip mall. The first in engine would establish command and announce a strategy beginning fire attack from the Alpha side. The initial IC will assign the truck to Roof Division, the second engine to Bravo Exposure Division, the third engine to the Delta Exposure Division, Heavy Rescue to RIT, and the rescue to medical group. The units from the second alarm can be assigned Charlie Division and reinforce existing divisions. Within the first few minutes, the initial IC has the critical divisions covered and can begin to get more information about the situation. If the problem continues to escalate, the IC already has the basic organization set up to reinforce and expand. His span of control is reasonable and with the assistance of a Deputy IC, he can maintain accountability, communication, and begin to formulate the use of resources from additional alarms.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- **Forecast and establish Divisions/Groups**

Determining the key tactical positions/functions is a part of the IC’s initial and ongoing size-up. These key positions/functions become the basis for assigning Divisions/Groups. Forecasting these needs, as a part of the initial size-up, also gives the IC a general idea of how many resources will ultimately be needed. The IC prioritizes the order in which each of these areas is addressed.

- **The Role of Divisions/Groups** – A Division/Group is a smaller more manageable unit of scene organization. Establishing Division/Groups is a standard system of dividing incident scene command into these smaller units.

The IC, through the use of Divisions/Groups, achieves the standard management function of delegation. Divisions/Groups allow the IC to share responsibility and authority. It becomes a major support mechanism allowing the IC to divide command, reduce stress, and maintain control while dealing with increasing operational complexity.

Once adequate Divisions/Groups have been established, the IC can concentrate on overall strategy, Incident Action Plan management, evaluation, and resource allocation. Each of the Division/Group Supervisors becomes responsible for tactical deployment of their resources, communicating needs, and giving progress reports back to Command.
**Division Supervisors**– A division is defined as a geographical area of responsibility. A division assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments within that area based upon the overall plan and safety conditions. Your goal is to meet the specific strategic objectives within your assigned area and to communicate your progress to Command. Company or command level officers should be assigned these positions.

**Group Supervisor** – A Group is defined as a functional assignment (i.e. Ventilation Group, Search Group, Medical/EMS Group). A Group assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and assignments in order to complete the assigned function based upon the overall plan and safety considerations. Your goal is to complete the assigned function and communicate your progress to Command. Company or command level officers should be assigned these positions.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

☐ **Accomplish effective delegation and span of control management with early Division/Group assignments**

Early establishment of Divisions/Groups provides the IC with several major benefits. First, it places supervisors and crews in key tactical locations. This is the platform that the IC uses to expand his incident management capability. The second benefit is that the tactical and task level responsibility is shifted from the IC to the Division/Group Supervisor. Remember, all on scene responsibility ultimately rests on the IC. The last major benefit is that it maintains an effective span of control. A battalion chief operating in the Command Mode supported by a Deputy IC can manage three to seven different assignments. This number does not include non-tactical division/groups operating at the scene (staging, PIO, rehab, investigation, safety).

- **The advantages of Divisions/Groups**
  - Reduces the IC’s span of control and divides the incident scene into more manageable parts
  - Creates more effective incident scene communication. It permits the IC to exchange information with a limited number of individuals. This reduces overall radio traffic.
  - Provides a standard and logical system to divide large geographical incidents into effectively sized units.
  - Provides a means to delegate major tactical functions. The execution and details of these functions becomes the responsibility of the Group Supervisor, not command.
  - Improves firefighter safety. It allows each Division/Group Supervisor more direct control of the position and function of the companies assigned to them.
• **Assigning Divisions/Groups** – Divisions/Groups are assigned based on the following factors:

  - Early fire stage overload – Direct tactical level control should be delegated before the IC’s ability to cope is exceeded. The early use of Division/Groups will consistently keep the IC from being overloaded.
  - Major operation predicted – The faster the IC predicts the build-up, the faster the correct organization can be in place to avoid playing catch-up.
  - Isolated or remote tactical positions – The IC needs information from areas he cannot see to make good decisions.
  - Dangerous conditions – Unusually dangerous conditions require close supervision and control.
  - Where special functions are needed – technical rescue, hazmat, safety, rehab, staging.

• **Fast Attack IC** – A working company officer IC may be able to assign a couple of companies into initial action. The fast attack IC is not in the best location to communicate and monitor the activities of these companies. What we attempt to do in the Fast Attack Mode is to authorize an initial arriving company officer to combine quick action and command to mitigate the situation before it escalates. In this situation, command should be transferred as soon as possible to an officer or battalion chief in a command position to support the attack.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

☐ **Correctly name Divisions/Groups**

Correctly naming Divisions/Groups eliminates confusion.

  - **Divisions** - When the IC divides the incident into divisions, it divides the scene into more manageable areas. The divisions that companies are assigned to become the work areas. This facilitates accountability. The IC eliminates any confusion when the division name matches the geographical position of the division. The front, usually the address side, is named the Alpha side. Bravo, Charlie, and Delta sides are named clockwise around the incident from Alpha. The division inside a single story structure will be named Interior. At multiple story buildings, the division on the inside will be named by the floor where they are operating, i.e., Division 1, Division 2. At large incidents where the hazard has moved beyond the building of origin, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta Division/Branch may be utilized.

  - **Groups** – The names for groups should match their primary function: fire attack, ventilation, medical, rescue. If the IC desires other specific tactical functions to be accomplished by this group, he should give those specific orders to the Group Supervisor. Once the Group has been assigned, the details on how the function will be completed are the responsibility of the Group Supervisor.
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Assign, brief, and provide objectives to Division/Group Supervisors

- **Initial Company Officer** - Division/Group Supervisors should be briefed on the overall strategy and tactical objectives of their assignment. Once a company officer has been assigned a Division or Group, it is his responsibility to get his crew into action.

When command orders a unit to an assignment where no Division/Group has been established, the officer will notify command when they are in position.

Example: “Command, this is E9, we are in position on the Charlie side.”

- **PPE and Position** - To efficiently do their jobs, Division/Group Supervisors must be in full PPE and be in a position to actually supervise the work that is being performed. The strength of the Division/Group system is that supervision and support are decentralized in a way that moves a supervisor right to where the work is being performed. These Division/Group Supervisors serve as the IC’s eyes and ears. The weakness of the Division/Group system is that in some situations the supervisor is affected by incident conditions. Dense smoke, high heat, excessive noise, and rushed working routines create an extremely challenging environment to manage.

- **Companies assigned to Division/Group** – When a company is assigned from staging to an operating Division/Group, that company will be told to whom they are to report. Command will then notify the Division/Group Supervisor what company has been assigned to them. It then becomes the responsibility of that company to make contact with the Division/Group Supervisor. It is also the responsibility of the supervisor to inform Command when they have arrived at their location.

**In-Transit Report** – When the IC assigns a unit to a Division/Group, he will notify the Supervisor of the unit in-transit. The Division/Group Supervisor will then notify the IC when the unit in-transit has arrived.

Example: “Division 2, Command.” “Division 2 by.” “Division 2, E4 is in-transit to your location.” “Division 2 copies, E4 in-transit.”

“Command, Division 2.” “Command by.” “E4 has arrived at Division 2.” “Command copies E4 at Division 2.”

Companies working in a Division/Group should communicate directly with their supervisor. They should try to use face-to-face communication whenever possible. Try to limit radio traffic between divisions, groups, and Command.
The company officer that is working within a Division/Group is responsible to supervise their crew while performing their assigned tasks. They must provide progress, completion, and exception reports to their Division/Group Supervisor.

- **Division/Group Supervisor responsibility**
  Division and Group Supervisors are responsible for all assigned functions within their assigned division or group. This requires each Division/Group Supervisor to:

  1. Complete objectives assigned by Command
  2. Account for all assigned personnel
  3. Ensure that operations are conducted safely
  4. Monitor work progress
  5. Redirect activities as necessary
  6. Coordinate actions with adjacent Divisions/Groups
  7. Monitor welfare of Division/Group personnel
  8. Request additional resources as needed
  9. Provide Command with essential and frequent progress reports
  10. Reallocation resources within the Division/Group
  11. Provide for adequate and organized rehab for assigned personnel

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- **Limit units assigned to Divisions/Groups to five when possible**

Although the number of units assigned to an individual Division/Group will depend upon needs and conditions, three to five companies are a practical span of control. When a practical span of control is reached, create another division/group.

- **Operating in the hazard zone** – A company officer who is managing and assisting his crew inside the hazard zone has his hands full. The IC cannot expect a company officer to effectively and safely manage five other crews as an initial Division/Group Supervisor. The IC should limit the number of units assigned to Division/Group Supervisors that are operating in the hazard zone to between two to three. This decision is based on the Division/Group Supervisor’s ability to stay in contact with assigned personnel, the level of risk, and the ability to quickly withdraw to safe positions.

- **Operating outside the hazard zone** – Seven represents the upper limit of units that a well supported Division/Group Supervisor, who is operating outside of the hazard zone, can manage. A Division/Group Supervisor who is managing in this fashion is outside the products of combustion, has the ability to write down and track assigned units, and is able to constantly evaluate conditions.
IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Allocate resources to Divisions/Groups

The IC must decide on a strategy, formulate an Incident Action Plan, and make assignments to the key tactical positions. These supervisors are in the best position to carry out the Incident Action Plan for their area of operations. The IC should avoid automatically assigning more resources to these positions. Once the system is implemented, Division/Group Supervisors should report back to the IC on the conditions, the actions they are taking, and their needs. This allows the IC to operate on the strategic level and allocate resources to the Divisions/Groups. The IC gives orders and makes assignments to get the organization in place and operating. After the organization is in place, the IC should switch from primarily talking to listening. The IC should evaluate reports and adjust the Incident Action Plan accordingly. In many cases that is all that is required to keep the strategy and Incident Action Plan current.

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Build a Command Team

The IC can quickly become overwhelmed with radio traffic. It is difficult keeping up with the tactical worksheets, information management, planning, calling for additional resources, and fulfilling the functions of command. The IC must have a Command Team to assist him in managing an escalating incident.

The Command Team concept is designed to fill the gap between a single IC and a full ICS sections incident: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance. In most cases the Command Team can create a response that quickly solves the problem.

- **Evolution of the Command Team** – The first in chief officer, usually a battalion chief, assumes Command from the initial company officer IC. This upgrades Incident Command by transferring Command from a mobile commander to someone in a fixed, stationary Command Post. If the initial assignment stabilizes the situation, this is as far as command needs to grow. On the other hand if the incident keeps growing, so does the command component. This component expands into the Command Team concept which includes a Deputy IC and a Senior Advisor.
Command Team

Senior Advisor
Assistant/Deputy

IC
1st BC

Deputy IC
BC Aide

Command Team Responsibilities

Incident Commander/BC
- Enroute monitor scene assignments by first arriving suppression units
- Document assignments enroute on department approved tactical worksheet
- Track greater alarm units enroute when the initial IC requests them
- Assume command of escalating single alarm incidents, working fires, multiple alarm incidents, and where the BC deems necessary
- Upon arrival, assess the scene and evaluate if the strategy and Incident Action Plan are appropriate
- Make changes to the strategy, Incident Action Plan, and assignments if necessary
- Make assignments that support the Incident Action Plan
- Establish a secure command post inside a vehicle
- Establish a Command Team
- Continue Tracking
- Request additional resources as necessary
- Run Operations Section if relieved of Command

Deputy IC/BC Aide- The BC Aide will assume the Deputy IC position
- Drive the BC to the scene in a quick and safe manner allowing the BC to give full attention to the developing incident
- Place the command vehicle in an advantageous position, but outside of the hazard zone
- Evaluate and recommend changes to the Incident Action Plan
- Evaluate critical fireground factors
- Assume/Assign logistical responsibilities
- Assign staging area if not established by the first arriving officer
- Acquire a staging channel
- Assign Staging Area Manager
- Manage and track second alarm or greater resources
- Be prepared to assume RIT Branch Director in the absence of the second BC
Second arriving BC
- May assume Deputy IC, Senior Advisor, or RIT Branch Director depending on need

Senior Advisor/ Battalion Chief, Assistant or Deputy Chief
- Upon arrival, take a position in the rear of the command vehicle
- Review Situation Status and Incident Action Plan; recommend changes
- Provide on-going review of the overall incident
- Review the organizational structure, suggest changes or expansion to meet incident needs and span of control
- Provide a liaison with other city agencies, outside agencies, property owners or tenants
- Support the IC by filtering distraction and assisting with communications
- Redundant tracking
- In the case of extended operations, create a plan for subsequent Command Teams and continued operational periods
- Prepare and plan for the escalation of command into branches and sections
- Assume Command if necessary; the IC and Deputy IC become Operations
- Consider repositioning into the next level command vehicle

IC CHECKLIST:

☐ Build outside agency liaison

We routinely conduct incident operations with a variety of other agencies. The activities of all these other organizations must be coordinated and integrated. It is important that we operate in a unified command structure. The unified command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure. This enables all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategy.

If the fire department is taking the lead in incident operations, the IC will be in charge of all incident activities. This includes knowledge of where the other agencies are and what they are doing. If a different agency has taken the lead role as the overall incident commander, the fire department reports to them. Instances of these types of incidents are:

- The police in control of a scene that is not secure
- The utility company is in charge of an incident with a major gas leak or electrical problem
- An industrial accident at a facility that has their own emergency response team

The fire department IC is always responsible for managing the fire department personnel and resources. When another agency is taking the management lead, the fire department
IC remains in control of FD resources. The FD IC communicates with the lead agency IC or their liaison.

We routinely operate at incidents where we must coordinate the activities of several different agencies. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is through liaisons from each agency.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- **Operate on the strategic level and support tactical/task level**

Every incident can be broken down into three basic organizational levels. Each level is very important and a failure at any level will make the entire system ineffective. The three levels are:

- **Strategic** – The strategic level is responsible for conducting the Functions of Command. The strategic level involves the activities necessary for overall operational control: managing the strategy, developing an Incident Action Plan, setting priorities, establishing objectives, allocating resources, and forecasting. This organizational level is designed around the IC and the Command Team operating at a stationary command post.

- **Tactical** – The first management subdivision of incident scene organization is accomplished by assigning Division/Group responsibilities. Division/Group supervisors are responsible for the tactical deployment of assigned resources, evaluation, and communication with the IC. They are assigned by the IC and supervise directly at the site of the assigned activity to meet the operational objectives.

- **Task** – The most important level of the organization is the task level, where the work is actually performed. Building a local organization from the bottom up, places the emphasis upon the action level. This is desirable as this is where the incident is mitigated. The effective IC will realize that his function is to support the workers doing these crucial jobs. The strategic and tactical levels are in place to support the task level, it is not the other way around.

The three levels of incident organization are built around the type, size, and complexity of the incident. It can be used for fires, medical responses, technical rescues, hazmat, and natural disasters. The basic system used to manage each type of incident is always the same. The only thing that changes is what Divisions/Groups are used. For example, at fire calls, you could typically have a Roof Division, Interior Division, Medical Group, EMS Group, RIT, and Safety. The IC commanding a MCI car wreck manages Extrication, Triage, Treatment, and Transport groups.

**IC CHECKLIST:**
**Evaluate progress reports, assist, and coordinate division/group activities**

The IC assigns Division/Group responsibilities to put the Incident Action Plan in motion. After the IC gets the correct amount of resources and management in place, he is in the strongest position to manage the continuation of the incident. After incident operations have begun, the IC uses progress reports to keep the strategy and Incident Action Plan current. The IC also coordinates activities between Divisions/Groups.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

**Implement management sections and branches to provide support**

The goal of the incident scene organizational system should be to have the capability to manage incident resources. If the Command Team allows themselves to get overwhelmed, incident operations as a whole will suffer. The IC/Command Team must use the different parts of incident organization to escalate operations and delegate the detail management.

- **Branches** – The next subdivision between command and Divisions/Groups are Branches. Branch Directors operate on the coordination level and manage whatever Divisions/Groups command assigns to them.

  Branch Directors should be utilized at incidents where the span of control with Divisions/Groups is maximized and at incidents that involve two or more different management components, such as a large fire with numerous patients or a fire with RIT operations. The Incident Commander may elect to assign Branch Directors as forward positions to coordinate the activities between Divisions/Groups.

  Other considerations for the utilization of Branches include:

  - The incident is forecasted as a major event that will end up needing many Divisions/Groups.
  - The incident is spread out over a large geographical area, such as wildland fires, several crash sites, large commercial structure, or multiple floors.
  - Anytime that the number of operating Divisions/Groups starts overwhelming Command.

To remain effective, Command must continue to operate on the strategic level and Division/Group supervisors must manage the tactical level. Branch Directors provide coordination between Command and Divisions/Groups. When Command has a need to join Divisions/Groups to maintain span of control, they should be assigned to a branch. As an example:

- EMS Branch – Triage, Treatment, and Transport Groups
• Hazmat Branch – Entry Team, Backup Team, Decontamination Group, Medical Group, Rehab Group
• Fire Control Branch – Alpha Division, Bravo Division, Charlie Division, Delta Division, Roof Division, Safety
• Evacuation Branch – Division 1, Division 2, Relocation Group

**Branch Directors** – Coordinate between the strategic level, command, and the tactical level, Divisions/Groups. They are responsible for the Divisions/Groups assigned to them and will usually be located away from the command post close to their area of responsibility. They should be in some type of vehicle with radios, phones and the staff support needed to carry out their mission.

The activation of branches signifies that the incident is going to be split into separate pieces. Each branch should operate on their own radio channel. When command makes a branch assignment, the director should be briefed on the following:

- Overall Incident Action Plan
- What their assignment is
- What are their objectives
- What Divisions/Groups are assigned to them
- What radio channel they will be operating on and their radio designation
- Any other pertinent information

When Command implements Branch Directors, the Division/Group Supervisors should be notified by Command of their new supervisor. This information should include:

1. What Branch the Division/Group is assigned to now.
2. The radio channel that the Branch and Division/Group is operating on.

Radio Communications should then be conducted between the IC and Branch Director, the Branch Director and the Division/Group Supervisor, and the Division/Group Supervisor and companies assigned to him.

**Sections** – As the incident continues to grow in size and complexity, it can quickly overwhelm command. Before this becomes a problem, the Command Team should expand the organization. Initiating Sections becomes the next step. Sections are created to focus on the major areas of a large complex operation. The incident scene can be divided into four sections:

- **Logistics Section**
The managers of these sections are called Chiefs. Section Chiefs assist the IC with the overall management of the incident and operate at the strategic level. During the initial phases of the incident, the initial Incident Commander and his staff normally carry out these four section functions. The Incident Commander implements Sections as needed. One incident may only require a Logistics Section while another incident may require all the sections to be implemented.

• **Logistics** - The Logistics Section is the support mechanism for the organization. Logistics provides services and support systems to all the organizational components involved in the incident. Command may assign the Logistics Section their own radio channel. The Logistic Section Chief may establish Divisions, Groups, or Branches for his section as needed.

  **Roles and Responsibilities:**
  • Manage rehab
  • Manage medical unit
  • Manage base
  • Provide and manage any needed supplies or equipment
  • Forecast and obtain future resource needs (coordinate with the Planning Section)
  • Provide any needed communications equipment
  • Provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment
  • Obtain specialized equipment or expertise per Command
  • Provide food and associated supplies
  • Secure any needed fixed or portable facilities
  • Coordinate immediate Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
  • Provide any other logistical needs as requested by Command

• **The Planning Section** is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and processing information needed for effective decision making. Information management is a full time task at large complex incidents. The Planning Section serves as the Incident Commander's source for information. This allows the Incident Commander to have a single person provide him with information in lieu of dozens of information sources. Critical information should be immediately forwarded to Command. Information should also be used to make long range plans. The Planning Section Chief’s goal is to
plan ahead of current events and to identify the need for resources before they are needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Evaluate current strategy and plan with the Incident Commander
- Refine and recommend any needed changes to plan
- Evaluate Incident Organization and span of control
- Forecast possible outcome
- Evaluation of situation status and resources status
- Evaluate future resource requirements
- Utilize technical assistance as needed
- Evaluate tactical priorities, specific critical factors, and safety
- Gather, update, improve, and manage information with a standard systematic approach
- Liaison with any needed outside agencies for planning needs

- **The Operations Section** is responsible for the tactical priorities and the safety of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Chief uses the tactical radio channel to communicate strategic and specific objectives to Division/Group and/or Branch Officers.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander
- Implement the Incident Action Plan
- Assign units to Divisions/Groups/Branches based on tactical objectives and priorities
- Build an effective organizational structure through the use of Divisions, Groups, and Branches.
- Provide Branches and Divisions/Groups tactical objectives
- Determine needs and request additional resources
- Consult with and inform other sections and the Incident Command Staff as needed

Implementing an Operations radio designation in the middle of a major incident can create some confusion with radio communications. It is absolutely essential that all personnel operating at the incident be made aware of the activation of Operations. All Division/Groups and/or Branch Directors must then direct their communications to the Operations Chief.

The Operations Chief will communicate with the Incident Commander to request additional resources and provide progress reports.

**The Incident Commander - Roles and Responsibilities after Activation of an Operations Chief:**

Once the Operations Chief is in place, the Incident Commander's focus should be on the strategic issues, overall strategic planning, and other components of the incident. The Incident Commander should provide
direction, advice, and guidance to the Operations Chief in directing the tactical aspects of the incident.

- Review and evaluate the plan, and initiate any needed changes
- Provide ongoing review of the overall incident
- Select priorities
- Provide direction to the Operations Chief
- Review the organizational structure: initiate, change, or expand to meet incident needs
- Initiate Section and Branch functions as required
- Establish liaison with other city agencies, outside agencies, and property owners
- Identify and correct system status problems: city coverage, call back, mutual aid

To maintain continuity and overall effectiveness, the Incident Commander and Operations Chief should be in the Command Post together.

- **The Finance/Administration Section** evaluates the risk and financial requirements for the Fire Department's involvement in the incident.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Procurement of services and/or supplies from sources within and outside the Fire Department or City as requested by Command (coordinates with Logistics)
- Documenting all financial costs of the incident
- Documenting for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies
- Analyzing and managing legal risk for incidents, such as a hazardous material clean up

The Administration Section is responsible for obtaining any and all needed incident documentation for potential cost recovery efforts or litigation, including criminal charges.

**IC CHECKLIST:**

- **Allow yourself to be supported**

The IC sends additional units to support Divisions/Groups. It is sensible that we support the IC with a Command Team. This does not reflect upon the capability of the IC. We do this to make the IC more effective. As we use a system that makes IC support an
automatic part of our incident management system, this team approach will become less of an issue.