This section presents a summary of the Incident Command System organization. It identifies the specific supervisory and line organizational positions, describes their general functions and responsibilities, and identifies internal and external working relationships. Section 100 of this manual is adopted by North Zone from ICS I 200, 300, and 400.

The organization of the Incident Command System begins to develop from the time the initial attack on an incident occurs until the requirement for incident management and operations no longer exists. The organization develops as the incident progresses, depending on the requirements of the situation. The basic organizational structure is applicable to daily operations, major wildland and urban interface fire incidents, and incidents not directly involving fire, such as major earthquakes, floods or rescues.

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

The command structure defines the lines of authority, but it is not intended that the transfer of information within the Incident Command System be restricted to the chain of command.

The majority of positions within the Incident Command System will not be activated until the initial attack is determined to be insufficient to handle the situation.

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

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM OPERATING REQUIREMENTS:

The following are basic system design operating requirements for the Incident Command System:

A. The system must provide for the following kinds of operations:
   - Single Jurisdiction/Single Agency.
   - Single Jurisdiction/Multi-Agency Involvement.
   - Multi-Jurisdictional/Multi-Agency Involvement.

B. The system's organizational structure must be able to adapt to any emergency or incident to which fire protection agencies would be expected to respond. The Incident Command System is designed to be used in response to emergencies caused by fires, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, riots, hazardous materials incidents and other human caused incidents.

FEATURES OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM:

The Incident Command System has a number of features. These features, working together, interactively provide the basis for an effective Incident Command System concept of operation:

- Common Terminology
- Organization Flexibility
- Integrated Communications
- Unified Command Structure
- Consolidated Actions Plans
- Manageable Span-of-Control
- Resource Management

COMMON TERMINOLOGY:

Common terminology is essential for any management system, especially one which will be used in joint operations by many diverse users. Common terminology should be established for each of the following elements:

- Organizational Elements
- Position Titles
- Resources
- Facilities

Organizational Elements

A standard set of organizational elements provide for a consistent pattern for designating each level of the Incident Command System organization (e.g., Sections, Branches, etc.).

Position Titles

Those charged with management or leadership responsibilities in the Incident Command System are referred to by position title such as Officer, Chief, Director, Supervisor, etc. This is done to provide a way to place the most qualified personnel in organizational positions on multi-agency incidents without confusion caused by various multi-agency rank designations. It also provides a standardized method for ordering personnel to fill positions.

Resource Elements

In the Incident Command System, the term "resources" refers to primary and support equipment and personnel, not natural resources. Common designations are assigned to various kinds and types of resources. Resources are the combination of personnel and equipment used in tactical incident operations. Common names have been established for all resources used within the Incident Command System. Any resource, which varies in capability because of size or power, is clearly typed as to capability.

Facilities

There are six standard facilities identified in the Incident Command System:

- Command Post
- Staging Areas
- Base
- Camps
- Helibase
- Helispots

Common identifiers are used for these facilities in and around the incident area, which will be used during the course of the incident. Each facility has a unique purpose on an incident. These six facilities should be able to fulfill almost all incident facility requirements.

ORGANIZATION FLEXIBILITY:

The Incident Command System organization adheres to a "form follows function" philosophy. This basically means the organization at any given time should reflect only what is required to meet planned tactical objectives. The Incident Command System 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. If the need exists, four separate functions can be developed, each with several units, which may be established. The specific organization 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 Command →	Incident Commander
— Command Staff →	Officer
— General Staff →	Section Chief
— Branch →	Director
— Division/Group →	Supervisor
— Unit →	Leader

In the Incident Command System, the first management assignments by the initial attack Incident Commander will normally be one or more Section Chiefs to manage the major functional areas. Section Chiefs will further delegate management authority for their areas only as required. If the Section Chief sees the need, functional units may be established within the section. Similarly, each functional Unit Leader will further assign individual tasks within the Unit only as needed.

INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS:

Communication at an incident is managed through the use of a common communications plan. For large incidents, an incident based communications center may be established solely for the use of tactical and support resources assigned to the incident. All communications between organizational elements at an incident 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 (if established) is responsible for all communications planning at an incident. This will include incident established radio networks, onsite telephones, public address, and off-incident telephone/microwave/radio systems.

Radio networks for incidents will normally be organized as follows:

— Command Net: Established to link supervisory personnel from the Incident Commander down to and including Division/Group supervisors.

— Tactical Nets: Established in a variety of ways, e.g., by agency, department, geographical area or function. Tactical nets may be established for each Branch, or for divisions and groups, depending upon hardware and frequency availability, and specific incident needs.

— Support Net: Established usually on larger incidents to handle logistical traffic and resource status changes as well as for support requests and certain other non-tactical or command functions.

— Ground to Air Net: A ground to air tactical frequency may be designated, or regular tactical nets may be used to coordinate ground to air traffic.

— Air-to-Air Assigned for coordination between aircraft assigned to the incident.

UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE:

The Unified Command process allows all agencies that have jurisdictional or functional responsibility for the incident to jointly develop a common set of incident objectives and strategies. This is accomplished without losing or giving up agency authority, responsibility, or accountability. In addition, it allows agencies having a legitimate responsibility at an incident to be part of the Incident Command function.

Under a Unified Command, the following always applies:

— The incident will function under a single, coordinated Incident Action Plan.

— On Operations Section Chief will have responsibility for implementing the Incident Action Plan.

— One Incident Command Post will be established.

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN:

Every incident needs an action plan.

— The purpose of the plan is to provide all incident supervisory personnel with appropriate direction for future actions.

— The plan may be oral or written.

Written plans should be used when it is essential that all levels of a growing organization have a clear understanding of the tactical actions associated with the next operational period. It is important to use written action plans whenever:

— Two or more jurisdictions are involved.

— The incident will overlap major changes in personnel or go into a new operational period.

— There is a partial or full activation of the Incident Command System organization. In the Incident Command System, an Incident Briefing Form (ICS 201) is used on

smaller incidents to record initial actions and list assigned and available resources. As incidents grow in complexity and/or size, the Incident Command System provides a format for a written action plan.

The Incident Commander will establish objectives and make strategy determinations for the incident based upon the requirements of the jurisdiction. In the case of a Unified Command, the incident objectives must adequately reflect the policy and needs of all the jurisdictional agencies.

The action plan for the incident should cover all tactical and support activities required for the operational period.

SPAN-OF-CONTROL:

Safety factors as well as sound management planning will both influence and dictate span-of-control consideration. In general, within the Incident Command System, the span-of-control of any individual with emergency management responsibility should range from three to seven with five being the rule of thumb. Of course, there will always be exceptions.

The kind of incident, the nature of the task, hazard, and safety factors and distance between elements all will influence span-of-control considerations. An important consideration in span-of-control is to anticipate change and prepare for it. This is especially true during rapid build-up of the organization when good management is made difficult because of numerous reporting elements.

DESIGNATED INCIDENT FACILITIES:

There are six Incident Command System designated facilities. They are:

- Command Post
- Staging Areas
- Base
- Camps
- Helibase
- Helispots

The determination of kinds of facilities and their locations will be based upon the requirements of the incident and the direction of Incident Command. The following facilities are defined for use with the Incident Command System:

Command Post

The Incident Command Post (ICP) is the location at which the primary command functions are performed. The Incident Commander will be located at the Incident Command Post.

All incidents must have a designated location for the Incident Command Post. There will only be one Incident Command post for each incident. This also applies to multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional incidents operating under a single or a unified command.

Staging Areas

A Staging Area is a temporary location at an incident where personnel and equipment are kept while awaiting tactical assignments. There may be more than one Staging Area per incident.

When possible, Staging Areas should be located within five minutes travel to the area of expected need. All resources assigned to a Staging Area are on available status and should be ready for assignment within three minutes.

All established Staging Areas will have a Staging Area Manager. The Staging Area Manager reports to the Operations Section Chief or the Incident Commander in the absence of an Operations Section Chief.

Incident Base

The Incident Base is the location at which primary service and support activities are performed. Normally the Base will be the location where all uncommitted (out-of-service) resources, personnel, and support operations are located. The Incident Logistics Section, which is responsible for ordering all resources and supplies, is also located at the Base. There should only be one Base established for each incident, and normally the Base will not be relocated. A Base Manager will be assigned to manage the Base.

Camps

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. Camps are separate facilities and are not located at the Incident Base. Large incidents may have more than one Camp. All Incident Command System functional unit activities performed at the Base may also be performed at Camps. A Camp Manager will be assigned to manage the Camp.

Helibases

A Helibase is the main location in and around the incident area at which helicopters may be parked, maintained, fueled and loaded with retardants, personnel or equipment. More than one Helibase may be required on very large incidents. Once established on an incident, a Helibase will usually not be relocated. A Helibase Manager will be assigned to manage the Helibase.

Helispots

Helispots are temporary locations, in the incident area, where helicopters can safely take off and land. Helispots can be used to load or off-load personnel, equipment, supplies, water, etc. A Helispot Manager will be assigned to manage the Helispot.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Resources assigned to an incident are managed in one of the following ways:

Single Resources

These are individual engines, bulldozers, crews, helicopters, etc. that will be assigned as primary tactical units. A single resource will be the equipment plus the required personnel to properly utilize it.

Task Forces

A Task Force is any combination of single resources within span-of-control guidelines, which can be temporarily assembled for a specific tactical need. All resource elements within a Task Force must have common communications and a leader. The leader should have a separate vehicle.

Strike Teams

Strike Teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type, which have an established minimum number of personnel. Strike Teams will always have a leader, and will have common communications among resource elements. Strike Teams can be made up of engines, hand crews, and dozers. The leader should have a separate vehicle.

The use of Strike Teams and Task Forces is encouraged, wherever possible, to maximize the use of resources, reduce the management control of a large number of single resources, and reduce the communication demands.

In order to maintain an up-to-date and accurate picture of resource utilization, it is necessary that:

- All resources be assigned a current status condition.
- All changes in resource location and status conditions must be made promptly to the appropriate functional unit.

Status Conditions

Three status conditions are established for use with tactical resources at the incident. They are:

- **Assigned** – performing an active assignment.
- **Available** – Ready for immediate assignment. (Usually assigned to a Staging Area)
- **Out of Service** – Not in available or assigned status.

Changes in Status

Normally, the individual who makes the change in a resource's status is responsible for providing that information to the Resource Unit.

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

The Incident Command System has five major functional areas. The functional areas are:

- Command
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance

These functional areas are structured as follows: