

OPERATIONS SECTION:

The Operations Section is responsible for the direction and coordination of all incident tactical operations. This is done under the direction of the Operations Section Chief.

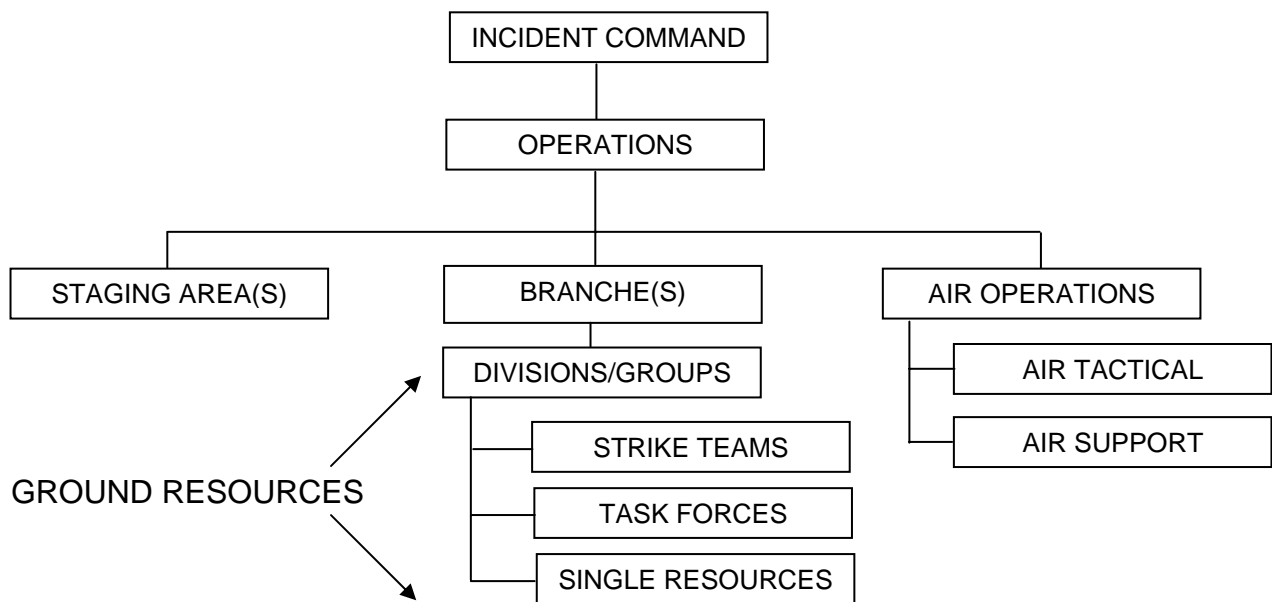
Operations at an incident or event can be set up in a variety of ways depending upon the kind of incident, agencies involved, and objectives and strategy. The Operations Section will expand or contract based upon the existing and projected needs of the incident.

Tactical operations at an incident include all activities, which are directed toward reduction of the immediate hazard, establishing situation control, and restoration of normal operations.

There are four (4) major functions of the Operations Section:

- Operations Section Chief/Deputy
- Ground Resources
- Air Resources
- Staging Area(s)

The following organizational Chart shows the Four (4) major functions of the Operations Section:



Operations Section Chief/Deputy

The incident Operations Section Chief, a member of the General Staff, is responsible for the management of all operations directly applicable to the mission. The Operations Section Chief also directs the preparation of unit operational plans, requests or releases resources, makes expedient changes to the Incident Action Plan as necessary and reports such changes to the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief may have a deputy. Deputies must have the same qualifications as the Operations Section Chief. An Operations Section Chief should be designated for each operational period and should have direct involvement in the preparation of the Incident Action Plan for their period of responsibility.

Ground Resources

At any incident, the individual resources that are assigned will initially report directly to the Incident Commander. As the incident grows in size and complexity, the Incident Commander may designate an Operations Section Chief to assume tactical direction of resources. In the Incident Command System, resources may be used in the following ways:

Single Resources

In general, single resources will be used for first-response situations. They also may be dispatched in an extended (reinforced) attack or sometimes in greater alarm situations. During an incident, there will be situations that will call for the use of a single helicopter, engine, crew, or the like.

Strike Teams

Strike teams are a set number of resources of the same kind and type. The three types of Strike Teams designated in the Incident Command System include engines, dozers, and hand crews. They must have common communications and operate under the direct supervision of a leader.

Strike teams are highly effective/efficient management units. Knowing how many elements will be involved and that all elements have the same capability allows for better planning, ordering, utilization, and management.

Task Forces

Task Forces are any combination of resources assembled for a particular tactical assignment. Task Forces require a leader and common communications among all resource elements. An example of a task force could include an engine, hand crew, and a dozer assigned to work under the direct supervision of the Task Force Leader.

Task forces can be very versatile combinations of resources, and their use is encouraged. Combining resources into task forces allows several resource elements to be managed under supervision, thus lessening the span-of-control.

Branches

Branches may be established on an incident to serve several purposes. A Branch may be established when the number of divisions or groups exceeds the recommended five-to-one span-of control for the Operations Section Chief. When this occurs, the Operations Section Chief should designate a two-branch structure and allocate the divisions and groups within those branches. For example, in figure A and B the Operations Section Chief has one group and four divisions reporting to him, with two additional divisions being added. At this point, a two-branch organization should be considered.

Figure A

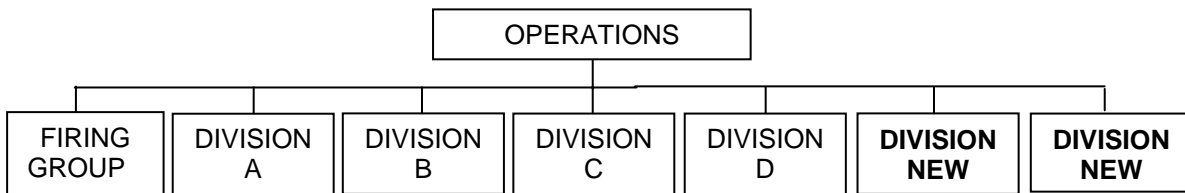
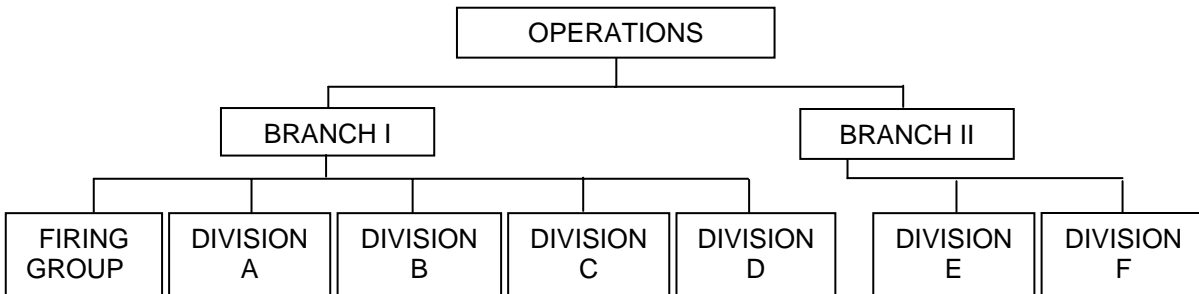
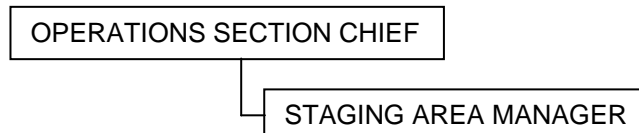


Figure B



Staging Areas

Staging Areas are locations set up at an incident where resources can be placed while awaiting a tactical assignment. Once a Staging Area has been designated and named, a Staging Area Manager will be assigned. The Staging Area Manager will report to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if the Operations Section Chief has not been designated. The Operations Section Chief may establish, move, and discontinue staging areas. All resources within a designated Staging Area should be available for an assignment on a three-minute notice.



Air Operations

The Air Operations Branch is established by the Operations Section Chief. Its size, organization, and use will depend primarily upon the nature of the incident and the availability of aircraft resources. On large incidents, the Operations Section Chief may deal directly with the Air Tactical Group Supervisor, who in turn will coordinate all airborne helicopter activity with a Helicopter Coordinator. In cases where only one helicopter is used, the helicopter may be directly under the control of the Operations Section Chief.

The Operations Section Chief may establish an Air Operations Branch Director position when:

- The complexity of air operations requires additional support and effort.
- The incident requires a mix of tactical fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft.

The Air Support Group Supervisor is responsible for establishing and operating helibases and helispots and for maintaining required liaison with fixed-wing air attack bases off the incident. The Air Support Group Supervisor is responsible for all time keeping for helicopters assigned to the incident. The Air Tactical Group Supervisor position is established as a separate position whenever both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft will be operated simultaneously within the incident airspace.

