

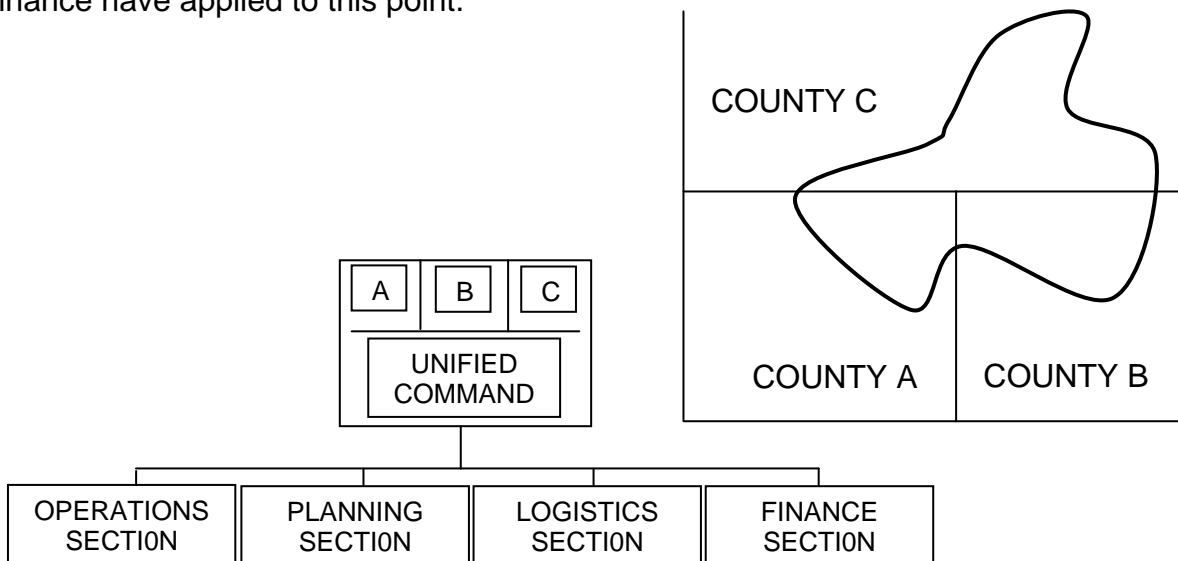
It is possible and often necessary to use a modified Incident Command System organizational structure to meet the needs of very complex and large incidents (e.g., wildland fires which may cover thousands of acres over several political subdivisions). This section provides a brief explanation of large incident management.

Two different examples of organizing for large incident management will be described. The first deals with a single but large wildland fire incident, which because of its size, requires additional support, but does not require the establishment of two complete incident organizations. The second example will deal with a large wildland fire incident, which could be divided into two separate incidents, each with a complete command structure and with an Area Command to ensure inter-incident coordination. The Area Command is an individual and/or organization established to ensure inter-incident coordination for command, operations, planning and logistical matters. The Area Command may be located at either of the Incident Command Posts or at a separate nearby location. It may also function from a regional facility. When in existence, the Area Command may change the priorities/objectives at any of the incidents under its authority.

Both examples given here assume a unified command structure as a starting point. There would be no difference if the incidents were being run under a single command structure.

**EXTENDING THE ICS ORGANIZATION:**

A very large wildland fire incident is depicted in the figure below. This incident has grown from a single command (County A) to a Unified Command organization (Counties A, B, & C). The standard Incident Command System functional sections of Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance have applied to this point.

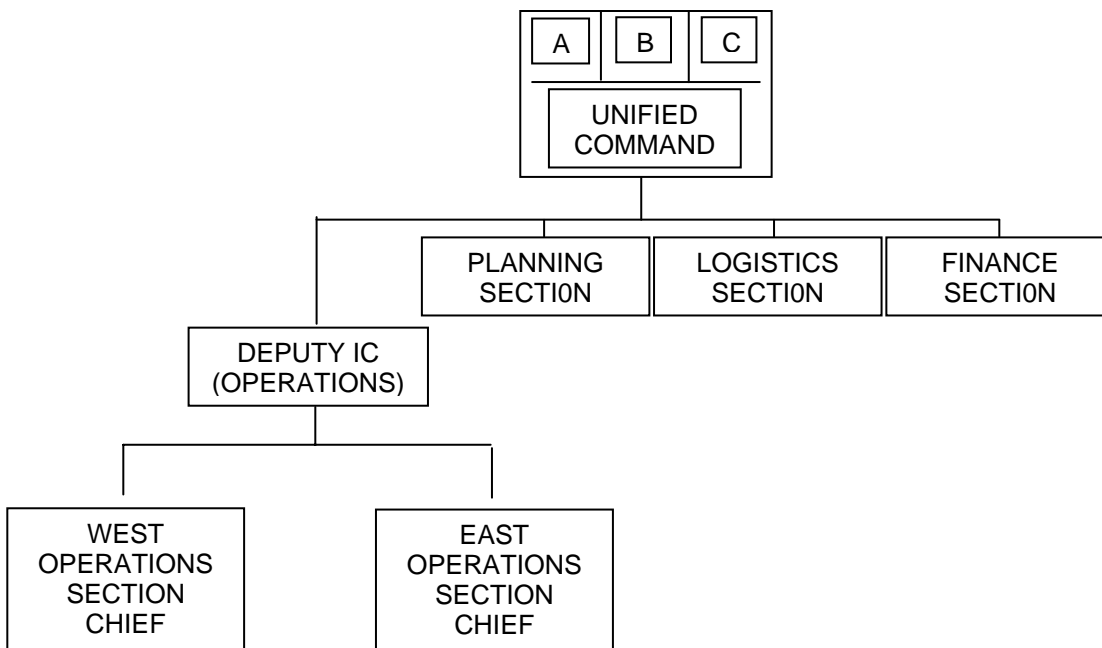


Some incidents, because of their magnitude, may require the necessity to develop ways in which the Incident Command System can be effectively used with these type of situation:

1. The Operations Section is not large enough to accommodate adequate resources under span-of-control guidelines

In the Incident Command System, the overall size of the Operations Section is determined by the makeup of the resources within each division or group. For example, using a division consisting of 3 Handcrew Strike Teams, 1 Dozer Strike Team and 1 Engine Strike Team, a “typical” division could consist of a minimum of 130 personnel. Expanding this to a 25 division, 5 branch incident, the personnel would be in excess of 3000 for each operational period.

In order to provide additional operations personnel, and to stay within span-of-control guidelines, another Operations Section could be added to the existing incident organization. At this time, the unified command structure of the incident would be modified to include a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations. This Deputy would have the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the two (old and new) Operations Sections were fully coordinated between each other and with other sections. The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations would normally be co-located with the Incident Command as shown below.

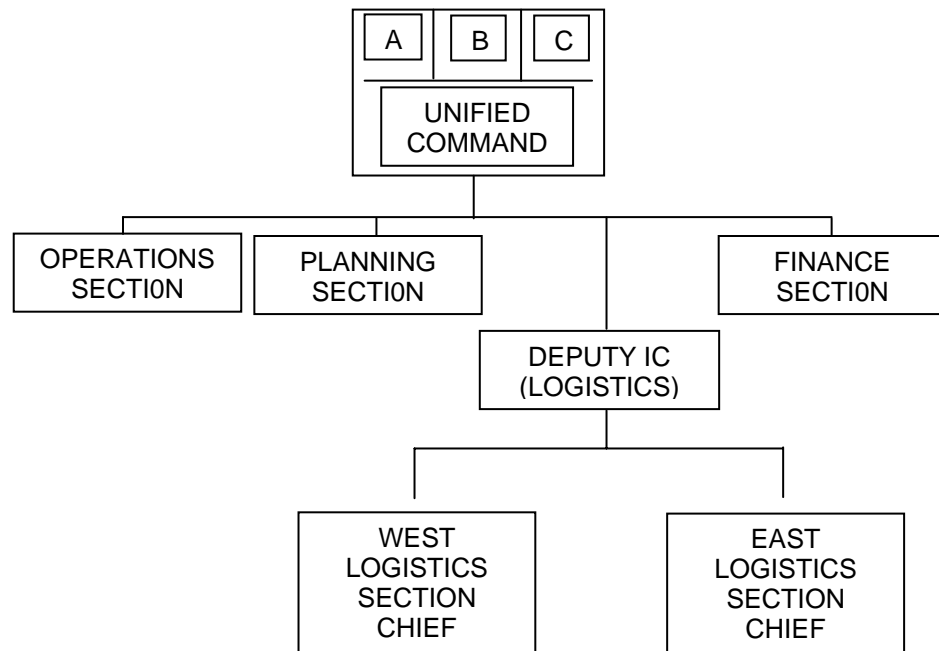


Unified Command – Two Operation Sections

2. Logistical support can no longer be adequately maintained

If the incident were so large geographically that it would not be possible for the Incident Base to support the required number of camps and other logistics needs, it may be necessary to establish another Logistics Section to support one part of the incident.

In this situation, another Incident Base and necessary camps serviced by that Base could be established. At this point, a Deputy Incident Commander for logistics should be added to the command structure to ensure full coordination of the two logistics efforts. This is shown in the diagram below.



Unified Command – Two Logistic Sections

3. Incident becomes too large for a single action plan

If the incident becomes so large that there is no logical set of objectives that pertain to the entire incident, or if the preparation and/or distribution of the plan could not be feasibly accomplished within the required time frame, then a modified planning structure could be adopted. In this case, the addition of another Planning Section is not recommended. The better solution would appear to have detailed action planning done at the Branch level. The Planning Section providing the following to each Branch could accomplish this:

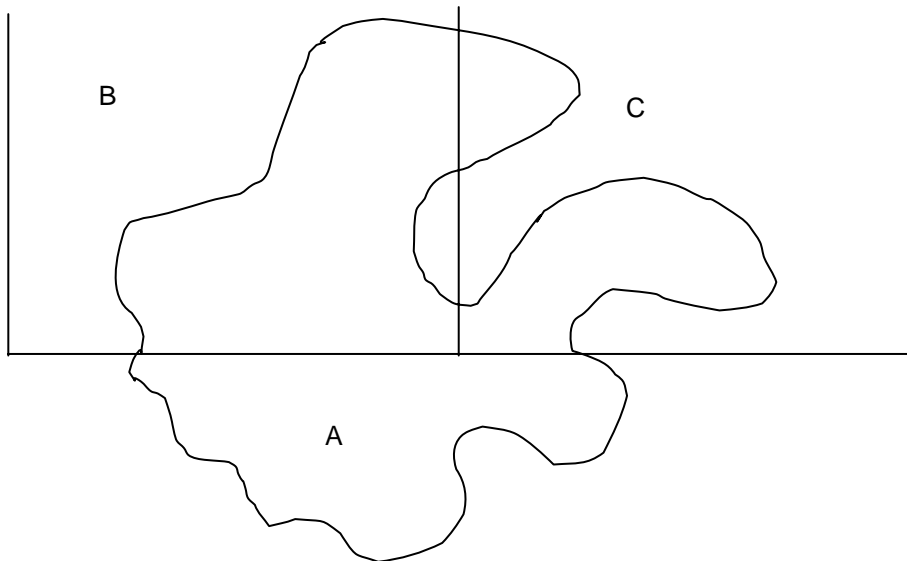
- General incident objectives
- Specific strategies for the branch for the next operational period.

- Incident resource summary for the next operational period.
- Weather and safety information as appropriate.
- Any changes to logistical support.

Individual branches could then perform detailed action planning from this information. (A modification to this could be accomplished by designating only certain branches, e.g., those in a mop-up mode, as branches, which would perform branch action planning. Other branches would continue under a centralized planning structure.) In either case, the Planning Section should provide each branch, which is doing individual branch planning with the required capability in terms of personnel and other support to get the planning accomplished.

### **DIVIDING AN INCIDENT:**

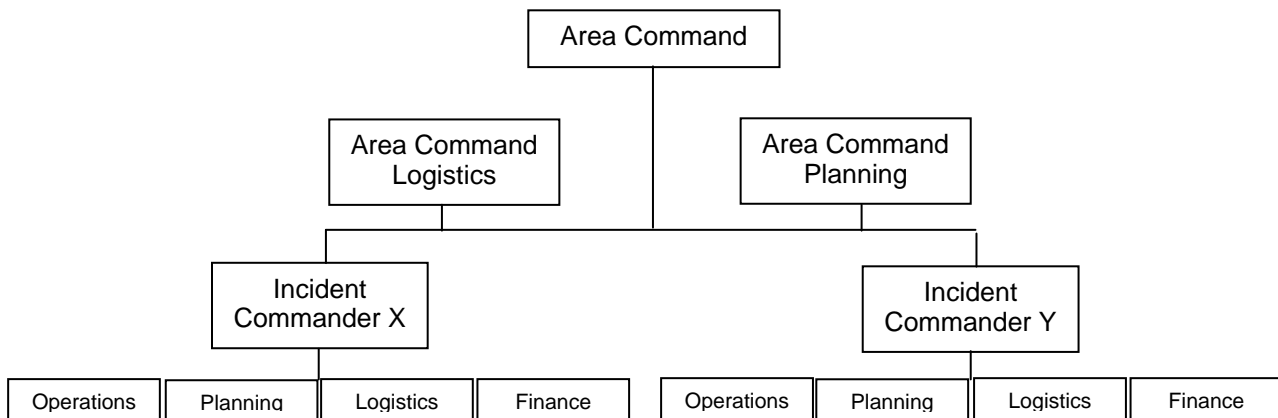
The diagram below shows a very large wildland fire incident, which covers an extensive area within several political jurisdictions. The incident is divided by a major ridge and is now so large the management of both planning and logistics has become very complex. The incident has, until this time, been run under a Unified Command organization. If the Unified Command determined that the incident should be divided into two separate incidents, the following should be accomplished.



1. An Area Command should be established. The existing unified command members may continue as jurisdictional liaison representatives to the Area Command.
2. A decision would be reached by the unified command on how best to divide the incident. This could be done in several ways, depending upon terrain considerations, political boundaries, current branch structure, etc.

3. Incident Commanders, command and general staff would be selected for each incident.
4. Supporting organizations, facilities, locations, etc., would be designated.
5. An appropriate time would be designated for establishing the separate incidents with individual names.
6. The Area Command would be responsible to ensure that jurisdictional action plans are being met through the respective incident action plans and that necessary procedures are established and functioning to ensure inter-incident coordination on all matters.

The organization would be as follows:



Area Command - Two Incident Organization

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The key factors to be kept in mind in making a determination to establish an Area Command for large incident management or to extend an existing organization are cost and effectiveness.

If the incident planning and operations functions are adequate, and have room for growth, but logistics is not adequate, then the decision should be to establish another logistics organization, and save the cost of establishing an entirely new complete incident organization and associated facilities. Similarly, if operations and logistics appear to be adequate but detailed action planning can no longer be accomplished by a single entity, then allowing branch action planning and ensuring that appropriate planning coordination is taking place might be more cost effective.

If the incident is divided into two main segments by geographical barriers, is separating naturally, or if it appears that any two of the major functional sections of the Incident Command Post will require extensive augmentation, the most effective solution would be to create two separate incident organizations.