Charlottesville, University of Virginia and Albemarle County Regional Incident Command System (ICS) Policy

This document establishes the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County policy for institutionalizing the policies and procedures of the Incident Command System (ICS) in order to ensure the region complies with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) -5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*.

Responding to emergencies, especially complex, multi-agency incidents, is one of the most important challenges facing the region. The Incident Command System (ICS) is a nationally recognized, standardized management system designed to enable effective and efficient management of such incidents by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure. It is designed to be applicable across all emergency management disciplines, to help organize both near-term and long-term field operations and to be used for a broad spectrum of emergencies ranging in size and complexity. The ICS provides a core mechanism for coordinated and collaborative incident management.

ICS permits the combining of agencies into one cohesive team for effective incident operations and should be used for all preplanned events including field training exercises, public events, planned activities, political forums, and special events. ICS will also be used for all unforeseen incidents requiring a response regardless of the size. The Commonwealth of Virginia Incident Command System Job Aid provides checklists for each position in the ICS structure and must be maintained by all individuals who may have a role in the ICS organizational structure.

ICS STRUCTURE

I. The ICS organization is built around the following five major components:

    A. Command

    B. Planning

    C. Operations

    D. Logistics

    E. Finance/Administration

Figure 1 — Incident Command System Structure

COMMAND STAFF

Incident Commander

Safety — Information

Liaison

Operations | Planning | Logistics | Finance and Administration

II.   **Single Agency Command**

A.   When an incident occurs within a single jurisdiction and there is no jurisdictional or functional agency overlap, a single Incident Commander should be designated with overall management responsibility.   The Incident Commander should be the senior first-responder to arrive at the scene.   The responsible agency may assign a more highly qualified Incident Commander as the incident grows in size and complexity.

B.   If the Incident Commander determines that additional support from other agencies is not required, he or she has the authority to cancel any other support that may have initially been dispatched through the Emergency Communications Center.

C.   If the Incident Commander determines that additional support from other agencies is required, he or she will request that support through the Emergency Communications Center.

III.   **Unified Command / Multi-Agency Response**

A.   Unified Command should be implemented for incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multi-agency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multi-agency involvement. Unified Command allows agencies with jurisdictional authority with different legal, geographic and functional responsibilities to operate effectively together within a common organizational framework.

B.   The establishment of a Unified Command will begin with a brief initial meeting of agency leaders. Agencies with functional responsibility for any or all aspects of an incident and agencies that provide specific resource support should participate in the Unified Command structure.

C.   Representatives in the Unified Command will collocate at the Incident Command Post to perform the following responsibilities:

(1)   determine overall incident strategy and objectives

(2)   establish a single incident action plan

(3)   approve, commit, and make optimum use of all assigned resources

(4)   agree on the designation of the Operations Section Chief

(5)   designate a Unified Command spokesperson

D.   The exact composition of the Unified Command structure will depend on the location(s) of the incident, type of incident and/or which functional agencies are involved in the response.

E.   The Operations Section Chief has the authority to implement the response operations specified in the Incident Action Plan.

F.   The differences between the single command structure and the Unified Command structure are:

     (1)   the Incident Commander is solely responsible for establishing incident management objectives and strategies in a single agency command.

     (2)   the individuals designated by their jurisdictional authorities must jointly determine objectives, plans and priorities and work together to execute them in a Unified Command.

IV.   **Area Command**

A.   Area Command should be established to oversee the management of multiple incidents or a very large incident being handled by separate ICS organizations, incidents that are not site specific and when there are a large number of the same types of incidents in the same area. If incidents under the authority of area command are multi-jurisdictional, a Unified Area Command should be established.

B.   Area Command does not have operational responsibilities. Area Command is responsible for:

     (1)   setting overall agency incident-related priorities

     (2)   allocating critical resources

     (3)   ensuring incidents are managed properly

     (4)   ensuring effective communications

     (5)   ensuring management objectives are met and do not conflict with each other

(6)   identifying critical resource needs and reporting them to the EOC

(7)   providing personnel accountability and safety

V.   **Transferring Command**

A.   The arrival of a higher ranking official does not mean that the Incident Commander role is being transferred. A subordinate official may continue the role of Incident Commander even if a higher-ranking official arrives on scene when the individual is effectively commanding an incident and satisfactory progress is being made to bring the incident under control. As circumstances change, the situation may dictate that a representative from another agency serve as Incident Commander.

B.   To transfer command, the person being relieved must brief the incoming Incident Commander on the following items utilizing the Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201):

(1)   the incident conditions (are, current situation, objectives, priorities, hazards, etc.)

(2)   the IAP and its current status

(3)   deployment and assignments of operating units

(4)   appraisal of the need for additional resources

(5)   summary of currently requested resources and

(6)   safety considerations.

C.   The new Incident Commander will accept full and total responsibility for the incident thereafter. The Emergency Communications Center shall be advised of the transfer of command and the radio designation Incident Commander shall be transferred to the relieving person.

D.   The Incident Commander role should not be passed to an individual not on the scene. It is preferable to have the initial Incident Commander continue to operate until the role can be transferred to an on-scene official.

FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

V.   **Incident Commander**

A.   The Incident Commander is responsible for on-scene management and should be readily, visually, authoritatively and geographically identifiable to all concerned.

B.   All incidents, regardless of size or complexity will have an Incident Commander.   At a minimum, the Incident Commander will be responsible for the following:

Initial Responsibilities:

(1)   Assume an effective command position - visually, authoritatively, and geographically

(2)   Transmit a brief initial radio report to the affected communications center and other appropriate responding agencies

(3)   Rapidly assess the situation

(4)   Identify contingencies

(5)   Develop the incident action plan that identifies steps to be taken to meet the established goals and objectives and responsible individuals for accomplishing these steps

(6)   Assign and maintain effective control of resources as required

(7)   Activate elements of the Incident Command System, **as needed and appropriate**

D.   Additional Responsibilities:

(1)   Provide continuing overall command of the incident and give progress reports to all affected persons with a need to know

(2)   Designate Command Staff and General Staff, coordinate staff activities, and manage incident operations

(3)   Brief Command Staff and Section Chiefs

(4)   Review and evaluate efforts. Revise the incident action plan as needed

(5)   Identify, request and assign resources as needed

(6)   Approve and authorize release of information to the news media

(7)   Arrange and conduct the debriefing

(8)   Prepare an after action report

(9)   Possess and review appropriate checklists in Incident Command System Job Aid

(10)   Use and complete ICS forms as appropriate and necessary

VI.   **Command Staff**

    A.   The members of the Command Staff report directly to the Incident Commander and will support and advise General Staff. The Command Staff attends meeting in the command post and consists of the Incident Commander and three special staff positions; the Public Information Officer, the Safety Officer, and the Liaison Officer.

    B.   **Information Officer**

The Information Officer formulates and releases information about the incident to the news media and other appropriate agencies. The Information Officer should develop accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, resources committed, and other matters of general interest. The Information Officer will normally be the point of contact for the media and other governmental agencies which desire information directly from the incident. In addition, the Information Officer may:

    (1)   establish a single center for incident information. The press area needs to be established away from the Command Post and staging area at all incidents. Large-scale incidents may require a Joint Information Center be established to better disseminate information to the public and press

    (2)   arrange for necessary work space, materials, telephones, and staffing

    (3)   prepare an initial information summary as soon as possible after arrival

    (4)   release approved information to the news media and post information in accordance with instructions from the Incident Commander

    (5)   update news releases

    (6)   maintain an activity log as necessary

    (7)   facilitate tours and photo opportunities, as soon as possible, in an area where safety of the press can be guaranteed

    (8)   maintain Unit Log ICS Form 214

    (9)   possess and review appropriate checklists in Incident Command System Job Aid

C.   **Liaison Officer**

The Liaison Officer is the point of contact for assisting agency representatives (i.e., public works, local agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, railroad, Red Cross, Social Services personnel, etc.).   In addition, the Liaison Officer will:

(1)   maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and agency representatives

(2)   assist in establishing and coordinating interagency contracts

(3)   keep agencies supporting the incident aware of incident status.

(4)   monitor incident operations to identify current or potential inter-organizational problems

(6)   ensure that all required agency forms, reports and documents are completed prior to demobilization.

(7)   maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214).

c.   **Safety Officer**

The Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring and assessing hazardous or unsafe situations, and developing measures for assuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer must exercise emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe acts when immediate action is required. However, the Safety Officer will typically attempt to correct unsafe acts or conditions through the normal chain of command. The Safety Officer maintains awareness of actively developing situations and periodically briefs the Incident Commander. In addition, the Safety Officer(s) may:

(1)   review incident action plans

(2)   identify potentially unsafe situations

(3)   exercise emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe situations

(4)   investigate accidents that have occurred within the incident areas

(5)   maintain a log of events as necessary

(6)   provide for safety, accountability and welfare of assigned personnel

6. **General Staff**

A. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to develop an organizational structure as soon as possible after arrival and implement initial control measures. The size and complexity of the organizational structure will be determined by the size and nature of the emergency. The Incident Commander may designate functional managers responsible for specific tasks. These tasks remain the responsibility of the Incident Commander unless they are delegated to someone else. Management functions can be divided into the following four sections; Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administrative. Each section will have a section chief who will (in addition to their specific tasks listed within the following sections) perform the following upon scene arrival:

(1) check in at the Incident Command Post and complete the check-in list (ICS Form 211)

(2) activate, oversee the safety of and supervise his/her respective units

(3) obtain a briefing from the Incident Command or Liaison Officer

(4) establish a working location

(5) attend planning meetings

(6) identify/advise Liaison Officer of special needs, requirements and supplies

(7) complete all necessary agency forms, reports and documents

(8) possess and review appropriate checklists in Incident Command System Job Aid

(9) assist in the formulation of the incident action plan

(10) brief personnel on the incident action plan

(11) develop operations plan for his/her respective section function

B. **Operations**

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the management of all operations directly applicable to the primary mission, and the safety and welfare of the personnel working in the Operations Section. The Operations Section Chief activates and supervises operations, organizational elements and staging areas. resources (personnel and equipment) in accordance with the incident action plan. When the command post is not located at the scene of the incident, the Incident Commander shall appoint at least one Operations Sections Chief to

assume direction and control of the incident scene. The Operations Section Chief may have a deputy whose responsibilities will be delegated by the Chief. In addition, the Operations Sections Chief will:

(1)   assess the incident scene and report the findings to the Incident Commander

(2)   manage on-site incident operations and carry out necessary tactical strategies

(3)   review resources to be released, initiate recommendations for the release of resources and request additional resources from the Command Post as needed

(4)   assemble and disassemble strike teams and task forces

(5)   maintain the Unit Log (ICS Form 214) and give it to the Documentation Unit at the end of each operational period

The Incident Command System provides for the following positions within the Operations Section:

(1)   Staging Area Manager

(2)   Operations Support Branch Director

(3)   Division/Group Supervisor

(4)   Strike Team/Task Force Leader

C.   **Planning**

The Planning Section Chief activate is responsible for the collecting and evaluating information about the incident and the status of resources. A major function of the Planning Section Chief is to anticipate future needs for equipment and manpower. In addition, the Planning Section Chief may assemble information on current and alternative strategies, identify needs for special resources, provide periodic predictions on incident potential, ensure that normal information collection and reporting requirements are being met, prepare recommendations for release of resources and compile and display incident status information. In addition, the Planning Section Chief will:

(1)   provide incident traffic plan

(2)   oversee preparation of the incident demobilization plan

(3)   assemble and disassemble non-operations strike teams and task forces

As the situation escalates, the Planning Section Chief may appoint personnel to assist with the following activities:

(1)   Documentation/recording/timekeeping

(2)   Technical issues

(3)   Special Situations (weather, etc.)

The Incident Command System provides for the following positions within the Planning Section:

(1)   Situation Unit Leader

(2)   Resources Unit Leader

(3)   Documentation Unit Leader

(4)   Demobilization Unit Leader

D.   **Logistics**

The Logistics Section Chief activates and supervises the logistics section and is responsible for providing facilities, services and materials in support of the incident. In addition, the Logistics Officer will:

(1)   provide and manage any needed supplies and materials

(2)   coordinate with the Planning Officer to forecast and obtain future resource needs

(3)   provide for communications plans and any needed communications equipment

(4)   provide fuel and needed repairs for equipment

(5)   obtain specialized equipment or expertise as requested

(6)   provide food and associated supplies

(7)   secure any needed fixed or portable facilities

(8)   maintain the Unit Log (ICS Form 214)

The Incident Command System provides for the following positions within the Logistics Section:

(1)   Logistics Support Branch Director

(2)   Ground Support Unit Leader

(3)   Facilities Unit Leader

(4)   Supply Unit Leader

(5)   Logistics Service Branch Director

(6)   Food Unit Leader

(7)   Communications Unit Leader

(8)   Medical Unit Leader

E.   **Finance and Administrative**

The Finance and Administrative Section Chief is responsible for the management of all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident. It is recommended that the person normally responsible for such activities under non-emergency conditions continue to serve in this function. In addition, the Finance and Administrative Section Chief will:

(1)   procure services and/or supplies from identified sources as requested by the Incident Commander;

(2)   document all financial costs of the incident;

(3)   document for possible cost recovery for services and/or supplies;

(4)   analyze and manage legal risk for incidents; and

(5)   document for compensation and claims for injury.

The Incident Command System provides for the following positions within the Finance/Administration Section:

(1)   Time Unit Leader

(2)   Cost Unit Leader

(3)   Compensation/Claims Unit Leader

(4)   Procurement Unit Leader

7.   **Span of Control**

Safety factors as well as sound management principles will dictate span of control considerations. The span of control should range from three to seven functions or

persons, with a span of control of five being established as optimal and generally acceptable. As responsibilities or response activities grow beyond that level, the organizational structure should also grow in order to maintain the span of control within the recommended range.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

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9.   **Initial Actions**

A.   The first agency on-scene should initiate the Incident Command System. Subsequent arriving personnel shall report to the Incident Commander for a situation briefing.

B.   Upon activation of the ICS, the first sworn employee on the scene shall establish command. This public safety employee is the Incident Commander until relieved by a higher ranking public safety employee.

C.   The Incident Commander shall rapidly evaluate the situation and brief the Emergency Communications Center about the situation and the nature and numbers of resources needed. A brief description of the incident should be given, including obvious conditions. The Emergency Communications Center should be advised as the situation changes.

D.   Initial personnel on the scene should secure access to the scene to prevent accidents and protect the injured. The Incident Commander should identify routes for emergency vehicles that will be responding. In some cases, it may be necessary to designate parking areas until a staging area is established.

10.   **Communications**

A.   Once multiple units respond and Command has been established, the Incident Commander will be identified over the radio by using the location of the incident, followed by the term "Command," i.e., "West Main Command." The dispatcher should relay all information concerning the incident through Command.

B.   If necessary, the Incident Commander may designate an operational channel to accommodate radio communications associated with the incident.

C.   Once Command is activated, clear text voice transmissions shall be used in order to avoid confusion.

D.   In order to ensure clear, efficient radio communications, all personnel shall:

(1)   minimize details in orders

(2)   use face-to-face communications when possible

(3)   repeat orders to ensure the intended message is the message received

(4)   include quality and quantity in orders

(5)   avoid unnecessary conversation

(6)   set a proper tone by controlling the speed and volume of transmissions

(7)   be brief and specific

11.   **Establishing the Command Post**

A.   Each incident will only have one command post. The command post should be positioned away from the general noise and confusion of the incident, outside the area of potential hazards and within view of the incident when possible.

B.   Initially, the command post may be a vehicle or a location on scene that is mutually agreeable to the agencies represented. If the incident has a long-term potential, it is advisable to select a more functional facility.

C.   The command post should be clearly identified as such by a green and white flag, lights or other marker.

D.   The number of personnel in the command post should be kept to a minimum. Security should be provided to control access and ensure only authorized individuals be allowed to enter.

E.   The command post shall be staffed at all times.

F.   The Incident Commander should ensure that the location is announced to all responders and dispatch.

12.   **Establishing the Staging Area(s)**

A.   The staging area will be established to manage available resources effectively. It is the location where resources and personnel should be placed while awaiting an assignment and is managed by the Operations Section.

B.   Consider the following factors when selecting a staging area:

(1)   multiple access routes

(2)   adequate size

(3)   secured for personnel and equipment

(4)   located away from the incident but as close to probable operational assignment as possible (less than 5 minutes away).

(5)   safe from incident hazards

(6)   easily visible to the arriving units

C.   The Incident Commander will notify the Emergency Communications Center of the location of the staging area. The Emergency Communications Center will instruct all incoming units to report to the staging area unless advised otherwise.

D.   The Staging Area Manager(s) will report the staging area's readiness status to the Operations Section Chief or the Incident Commander. The radio designation for the Staging Area Manager will be "Staging".

E.   The Staging Area Manager(s) will have the following responsibilities:

(1)   initiate a parking plan to prevent excessive congestion at the staging area.

(2)   brief all incoming personnel

(3)   assume a position that is visible and accessible to incoming staging units

(4)   maintain written logs for all significant activities occurring at the staging area

(5)   establish and oversee a check-in/check-out system for all equipment and personnel

(6)   assign available resources in response to resource requests

(7)   monitor the status of resources

F.   The following procedures will apply to the staging operation:

(1)   Once staging has been announced, all incoming agencies will assemble at their designated staging area.

(2)   Equipment will not be left unattended. Personnel will stay with their equipment unless directed otherwise.

13.   **Other Incident Facilities**

A. A Base provides primary services and support activities for incidents that cover a large area or are expected to continue for an extended period of time.

B. A Camp provides food, water and sleeping and sanitary facilities to incident personnel.

C. A Helibases is the location where helicopters may be parked, maintained, fueled and equipped.

D. A Helispots is the location where helicopters can land and load and offload personnel and equipment.

E. A Casualty Collection Point is the area designated to receive, conduct triage, and provide treatment and transportation to injured personnel.

14. **Debriefing**

A. Debriefings may be conducted on an ongoing basis during the incident to gather intelligence and enhance operational effectiveness. In addition, it is essential that all participants be debriefed at the conclusion of the incident in order to gather all of the information necessary for developing a complete, accurate understanding of the response activities for future planning purposes and training needs.

B. Field personnel may be debriefed in several ways:

   (1) In small incidents, all personnel may be debriefed as they return to the staging area.

   (2) In larger operations, team leaders who have previously debriefed their team members may be debriefed.

   (3) In complex, multi-jurisdictional operations, a debriefing session may be held after the incident is concluded, led by the Incident Commander.

14. **After Action Report**

A. After action reports will not be required for preplanned events that have had a plan of operation prepared, approved and implemented. However, debriefings should be conducted for significant events. If information of significant importance arises from events such as these participants may write his/her findings to their supervisor.

B. Agencies regularly compile separate incident reports for most incidents. In the event or an incident that involves more than one agency or jurisdiction, the Incident Commander will be responsible for compiling a collective after action report, submitting it to the Emergency Management

Coordinator and conducting a review of the lessons learned with key personnel. Each event will dictate who will be required to participate in the after action report and review. If a Planning Section was activated, they are the responsible unit for compiling the after action report.

An Incident Commander may submit an after action report on any incident he or she feels should be documented and evaluated. Events that may require an after action report include:

(1)   Hostage incidents

(2)   Pursuits that involve multiple jurisdictions, and last at least 60 minutes, and involve extensive damage or any injury or death.

(3)   Plane crashes where there is a loss of life.

(4)   Motor vehicle, or other transportation type, crashes/incidents causing a major primary route or interstate system to be shut down for a significant period of time (in excess of six hours). For the purpose of this request a shut down means all lanes in at least one direction.

(5)   Chemical leaks or spills which require massive evacuation of the public.

(6)   Raids that result in accidental/deliberate and unprepared for chemical exposure.

(7)   Any terrorist attack or attempted attack (domestic or foreign in nature).

(8)   Prison   or   other   correctional   institutional uprisings/riots/disturbances.

(9)   Escapes from penal institutions requiring active pursuit of escapee(s). This does not include merely the investigation of an escapee.

(10)   Civil disturbances.

(11)   Natural or man made disasters such as:

(a)Major flooding
(b) Hurricanes
(c) Tornadoes
(d) Blizzards

(12)   When any of the following are a result of the disaster:

(a)   Loss of life.

(b) Significant and/or widespread damage to property and or infrastructure.

(c) resources are called in from other areas to assist in the management of the incident.

(d) The event is declared a local disaster

(13) Major crimes involving multiple deaths, injuries or victims in general and require extensive resources, i.e., sniper-type incident.

C. The after action report should include the following:

(1) Synopsis of the incident

This paragraph will generally summarize who, what, where, and when of an operation.

(2) Resources/equipment used

This paragraph will detail the manpower used and equipment required.

(3) Strategies employed

(4) Evaluation of the effectiveness of resources and strategies used

This paragraph will offer an objective evaluation of the overall operation measuring both its success and deficiencies.

(5) Recommendations for improvement, including training and/or policy recommendations

(6) Injuries/deaths sustained by participating agencies

(7) Rosters/man-hours recorded

D. The after action report shall be provided to the Emergency Management Coordinator who will provide copies to the necessary department heads.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION

15. The regional offices of public safety have a number of guidelines and procedures that govern our response to different types of incidents. Employees should familiarize themselves with all general orders, standard operating procedures and training manuals of that pertain to their assignment.

16.   A regional Incident Command System training program will be developed by a team of training officers from each public safety agency and the Emergency Management Coordinator. Training will be the collective responsibility of all public safety agencies and will be accomplished in a unified training environment.

17.   Each Training Officer shall:

a.   ensure that all personnel with a direct role in emergency preparedness and incident management or response (including new employees, recruits and first responders) complete the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Awareness Course: IS-700.

b.   ensure all personnel at the entry-level, first line supervisor level, middle management level and command and general staff level of emergency management complete ICS 100.

c.   ensure all the above complete ICS 200 with the exception of entry-level personnel (those that have completed IS-195 have met both 100 and 200 requirements).

d.   coordinate and document annual ICS training exercises

e.   conduct a biennial, documented analysis of all events that required an after action report and the effectiveness of the training program. The analysis shall include a review of all after action reports and training exercises. Recommendations for improvement, including training and/or policy recommendations, shall be included. The biennial analysis shall be provided to the appropriate department heads.