C. NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM / INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (NIMS / ICS)

1. OVERVIEW

In order for personnel, equipment, and support resources to respond quickly and efficiently under the *Mobilization Plan*, a common command structure must be used at all levels of the emergency operations. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a common command and communication system for federal, state and local agencies. The Office of State Fire Marshal has adopted NIMS.

To ensure prompt and effective movement and use of personnel, equipment and support services, the Office of State Fire Marshal requires all fire service agencies activated under the *Mobilization Plan* to use the NIMS incident command system. NIMS establishes standard incident management processes, protocols and procedures for all responders.

The ICS component of NIMS goes into effect each time an incident occurs and continues until there is no longer a need for incident management or operations. Once established, the ICS structure can be expanded or contracted, depending upon the changing conditions of the incident. The incident command positions are intended to be staffed by qualified personnel and may include personnel from several agencies. The system can be used for any type of emergency, ranging from a minor incident involving a few units to a major incident involving several agencies.

The national NIMS model is available on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) web site at http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/NIMS-90-web.pdf.

2. NIMS COMPONENTS

NIMS incorporates incident management best practices developed and proven by thousands of response leaders across the United States. It is designed to be used for all kinds of emergencies, and is applicable to small day-to-day situations as well as very large and complex incidents. The following is a synopsis of each major component of the NIMS, as well as how these components work together as a system to provide the national framework for preventing, responding to, and recovering from emergency incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. For a more detailed discussion of each component, access the complete document on the DHS web site.

A. Command and Management

NIMS standard incident command structures are based on three key organizational systems.

1. The ICS

The ICS defines the operating characteristics, interactive management components, and structure of incident management and emergency response organization engaged throughout the life cycle of an incident;

2. Multiagency Coordination Systems

These define the operating characteristics, interactive management components, and organizational structure of supporting incident management entities engaged at the Federal, State, local, tribal and regional levels through mutual aid agreements and other assistance arrangements; and

3. Public Information Systems

These refer to processes, procedures, and systems for communicating timely and accurate information to the public during crisis or emergency situations.

B. Preparedness

Effective incident management begins with a host of preparedness activities conducted on a "steady-state" basis, well in advance of any potential incident. Preparedness involves an integrated combination of planning, training, exercises, personnel qualification and certification standards, equipment acquisition and certification standards, and publication management processes and activities.

1. Planning

Plans describe how personnel, equipment, and other resources are used to support incident management and emergency response activities. Plans provide mechanisms and systems for setting priorities, integrating multiple entities and functions, and ensuring that communications and other systems are available and integrated in support of a full spectrum of incident management requirements.

2. Training

   Training includes standard courses on multiagency incident command and management, organizational structure, and operational procedures; discipline-specific and agency-specific incident management courses; and courses on the integration and use of supporting technologies.

3. Exercises

   Incident management organizations and personnel must participate in realistic exercises--including multidisciplinary, multijurisdictional, and multisector interaction—to improve integration and interoperability and optimize resource utilization during incident operations.

4. Personnel Qualification and Certification

   Qualification and certification activities are undertaken to identify and publish national level standards and measure performance against these standards to ensure that incident management and emergency responder personnel are appropriately qualified and officially certified to perform NIMS-related functions.

5. Equipment Acquisition and Certification

   Incident management organizations and emergency responders at all levels rely on various types of equipment to perform mission l tasks. A ritical component of operational preparedness is the acquisition of equipment that will perform to certain standards, including the capability to be interoperable with similar equipment used by other jurisdictions.

6. Mutual Aid

   Mutual aid agreements are the means for one jurisdiction to provide resources, facilities, services, and other required support to another jurisdiction during an incident. Each jurisdiction should be party to a mutual aid agreement with appropriate jurisdictions from which they expect to receive or to which they expect to provide assistance during an incident.

7. Publications Management

   Publications management refers to forms and forms standardization, developing publication materials, administering publications—including establishing naming and numbering conventions, managing the

publication and promulgation of documents, and exercising control over sensitive documents—and revising publications when necessary.

C. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The NIMS defines standardized mechanisms and establishes requirements for processes to describe, inventory, mobilize, dispatch, track, and recover resources over the life cycle of an incident.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

1. Incident Management Communications

Incident management organizations must ensure that effective, interoperable communications processes, procedures, and systems exist to support a wide variety of incident management activities across agencies and jurisdictions.

2. Information Management

Information management processes, procedures, and systems help ensure that information, including communications and data, flows efficiently through a commonly accepted architecture supporting numerous agencies and jurisdictions responsible for managing or directing domestic incidents, those impacted by the incident, and those contributing resources to the incident management effort. Effective information management enhances incident management and response and helps insure that crisis decision making is better informed.

3. COMMON TERMINOLOGY

Organizational Functions A standard set of major functions and functional units has been predesignated and named for the ICS. Terminology for the organizational elements is standard and consistent.

Resource Elements Resources refers to the combination of personnel and equipment used in tactical incident operations. Common names have been established for all resources used within ICS. Any resource which varies in capability because of size or power (e.g., helicopters) is clearly typed as to capability.

Facilities Common identifiers are used for those facilities in and around the incident area. These facilities include such things as the command post, incident base, staging areas, etc.

4. MODULAR ORGANIZATION

The ICS organization has five major functional areas. The functional areas are:

- Command
- Operations
- Planning
- Logistics
- Finance

These functional areas are structured as follows:

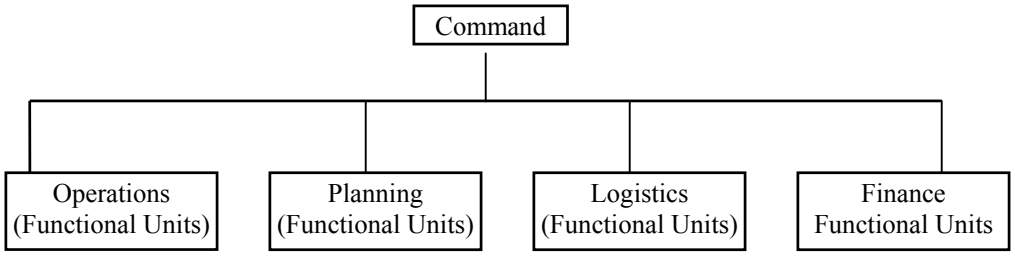

Figure 1
Incident Command System
Basic Functional Area Structure

The ICS 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. As needed, four sections can be developed, each with several units. The organization structure for incident will be based upon management needs. 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 each 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
Section -	Section Chief
Branch -	Branch Director (optional level)
Division -	Division Supervisor
Unit -	Unit Leader

In the ICS, 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 as required. If needed, the section chief may establish functional units within the section. Similarly

each functional unit leader will further assign individual tasks within the unit as needed. (See ICS organization chart at the end of this section.)

Unified Command Structure

The need for a unified command is brought about because:

1. Incidents have no regard for jurisdictional boundaries. Wildland fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes usually cause multi-jurisdictional major incident situations.
2. Individual agency responsibility and authority is normally legally confined to a single jurisdiction.

The concept of unified command simply means that all agencies who have a jurisdictional responsibility at a multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to the process of:

1. Determining overall incident objectives.
2. Selection of strategies.
3. Ensuring joint planning for tactical activities will be accomplished.
4. Ensuring integrated tactical operations are conducted.
5. Making maximum use of all assigned resources.

The proper selection of participants to work within a unified command structure will depend upon:

1. The location of the incident - which political jurisdiction(s) are involved.
2. The kind of incident - which functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s) are required.

A unified command structure could consist of a key responsible official from each jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdictional situation or it could consist of several functional departments within a single political jurisdiction.

Command objectives and strategy on major multi-jurisdictional incidents should be written. The objectives and strategies then guide development of the action plan. Under a unified command structure in the ICS, the implementation of the action plan will be done under the direction of a single individual--the Operations Chief.

The Operations Chief will normally be from the agency which has the greatest jurisdictional involvement. Designation of the Operations Chief must be agreed upon by all agencies having jurisdictional and functional responsibility at the incident.

Consolidated Action Plan

Every incident needs some form of an action plan. For small incidents of short duration, the plan need not be written. The following are examples of when written action plans should be done:

1. When resources from multiple agencies are being used;
2. When several jurisdictions are involved;
3. When the incident will require changes in shifts of personnel and/or equipment.

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.

Manageable Span of Control

Safety factors as well as sound management planning will both influence and dictate span-of-control considerations. In general, within the ICS, the span-of-control of an individual with emergency management responsibility should range from three to seven with a span-of-control of five being established as a general rule of thumb. Of course, there will always be exceptions (e.g., an individual crew leader will normally have no more than five personnel under supervision).

The kind of an incident, the nature of the task, hazard and safety factors and distances 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 too many reporting elements.

STANDARDIZED ICS FORMS

The following standard ICS forms have been adopted and recognized for utilization on OSFM declared conflagration mobilizations.

ICS 201	Incident Briefing
ICS 202	Incident Objectives
ICS 203	Organizational Assignment List
ICS 204	Assignment List
ICS 205	Incident Radio Communications Plan
ICS 206	Medical Plan
ICS 207	ICS Chart
ICS 209	Incident Status Summary
ICS 210	Status Change Card
ICS 211	Check-in List
ICS 212	Incident Demobilization Vehicle Safety Inspection
ICS 214	Unit Log
ICS 215	Operational Planning Worksheet
ICS 215A	Incident Safety Analysis Assignment
ICS 217	Radio Frequency Worksheet

Standard ICS forms can be obtained through: National Interagency Fire Center
Attention: Supply
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, ID 83705-5354

or fax to: NIFC 208-387-5573 or 208-387-5548

2. ICS ORGANIZATION CHART

INCIDENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART