

Course Welcome

This course will introduce students to the Incident Command System (ICS). This system is used nationwide to manage incidents regardless of size or type.

This is the first in a series of ICS courses for all personnel involved in incident management. Descriptions and details about the other ICS courses in the series may be found on our web site: <http://training.fema.gov>.

Course Goal

The overall course goal is to promote effective response by:

- Familiarizing you with the Incident Command System (ICS) and the NIMS principles used to manage incidents.
- Preparing you to coordinate with response partners from all levels of government and the private sector.

IS-100.c provides information on ICS which is part of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). To learn more about NIMS following completion of this course, you can take [IS-700.b: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System](#).

Overall Course Objectives

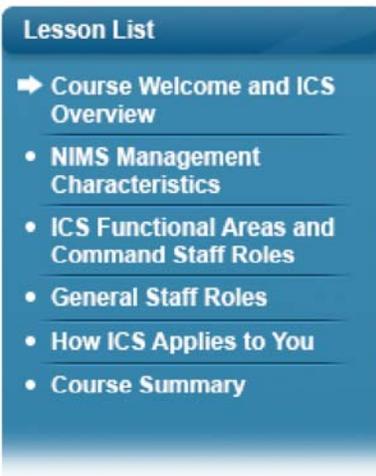
At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain the principles and basic structure of the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Describe the NIMS Management Characteristics that are the foundation of the ICS.
- Describe the ICS functional areas and the roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
- Describe the General Staff roles within ICS.
- Identify how NIMS management characteristics apply to ICS for a variety of roles and discipline areas.

Course Structure

This course is divided into five lessons plus the Course Summary.

- Unit 1: Course Welcome and ICS Overview
- Unit 2: NIMS Management Characteristics
- Unit 3: ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles
- Unit 4: General Staff Roles
- Unit 5: How ICS Applies to You



Lesson 1: ICS Overview

Lesson 1 provides an overview of the Incident Command System (ICS). At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the Whole Community approach to ICS.
- Identify the basic concept and benefits of ICS.

Whole Community

Every part of society must be involved in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating any and all incidents. The Federal Government is only one part of the whole community.

The **Whole Community** approach ensures solutions that serve the entire community are implemented, while simultaneously making sure that the resources the different members of the community bring to the table are used efficiently. These members include those in all levels of government as well as those in non-governmental and private-sector organizations in fields such as transportation, health care, schools, public works, communications, agriculture, chemical/nuclear, and more.

As part of the whole community, you will need to understand your role in the Incident Command System (ICS) and how ICS works to help everyone involved. This course will help in that regard.

This course addresses all disciplines that use ICS across the community. In addition, Lesson 4 concludes by providing links to discipline-specific examples of ICS applications, such as Public Works, Schools, and Utilities. Lesson 5 incorporates a variety of disciplines in a series of scenarios.

What is the Incident Command System?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized approach to incident management that:

- Is used for all kinds of incidents by all types of organizations and at all levels of government; ICS is applicable to small incidents as well as large and complex ones.
- Can be used not only for emergencies, but also for planned events.
- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and agencies.
- Establishes common processes for incident-level planning and resource management.
- Allows for the integration of resources (such as facilities, equipment, personnel) within a common organizational structure.

When is ICS Used?

The Incident Command System (ICS) can be used to manage any type of incident, including a planned event (e.g., the Olympics, the Governor's inauguration, state fairs, a local parade, etc.). The use of ICS is applicable to all types of incidents, regardless of their size or cause.

As a system, ICS is extremely useful. Not only does it provide an organizational structure for incident management, but it also guides the process for planning, building, and adapting that structure.

Using ICS for every incident or planned event provides the practice that will help to maintain and improve skills needed to effectively coordinate larger or more complex efforts.

[Transcript](#)

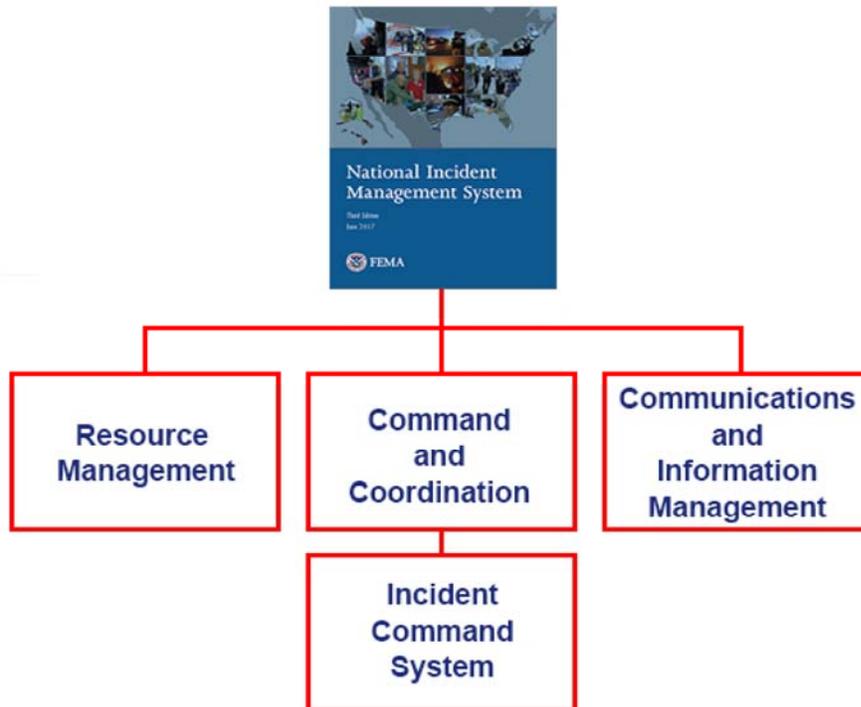
ICS as a Component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is a systematic, proactive approach to guide all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the effects of incidents. NIMS provides a consistent foundation for all incidents, ranging from daily occurrences to incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response.

NIMS is organized into three major components:

- Resource Management
- Command and Coordination - including the Incident Command System
- Communications and Information Management

It is important to note that the Incident Command System (ICS) is just one part of NIMS.



Benefits of ICS

The Incident Command System (ICS) has positively impacted incident management efforts by:

- Clarifying chain of command and supervision responsibilities to improve accountability.
- Leveraging interoperable communications systems and plain language to improve communications.
- Providing an orderly, systematic planning process.
- Implementing a common, flexible, predesigned management structure.
- Fostering cooperation between diverse disciplines and agencies.

ICS: Built on Best Practices

The Incident Command System (ICS) has been tested for more than 40 years of emergency and nonemergency applications by all levels of government; and in nongovernmental and private–sector organizations.

ICS helps to ensure:

- The safety of responders, community members, and others.

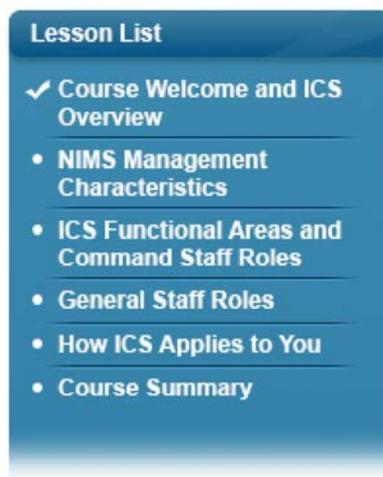
- The achievement of incident objectives.
- The efficient use of resources.

Lesson 1 Summary

You have completed the Course Welcome and Incident Command System (ICS) Overview lesson. This lesson presented the following key points:

- ICS is a standardized management tool that allows better coordination and use of resources.
- ICS represents organizational “best practices” and has become the standard for emergency management.
- ICS can be used to manage the response for all incidents and planned events.

ICS works! It saves lives!



Lesson 2 Overview

This lesson presents the National Incident Management System (NIMS) management characteristics. These characteristics are the foundation of all NIMS command and coordination components, including the Incident Command System (ICS).

Objective:

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the 14 NIMS management characteristics.



Making ICS Work

Effective incident management relies on a common organizational structure for managing resources, making decisions, and assigning tasks. The Incident Command System (ICS) uses a standardized management approach to ensure that incidents are properly managed and communications are effectively coordinated during an incident.

As an incident occurs, you may be called upon to assist -- making you a part of this organizational structure. To ensure success, you should understand how this structure works.

[Transcript](#)

NIMS Management Characteristics: Overview

The Incident Command System (ICS) is based on the following 14 proven NIMS management characteristics, each of which contributes to the strength and efficiency of the overall system:

- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Management by Objectives
- Incident Action Planning
- Manageable Span of Control
- Incident Facilities and Locations
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Integrated Communications
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Unified Command
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Accountability
- Dispatch/Deployment

- Information and Intelligence Management

We'll take a closer look at these characteristics on the following screens.

Common Terminology

The Incident Command System (ICS) establishes Common Terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of emergency functions and hazard scenarios. This common terminology covers the following:

- **Organizational Functions:** Major functions and functional units with incident management responsibilities are named and defined. They remain standard and consistent.
- **Resource Descriptions:** Major resources – including personnel, equipment, teams, and facilities – are given common names and are “typed” with respect to their capabilities.
- **Incident Facilities:** Common terminology is used to designate the facilities in the vicinity of the incident area.

During an incident:

- Communications should use common terms.
- Organizations should avoid radio codes, agency-specific codes, acronyms, or jargon. Usage of these types of codes may cause confusion or possibly compromise life safety due to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

The goal is to promote understanding among all parties involved in managing an incident.

Modular Organization

The Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure develops in a modular fashion based on the incident's size and complexity.

- The responsibility for the establishment and expansion of the ICS modular organization rests with the Incident Commander.
- As the incident grows more complex, the ICS organization may expand as functional responsibilities are delegated.

Management by Objectives

The Incident Commander or Unified Command (which will be discussed later), establishes incident objectives that drive incident operations.

Management by Objectives includes the following:

- Establishing specific, measurable incident objectives.
- Identifying strategies, tactics, tasks and activities to achieve the objectives.
- Developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols to accomplish identified tasks.
- Documenting results for the incident objectives.

Incident Action Planning

Incident action planning guides effective incident management activities. An Incident Action Plan (IAP) is a concise, coherent means of capturing and communicating overall incident priorities, objectives, strategies, tactics, and assignments in the context of both operational and support activities. The IAP should focus on addressing the needs of future timeframes (called operational periods).

To be effective, an IAP should:

- Cover a specified timeframe
- Be proactive
- Specify the incident objectives
- State the activities to be completed
- Assign responsibilities
- Identify needed resources
- Specify communication protocols

For smaller/less complex incidents, the IAP may be oral or written, except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP. FEMA has developed a series of ICS Forms for use in developing a written IAP.

Manageable Span of Control

Depending on your role within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure, you may be asked to manage the activities of others.

Span of control refers to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident. The optimal span of control is one supervisor to five subordinates (1:5). However, effective incident management may require ratios significantly different from this. This ratio is a guideline--incident personnel should use their best judgement to determine the appropriate ratio for an incident.

If too much responsibility is given to the supervisor, the span of control may become unmanageable. A manageable span of control on incidents may actually vary depending upon the type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources.

Maintaining a manageable span of control is particularly important at incidents where safety and accountability are a top priority.

Incident Facilities and Locations

Depending upon the incident size and complexity, various types of support facilities may be established by Incident Command. These designated facilities typically include:

- Incident Command Post (ICP)
- Incident base, staging areas, and camps
- Mass casualty triage areas
- Point-of-distribution
- Emergency shelters

Comprehensive Resource Management

Comprehensive Resource Management describes standard mechanisms to identify requirements, order and acquire, mobilize, track and report, demobilize, and reimburse and restock resources such as personnel, teams, facilities, equipment and supplies.

Key resource management activities include:

- Resource Identification and Typing
- Qualification, Certification and Credentialing Personnel
- Planning for Resources
- Acquiring, Storing and Inventorying Resources

Integrated Communications

Incident communications are facilitated through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communication processes and systems that include voice and data links.

Integrated Communications are necessary to:

- Maintain connectivity
- Achieve situational awareness
- Facilitate information sharing

Establishment and Transfer of Command

The command function should be clearly established at the beginning of an incident. The jurisdiction or organization with primary responsibility for the incident designates the Incident Commander and the process for transferring command.

Transfer of command may occur during the course of an incident. When command is transferred, the process should include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.

Unified Command

In a Unified Command there is no single "Commander." Instead the Unified Command manages the incident through jointly approved objectives. Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

Unified Command is typically established when no single jurisdiction, agency or organization has the authority and/or resources to manage the incident on its own. This can include incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement.

Chain of Command

Chain of command is an orderly line that details how authority flows through the hierarchy of the incident management organization. Chain of command:

- Allows an Incident Commander to direct and control the actions of all personnel on the incident.
- Avoids confusion by requiring that orders flow from supervisors.

Chain of command does NOT prevent personnel from directly communicating with each other to ask for or share information. While formal direction and control follows the chain of command, informal information sharing occurs throughout the ICS structure.

Unity of Command

While chain of command relates to the overall hierarchy of the organization, unity of command deals with the fact that all individuals have a single designated supervisor they report to.

Based on the principle of unity of command, you will:

- Report to only one Incident Command System (ICS) supervisor.
- Receive work assignments only from your ICS supervisor.

When you are assigned to an incident, you no longer report directly to your day-to-day supervisor. In fact, there is no correlation between the ICS organization and the administrative structure of any single agency or jurisdiction. This is deliberate, because confusion over different position titles and organizational structures has been a significant stumbling block to effective incident management in the past.

While chain of command and unity of command are applied in all incidents, the actual command structure itself and the responsibilities of those involved change based on the type of incident and your specific role.

Accountability

Effective accountability during incident operations is essential. As part of the Incident Command System (ICS) structure, you will need to abide by agency policies and guidelines and any applicable local, tribal, state, or Federal rules and regulations.

There are several principles you will need to adhere to:

- **Check-In/Check-Out.** All responders must report in to receive an assignment. Checking out is just as critical as checking in.
- **Incident Action Planning.** Response operations must be coordinated as outlined in the Incident Action Plan.
- **Unity of Command.** Each individual will be assigned to only one supervisor.
- **Personal Responsibility.** ICS relies on each individual taking personal accountability for his or her own actions.
- **Span of Control.** Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
- **Resource Tracking.** Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur. Accountability starts as soon as a resource is requested through the time that the resource returns to their home base safely.

Dispatch/Deployment

Resources should be deployed only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority through established resource management systems.

Resources not requested should refrain from self-dispatching to avoid overburdening the incident command.

Information and Intelligence Management

Information and intelligence are important in the Incident Command System (ICS).

Incident management must establish a process for gathering, analyzing, assessing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence. In NIMS, "intelligence" refers exclusively to threat-related information developed by law enforcement, medical surveillance, and other investigative organizations.

Information and intelligence may be gathered from a variety of sources, including:

- 911 calls
- Radio, video and data communications among responders
- Situation Reports (SITREPS)
- Technical specialists from organizations such as the National Weather Service
- Reports from field observers
- Geospatial products, such as GIS, etc.
- Print, online, broadcast, and social media
- Risk assessments
- Terroristic or violent threats
- Surveillance of disease outbreaks
- Structural plans and vulnerabilities

Lesson 2 Summary

You have completed the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics lesson.

This lesson introduced:

- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Management by Objectives
- Incident Action Planning
- Manageable Span of Control
- Incident Facilities and Locations
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Integrated Communications
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Unified Command
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Accountability
- Dispatch/Deployment
- Information and Intelligence Management

The next lesson will provide an overview of the ICS Functional Areas and introduce the roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.



Lesson 3 Overview

This lesson introduces you to the Incident Command System (ICS) Functional Areas and roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff. By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify the five major ICS functional areas.
- Describe the role of the Incident Commander.
- Describe the selection of and transfer of command between Incident Commanders.
- Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff.
- Describe the roles of the Command Staff.
- Differentiate between incident command and incident coordination.



ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles

Every incident requires that certain functional areas be implemented. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it must be developed and implemented, and the necessary resources must be procured and paid for.

Regardless of the size of the incident, these functional areas are all required.

In case you ever need to assist with an incident, you should understand how the management structure is constructed using the Incident Command System (ICS). This will help you understand your role in the structure and how you may receive information and assignments.

This lesson focuses on the five major functional areas and the Command Staff roles. The General Staff roles will be discussed in the next lesson.

Five Major ICS Functional Areas

There are five major Incident Command System (ICS) functional areas that are the foundation on which an incident management organization develops.

These functions apply to incidents of all sizes and types, including both planned events and ones that occur without warning.

If you are in an incident and hear these terms, it's important for you to know what they mean. For instance, you may be directed to provide documents to the Planning Section or receipts to the Finance/Administration Section.

ICS Functional Area Descriptions

Incident Command: Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities, and has overall responsibility for the incident.

Operations: Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes tactics and directs all operational resources.

Planning: Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.

Logistics: Arranges for resources and needed services to support achievement of the incident objectives (resources can include personnel, equipment, teams, supplies, and facilities).

Finance/Administration: Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Intelligence/Investigations Function in ICS

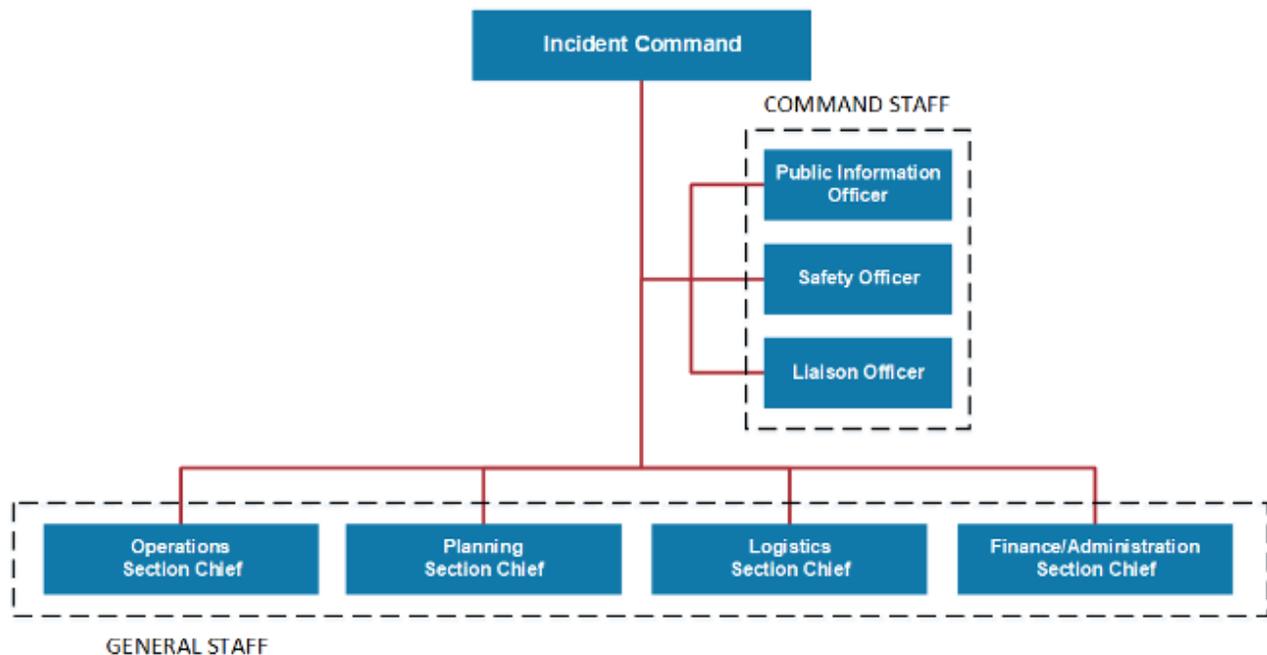
Intelligence/Investigations (I/I) is a sixth ICS function identified in NIMS. The Intelligence / Investigations function can be established to collect, analyze, and disseminate incident-related information and intelligence for incidents involving intensive intelligence gathering

and investigative activity (such as a criminal or terrorist act, or epidemiological, accident or mass fatality investigation).

When I/I is required, the Incident Command/Unified Command can place the I/I function in multiple locations within the incident command structure based on factors such as the nature of the incident, the level of I/I activity, and the relationship of I/I to other incident activities.

ICS Structure

The standard Incident Command System (ICS) organizational structure is shown here. Incident Command, which could be a single Incident Commander or a Unified Command, will lead the effort and, as needed, assign Command Staff and General Staff. For the remainder of this lesson, we will discuss the Incident Command function and the members of the Command Staff.



Incident Command Definition

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) defines **command** as the act of directing, ordering, or controlling by virtue of explicit statutory, regulatory, or delegated authority.

When you are using the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage an incident, an **Incident Commander** is assigned. The Incident Commander has the authority to establish objectives, make assignments, and order resources. To achieve these ends, the Incident Commander works closely with staff and technical experts to analyze the situation and consider alternative strategies.

The Incident Commander should have the training, experience, and expertise to serve in this capacity. Qualifications to serve as an Incident Commander should not be based solely on rank, grade, or technical knowledge.

Incident Commander

Let's begin by taking a closer look at the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is responsible for the overall management of the incident. Overall management includes Command Staff assignments required to support the incident command function. **The Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications.** On small incidents and events, one person—the Incident Commander—may accomplish all management functions.

Incident Commander Responsibilities

In addition to having the overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring overall incident safety
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders, such as disaster survivors, agency executives, and senior officials
- Establishing and maintaining liaisons with other agencies participating in the incident

The Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies. If a Deputy is assigned, he or she should be fully qualified to assume the Incident Commander's position.

Selecting or Changing Incident Commanders

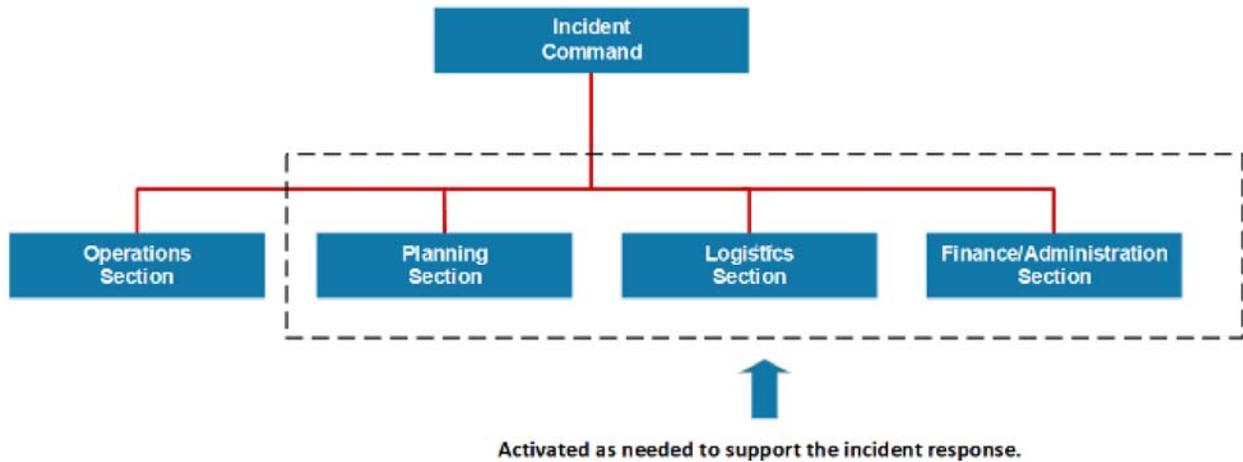
The command function should be clearly established at the beginning of an incident. The jurisdiction or organization with primary responsibility for an incident designates the individual at the scene who is responsible for establishing command and the protocol for transferring command. As an incident becomes more or less complex, command may change to meet the needs of the incident.

When command is transferred, the process should include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.

Delegating Incident Management Responsibilities

The Incident Commander is responsible for all Incident Command System (ICS) functional areas until he or she delegates a function. Since the ICS organization is modular, it has the ability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. During a larger incident, the Incident Commander may create sections and delegate the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration responsibilities. For very small, routine, or short-duration incidents, it is possible that the Incident Commander will not establish any of

the Staff positions. In this case, the Incident Commander will personally manage all ICS functions.



The Incident Commander only creates those sections that are needed. If a section is not staffed, the Incident Commander will manage those functions.

ICS Command Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, the Incident Commander may designate personnel to provide information, safety, and liaison services. In the Incident Command System (ICS), the Command Staff may include:

- **Public Information Officer**, who interfaces with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements.
- **Safety Officer**, who monitors incident operations and advises the Incident Commander on all matters relating to safety, including the health and safety of incident management personnel.
- **Liaison Officer**, who serves as the Incident Commander's point of contact for representatives of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private-sector organizations.

Incident Commanders may also choose to appoint technical specialists (such as legal, medical, science and technology, or access and functional needs) to act as command advisors.

The Command Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander. In a complex incident, Assistant Officers may be assigned to each of the Command Staff functions.

Command Staff Overview - Video

[Transcript](#)

Incident Coordination

Now that we've discussed the Command Staff roles, let's take a look at how the overall incident is coordinated.

Coordination involves the activities that ensure the onsite Incident Command System (ICS) organization receives the information, resources, and support needed to achieve those incident objectives. Coordination takes place in a number of entities and at all levels of government. Examples of coordination activities include:

- Establishing policy based on interactions with agency executives, other agencies, and stakeholders.
- Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information to support the establishment of shared situational awareness.
- Establishing priorities among incidents.
- Resolving critical resource issues.
- Facilitating logistics support and resource tracking.
- Synchronizing public information messages to ensure that everyone is speaking with one voice.

Let's take a look at how this coordination happens.

Command and Coordination

Effective incident management consists of four overarching areas of responsibility:

1. Direct tactical response to save lives, stabilize the incident, and protect property and the environment
2. Incident support through resource acquisition, information gathering, and interagency coordination
3. Policy guidance and senior level decision making
4. Outreach and communication with the media and public to keep them informed about the incident

These objectives are accomplished through the use of the Incident Command System (ICS), Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), Multi-agency Coordination (MAC) Groups, and the Joint Information System (JIS), respectively.

The Command and Coordination component of NIMS defines these structures and explains how various elements operating at different levels of incident management interface to achieve the maximum effect through a shared understanding.

Emergency Operations Center Role

Jurisdictions and organizations across the Nation use Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) as an element of their emergency management programs.

Typically, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) supports the on-scene response by relieving the Incident Commander of the burden of external coordination and the responsibility for securing additional resources.

An EOC is:

- A physical or virtual location where staff from multiple agencies come together to address imminent threats and hazards
- Staffed with personnel trained for, and authorized to, represent their agency/discipline
- Equipped with mechanisms for communicating with the incident site
- Providing support to the incident by obtaining resources
- Applicable at different levels of government

EOCs may be established at the Federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local levels.

If you are from a non-governmental organization (NGO) or from the private sector, you may be asked to assist at the EOC to assess a situation, provide advice, and make recommendations based on your knowledge and professional expertise.

Joint Information Center

Another coordination entity is the Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC:

- May be established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities
- Serves as the central point of contact for all news media—when possible, public information officials from all participating agencies should co-locate at the JIC

JICs may be established at various levels of government and at incident sites. Depending on your role in the incident, you may need to direct individuals or organizations to the JIC to obtain information.

Lesson 3 Summary

This lesson introduced you to the:

- Five major Incident Command System (ICS) Functional Areas
- ICS organizational structure
- Incident Commander roles and responsibilities
- Selection and transfer of Incident Commanders
- Command Staff roles and responsibilities
- Differences between incident command and incident coordination

The next lesson provides an introduction to the ICS General Staff Roles.

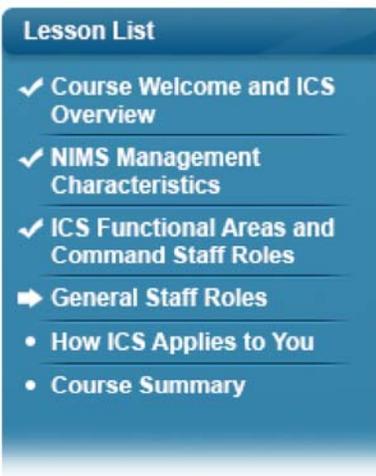
A blue vertical menu titled "Lesson List" with a gradient background. It contains six items: "Course Welcome and ICS Overview", "NIMS Management Characteristics", "ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles", "General Staff Roles", "How ICS Applies to You", and "Course Summary". The first three items have a white checkmark icon to their left, and the last three have a white circle icon.

Lesson List	
✓	Course Welcome and ICS Overview
✓	NIMS Management Characteristics
✓	ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles
•	General Staff Roles
•	How ICS Applies to You
•	Course Summary

Lesson 4 Overview

In the previous lesson, you learned that the Command Staff supports the Incident Commander who is responsible for overall management of the incident. This lesson introduces you to the General Staff. By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

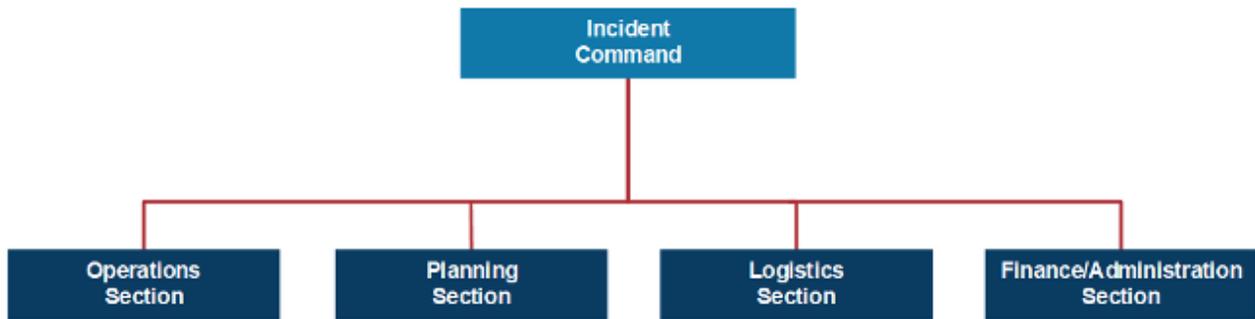
- Identify the Incident Command System (ICS) titles used for General Staff members.
- Describe the major activities of the four general staff sections.

A blue vertical menu titled "Lesson List" with a gradient background. It contains six items: "Course Welcome and ICS Overview", "NIMS Management Characteristics", "ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles", "General Staff Roles", "How ICS Applies to You", and "Course Summary". The first three items have a white checkmark icon to their left, "General Staff Roles" has a white right-pointing arrow icon, and the last two have a white circle icon.

Lesson List	
✓	Course Welcome and ICS Overview
✓	NIMS Management Characteristics
✓	ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles
➔	General Staff Roles
•	How ICS Applies to You
•	Course Summary

General Staff

To maintain span of control, the Incident Commander may establish any or all of the following four sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.



The person in charge of each section is designated as a Section Chief. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their sections to meet the needs of the situation. As shown here, they report directly to the Incident Commander. Let's take a closer look at these General Staff positions.

General Staff Overview

In an expanding incident, the Incident Commander first establishes the Operations Section. The remaining sections are established as needed to support the operation.

[Transcript](#)

Operations Section

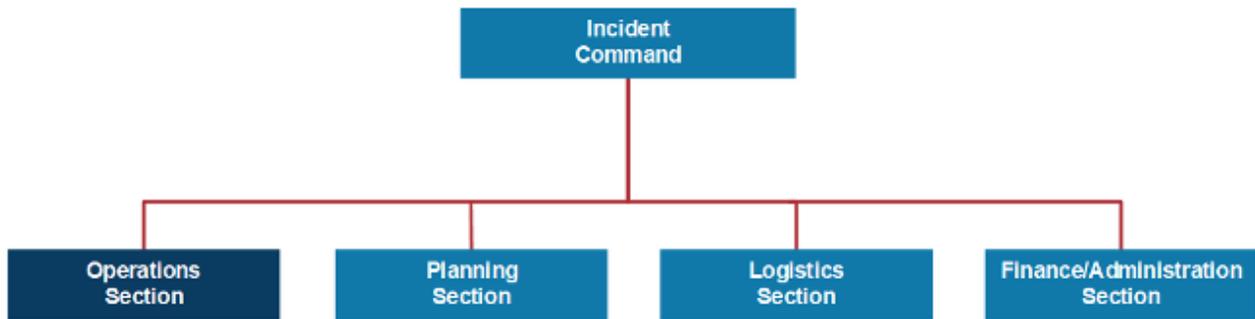
The Incident Commander determines whether there is a need for an Operations Section and, if so, will designate an Operations Section Chief. It is up to the Operations Section Chief to activate any additional staffing that is needed. When the Operations Section Chief is designated, the staging and management of operational resources moves from the Incident Command to Operations.

If no Operations Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all operations functions.

Operations Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Operations Section may include:

- Implementing strategies and developing tactics to carry out the incident objectives
- Directing the management of all tactical activities on behalf of the Incident Commander
- Supporting the development of the Incident Action Plan to ensure it accurately reflects current operations
- Organizing, assigning, and supervising the tactical response resources



Planning Section

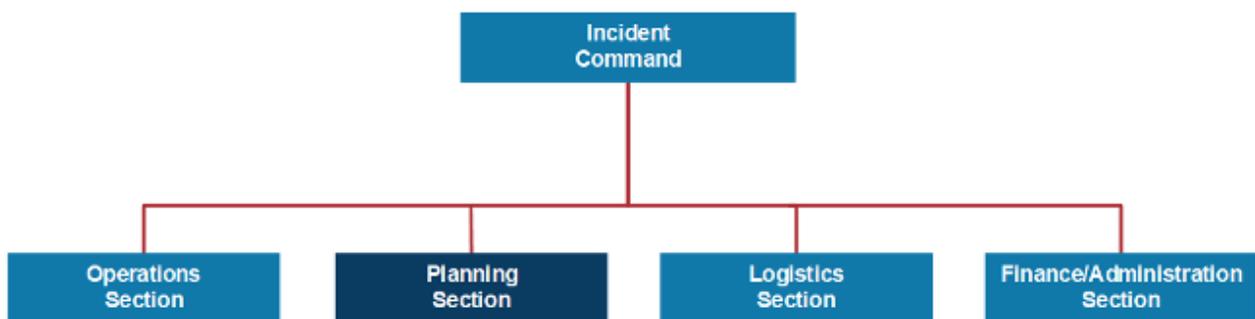
The Planning Section Chief is designated only after the Incident Commander determines whether there is a need for a Planning Section. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any additional staffing that is needed.

The Incident Commander will perform all planning functions if no Planning Section is established.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans
- Managing information and maintaining situational awareness for the incident
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident
- Maintaining incident documentation
- Developing plans for demobilization



Logistics Section

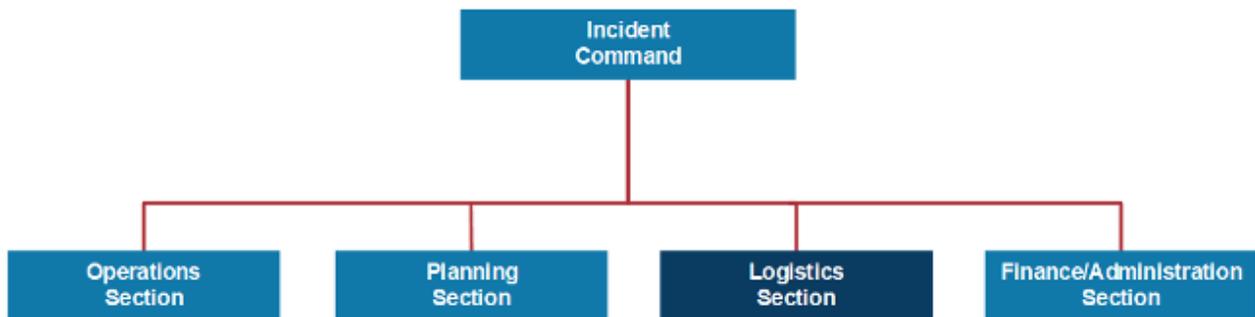
The Logistics Section Chief is designated only after the Incident Commander determines whether there is a need for a Logistics Section. It is up to the Logistics Section Chief to activate any additional staffing that is needed.

The Incident Commander will perform all logistics functions if no Logistics Section is established.

Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all services and support needs, including:

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies
- Providing communication planning and resources
- Setting up food services for responders
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities
- Providing support transportation
- Providing medical services to incident personnel



Finance/Administration Section

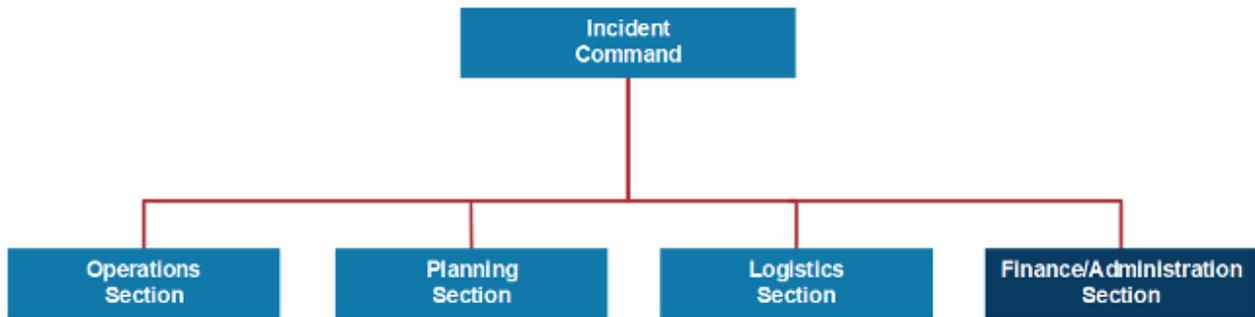
The Incident Commander determines whether there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident; if so, the Incident Commander will designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

The Time, Compensation/Claims, Cost, and Procurement Units may be established within this section.

Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Contract negotiation and monitoring
- Timekeeping
- Cost analysis
- Compensation for injury or damage to property
- Documentation for reimbursement (e.g., under mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements)



ICS for Your Discipline

Select one of the links below for an overview of ICS in your discipline. Other links will be added as they become available.

Each link will open an Adobe PDF file, which you can then print or download.

Select this link to view ICS for Public Works .
Select this link to view ICS for Schools .
Select this link to view ICS for Utilities .

Lesson 4 Summary

This lesson introduced you to:

- The Incident Command System (ICS) roles of the General Staff.
- The major activities of the four ICS General Staff sections.

The next lesson focuses on how the ICS applies to you and your agency or organization.

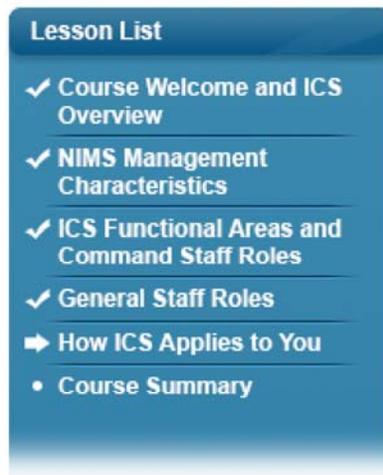


Lesson 5 Overview

In this lesson you will be given an opportunity to apply information presented in the previous lessons. You will be given a scenario involving flooding and you will be asked to select which NIMS Management Characteristics are demonstrated throughout the scenario.

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify how the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics apply in specific roles.
- Identify how the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics apply in specific situations.



Emerald City Flood Scenario

It has been raining heavily for the past seven days in Emerald City. The Emerald City and Liberty County Emergency Management offices are preparing for a response to a possible flood situation. Residents are starting to ask questions about the rising river and lake levels, and are wondering if they will need to leave their homes.

Knowledge Check 18



Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.

Scenario: You are an American Red Cross Disaster Program Specialist in charge of teams trained to help in sheltering displaced persons. You have been notified by your office to be prepared to deploy to conduct shelter operations. Your supervisor has asked you to come to the office to begin organizing volunteers and get prepared to set up shelters, if tasked. You check in before you begin.

What NIMS Management Characteristic are you supporting?

- Modular Organization
- Incident Action Planning
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Accountability

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 19

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below, select the correct answers, then select Check.

Scenario:



- You are a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist who normally works at the Public Works Planning office.
- You are directed to report to the Incident Command Post (ICP) and have been assigned to the Planning Section Chief and will report to her.
- You will be producing maps to display potential flooding impacts in the city and county.

What NIMS Management Characteristics are you supporting? Select the two characteristics that apply.

- Integrated Communications
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Accountability
- Dispatch/Deployment
- Information and Intelligence Management

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 1

Raining has continued for three more days and the flooding is expected to reach its highest point today. The flooding has caused residents to evacuate their homes in anticipation of rising floodwaters. Basement flooding to the first-floor level is anticipated.

The local Nursing Home is assessing the situation to determine if an evacuation of residents is necessary.

The Liaison Officer, with the support of the Public Information Officer, is in contact with business owners to determine if any of their stored chemicals will be affected by the flooding, causing possible contamination downstream.

Based upon previous floods, it is a high priority to establish shelters for evacuees early on. The Emergency Operation Plan pre-identified the following shelters: Lawrence College Auditorium and Lafayette Middle School.

Due to the complexity of the incident, the Incident Commander has expanded the Operations Section to include an Evacuation Group. The Evacuation Group Supervisor immediately contacts the Lawrence College President and the Lafayette Middle School Principal to begin the process of establishing shelters in those facilities.

Knowledge Check 20

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.



Scenario: You are the American Red Cross liaison in the Emergency Operation Center and you print up a list of the location of materials necessary to outfit the shelters. Materials stored in both facilities are adequate to meet the initial needs. Both the College and the Middle School are implementing their respective plans and are establishing necessary staffing to support the shelter requirements.

What NIMS Management Characteristic is being demonstrated?

- Modular Organization
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Dispatch/Deployment

[Check](#)

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 21

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.



Scenario: Due to the complexity of the incident, the Incident Commander has expanded the Operations Section to include an Evacuation Group.

What NIMS Management Characteristic is being demonstrated?

- Modular Organization
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Dispatch/Deployment

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 22

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below, select the correct answers, then select Check.

Scenario:



- You are the City Fire Chief and are evaluating the supervisory structure needed to manage the Incident Command Post staff.
- You are also identifying senior representatives from the Health Care community and from Public Works to help develop objectives to protect the residents of the nursing home and the critical water resources of the community.

Select the three NIMS Management Characteristics you are supporting.

- Incident Facilities and Locations
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Unified Command
- Accountability
- Dispatch/Deployment
- Information and Intelligence Management

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 2

The Evacuation Group is reporting that homeowners are beginning to move their families out of the area. The American Red Cross has opened two shelters, one at the Lawrence College Auditorium and one at the Lafayette Middle School.

The Nursing Home is attempting to move 55 patients from their skilled nursing care facility and is asking for assistance from Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Department, and the School Bus Company.

Acme Chemical is reporting first-floor flooding of their chemical processing plant. They are not reporting any chemical release but are closely monitoring their facility.

Calls are coming into the Emergency Operations Center from concerned citizens wondering about the safety of the municipal drinking water. Additional concerns about the wellbeing of water fowl and fish in the river and lake are being voiced because tourism, fishing, and hunting are a major part of the economy in the area.

Additional resources are needed for evacuation, sheltering, sandbagging, water level and chemical monitoring, traffic control, and scene security at other Incident Command Posts. Several media helicopters have arrived in the area to film the ongoing operations.

Knowledge Check 23

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer(s).

General Staff immediately come together and begin developing strategies. General Staff Chiefs are:



- Evaluating staffing and supervisory needs in the Incident Command Post.
- Identifying resource shortfalls.
- Updating planning documents.

What NIMS Management Characteristics are you supporting? Select all that apply.

- Common Terminology
- Management by Objectives
- Incident Action Planning
- Manageable Span of Control
- Unified Command
- Accountability

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 24



Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer(s).

Scenario: You are the Operations Section Chief at the Incident Command Post and request that all response communications be conducted using a pre-

determined set of frequencies. You also remind everyone in the field to use plain language.

What NIMS Management Characteristics are you supporting? Select all that apply.

- Common Terminology
- Management by Objectives
- Incident Action Planning
- Integrated Communications
- Unified Command
- Accountability

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 25

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.



Scenario: The Operations Section has determined that the Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Department, and the School Bus Company will be assigned to the evacuation of the Nursing Home. They will all converge at City Hall and will be dispatched, as appropriate, to begin the rapid and safe movement of the residents to their temporary shelter locations.

What NIMS Management Characteristic is being demonstrated?

- Modular Organization
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Dispatch/Deployment

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 3

The nursing home's emergency plan calls for relocating residents with acute medical care needs to the Community Hospital. Residents without acute medical needs will be sheltered.

The American Red Cross, in collaboration with the Salvation Army, are managing the shelters and providing food for displaced residents.

The Public Works Department and the Health Department are monitoring the water intake at the Water Treatment Plant for signs of chemical contamination. Public Works crews are placing sandbags to protect the Water Treatment Plant.

Knowledge Check 26

Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.



Scenario: You are the President of Lawrence College. You and the American Red Cross Shelter Manager have contacted the Incident Command Post concerning the ability to meet the nutritional and long term pharmaceutical needs of the elderly residents. The Liaison Officer requests assistance from the Emergency Operations Center.

What NIMS Management Characteristic is being demonstrated?

- Modular Organization
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Establishment and Transfer of Command
- Dispatch/Deployment

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 27



Instructions: Read the scenario and question below, select the correct answer (s), then select Check.

Scenario:

- You are the Middle School Principal.
- You and the Shelter Manager notify the Incident Command Post that several people are complaining of severe stomach cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting.
- You ask for assistance from medical and public health personnel.
- You also request additional sanitation supplies, bedding, and bathing materials.
- The Operations Section Chief is requesting additional assistance from the Emergency Operations Center for a specialized monitoring team to be deployed to the shelter to survey for a possible outbreak. Survey results will be shared with Health and Public Works departments.

What NIMS Management Characteristics are you supporting? Select all that apply.

- Common Terminology
- Modular Organization
- Incident Action Planning
- Integrated Communications
- Unified Command
- Information and Intelligence Management

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 4

(Scroll to the bottom of the page to see the link for audio narration.)

The river levels have steadily receded and residential property owners are anxious and attempting to return to their properties. Public Utility Crews are assisting City Building Inspection crews in the inspection of evacuated homes for safety and structural integrity before allowing residents to move back in. Drinking water qualities are being monitored and cleanup and damage assessment activities are beginning.

The American Red Cross and Salvation Army report that most evacuees have found longer-term temporary housing. Very few evacuees remain in their shelters, and shelters are anticipated to be closing soon.

Emerald City Health Department personnel, along with representatives from the County and the State Health Departments, are monitoring the water intakes and the city drinking water for any signs of contamination. Nothing significant has been detected so far. The County Health Department is also monitoring private wells as requested by the landowners.

The Nursing Home reports that water has receded from their building and that they are beginning cleanup procedures. They expect to finish their cleanup, including mandatory inspections by the State Health Department, within a week.

Because the activities are shifting from response to recovery, the mayor of Emerald City has asked the Incident Commander to prepare to demobilize and transfer command of the incident to a Unified Command consisting of Emergency Management, the Emerald City Health Department, and the Emerald City Department of Public Works.

The newly formed Unified Command will focus on restoring essential services, providing a safe re-entry for displaced residents, and completing a thorough damage assessment. The transfer of command will take place at the end of the next operational period.

Knowledge Check 28



Instructions: Read the scenario and question below, select the correct answer (s), then select Check.

Scenario:

- As phasedown of shelter operations has begun, the American Red Cross Disaster Operations Supervisor has directed you to begin re-assigning shelter staff personnel and release those that are no longer required.
- As a supervisor, you direct released staff to checkout.

What NIMS Management Characteristics are you supporting? Select all that apply.

- Modular Organization
- Incident Facilities and Locations
- Unified Command
- Chain of Command and Unity of Command
- Accountability
- Information and Intelligence Management

Check

Tries Remaining: 2

Knowledge Check 29



Instructions: Read the scenario and question below; then select the correct answer.

Scenario: You are the Middle School Principal. As shelter operations are beginning to phase down, you continue to be concerned about the illness suffered by the residents of your facility, which was confirmed to be a food borne illness from donated food. Since school will resume soon, you want to reassure school staff and parents that there are no residual risks. You request the newly formed Unified Command for a public information broadcast and a representative from the Health Department to share information regarding the illness and be available to answer questions.

What NIMS Management Characteristic is being demonstrated?

- Modular Organization
- Comprehensive Resource Management
- Dispatch/Deployment
- Information and Intelligence Management

Check

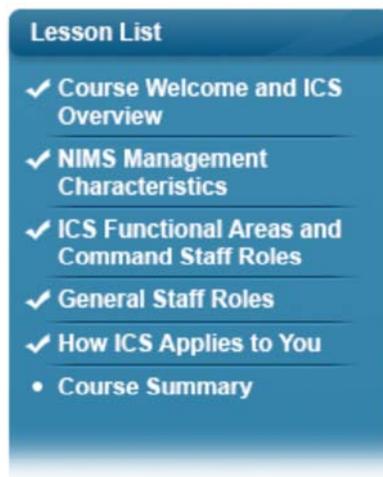
Tries Remaining: 2

Lesson 5 Summary

You have now completed the Lesson 5.

In this lesson you have:

- Identified how the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics apply in specific roles
- Identified how the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics apply in specific situations



Course Summary

You have now completed this course.

You should now be able to:

- Explain the principles and basic structure of the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Describe the NIMS management characteristics that are the foundation of the ICS.
- Describe the ICS functional areas and the roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
- Describe the General Staff roles within ICS.
- Identify how NIMS management characteristics apply to ICS for a variety of roles and discipline areas.

Review the printable version of this course and continue to the next screen to receive instructions for taking the course exam.

Lesson List

- ✓ **Course Welcome and ICS Overview**
- ✓ **NIMS Management Characteristics**
- ✓ **ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles**
- ✓ **General Staff Roles**
- ✓ **How ICS Applies to You**
- ✓ **Course Summary**