CERT INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)

Course: IS-315

LEALMAN CERT
Community Emergency Response Team

Course Topics

1. Overview of ICS
2. ICS Operations
3. ICS Principles
4. Working with the Media
5. Transferring Command
6. Effective Communications

What is ICS?

- It is a systematic tool used for the command, control, and coordination of emergency response.
- It is a changeable, scalable response organization where people can work together effectively, even from multiple agencies
- It is a "first-on-scene" structure, where the first responder of a scene has charge of the scene until the incident has been declared resolved, a more qualified responder arrives on scene and receives command, or the Incident Commander appoints another individual Incident Commander

Why Is the ICS important

- Maintain the safety of disaster workers

- Provide clear leadership and organizational structure

- Improve the effectiveness of rescue efforts

ICS Flexibility

- The Incident Command System is flexible so that it can expand or contract depending on the ongoing assessment priorities and the people and resources available.
- This expansion and contraction helps ensure:
  - Rescuer safety
  - Doing the greatest good for the greatest number
  - A manageable span of control
  - Accountability of CERT members

What Happens When There is No ICS?

Without using ICS during a CERT response, the team can break down because of:

- Poor communication
- No accountability
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure
- No predefined methods to effectively integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process

In a disaster situation, the CERT:

- Identifies the scope of the incident (What is the problem?)
- Determines an overall strategy (What can we do, and how will we do it?)
- Deploys teams and resources (Who is going to do what?)
- Documents actions and results

ICS Roles and Responsibilities

There are five major management functions of the incident command system:

- Incident Commander/Team Leader (IC/TL)
- Operations
- Logistics
- Planning
- Finance & Administration
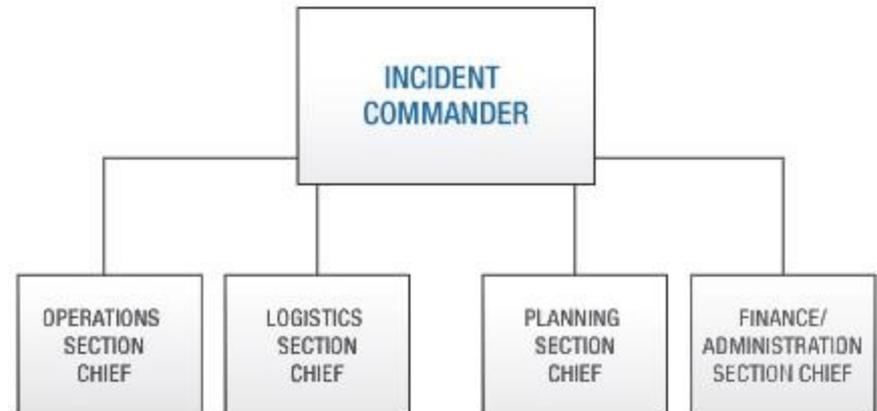
Incident Commander/Team Leader

Provides overall leadership for incident response. The CERT IC/TL's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring incident safety
- Establishing incident objectives
- Delegating authority to others
- Providing information to internal and external parties
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other responders (e.g., fire, law enforcement, public works, other CERTs)
- Taking direction from agency officials

CERT Operations Section Chief

Directs and coordinates all incident tactical operations such as:

- Medical operations
- Search and rescue
- Traffic management

It is typically one of the first functions to be assigned.

INCIDENT COMMANDER

OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

LOGISTICS SECTION CHIEF

PLANNING SECTION CHIEF

FINANCE/ ADMINISTRATION SECTION CHIEF
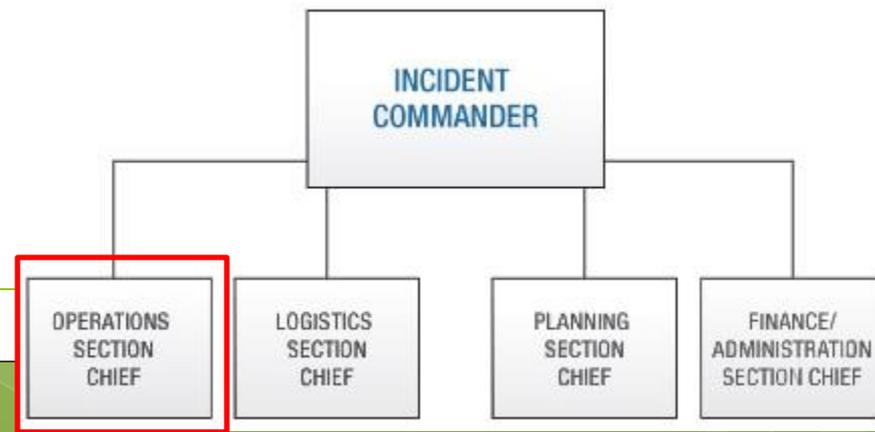
CERT Logistics Chief

- Provides communications
- Provides food and medical support to Team members
- Manages supplies and facilities
- Helps make sure that there are adequate resources (personnel, supplies, and equipment) for meeting the incident objectives.

INCIDENT COMMANDER

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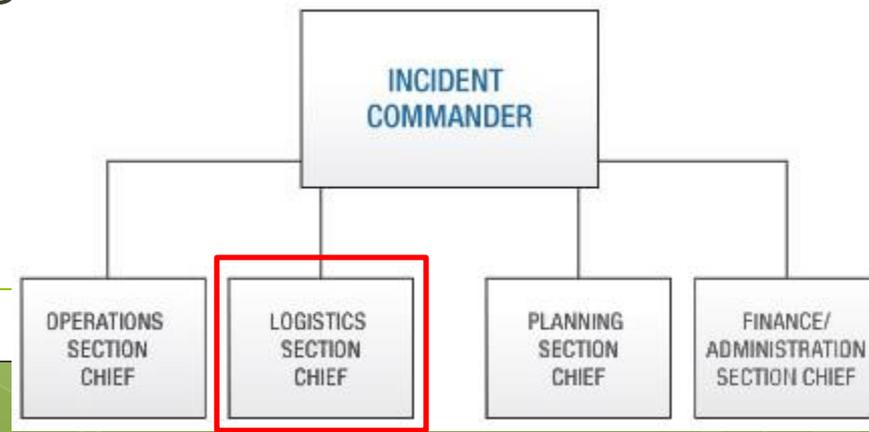
CERT Planning Chief

- Tracks situation status
- Prepares the team's action plan
- Develops alternative strategies
- Provides documentation services
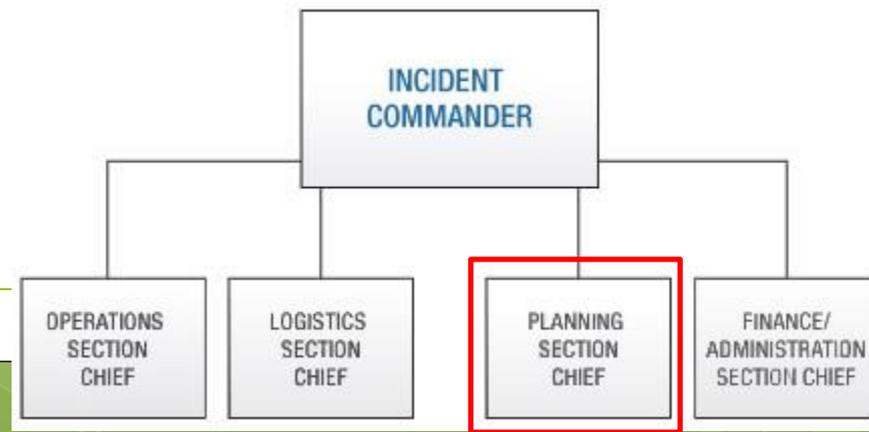
CERT Finance/Administration Chief

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

- Contract negotiation and monitoring
- Timekeeping
- Cost analysis
- Compensation for injury or damage to property
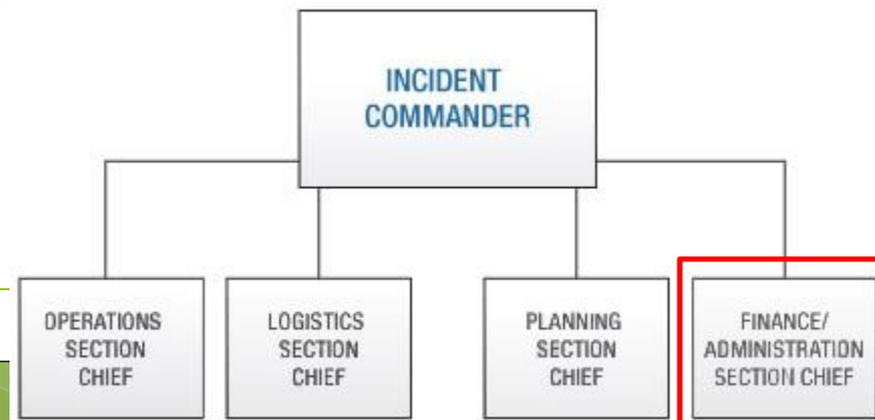
ICS Principles

1. Common Terminology - A core principle of ICS is to use common terminology with everyone involved in managing an incident.

2. Well-Defined Management Structure –

- All CERTs must establish a management, or command, structure.
  - The CERT Incident Commander/Team Leader (IC/TL) provides overall leadership for incident response and is responsible for all functions until he or she delegates them to someone else.
  - The first person who arrives at the pre-designated staging area assumes the role of CERT IC/TL.

ICS Principles

3. Manageable Span of Control – Span of control pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can effectively manage.

- An effective span of control may vary from three to seven with **five** being optimal.

- All CERT members report through a chain of command to the CERT IC/TL. This helps to prevent confusion. Personnel report to only one CERT supervisor and receive assignments only from that supervisor.
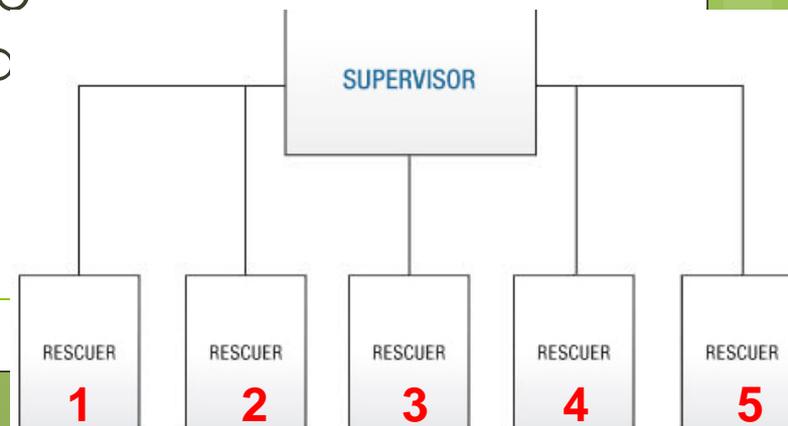
ICS Principles

4. Transfer of Command: The process of moving the responsibility of incident command from one CERT IC/TL to another is called transfer of command.

5. Comprehensive Resource Management - A resources refers to personnel, supplies, and equipment.

ICS Principles

6. Integrated Communications - Prior to an incident, response partners should work together to create a communications plan that includes information about communication equipment, procedures, and systems that partners will use together during a response.

7. Consolidated Action Plans - Every incident must have an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that coordinates strategic goals, tactical objectives, and support activities. Incident action plans may be oral or written.

ICS Principles

8. Accountability - Effective accountability during incident operations is essential.

- For all responders, including CERT members, the following principles must be adhered to:
  - Check In - to receive an assignment.
  - Unity of Command. Each individual will report to only one ICS supervisor and receive work assignments.
  - Span of Control. Supervisors must be able to communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.

Communicating with the Media

It is common for members of the local media to show up on the scene of an incident. This can be an important responsibility of the CERT IC/TL.

- Refer all media inquiries to the CERT IC/TL.

- The CERT IC/TL should then refer the media inquiries to the Public Information Officer (PIO) of your CERT's sponsoring organization.

- Different jurisdictions have different protocols, so it's important to understand what you should and should not report as a representative of your CERT.

Communicating with the Media

If there is no PIO, the CERT IC/TL should

- Refrain from addressing the media until doing so will no longer inhibit or delay the team's ability to do the greatest good for the greatest number in the shortest amount of time

- Establish an area for briefing the media

- Be careful about the information released. The CERT IC/TL should make sure it is both accurate and approved for release and also keep in mind victims' right to privacy

Communicating with the Media

The CERT IC/TL should NOT:

- Feel compelled to answer every question the media asks
- Comment on operations other than those of his or her own team

Transferring/Assuming Command

- May take place when:
  - A more qualified CERT IC/TL arrives and assumes command
  - A jurisdiction or agency assumes command
  - The incident changes in complexity

When transferring command, it is critical to always get a briefing from the outgoing CERT Incident Commander/Team Leader to avoid confusion or delays.

Upon assuming command

- Talk with each section chief to check on current activities and any immediate or emerging needs.
- Study the overall progress, as it is an important step before changing the plan of action

Effective Communications

- The CERT Incident Commander/Team Leader (CERT IC/TL) work with the CERT Operations Chief to ensure the individuals on a team have received appropriate training to respond to a particular incident.

- The CERT Incident Commander/Team Leader should work with the CERT Logistics Chief to ensure all team members have the appropriate equipment required to respond to that particular incident.

Effective Communications

- The CERT IC/TL should work closely with the EOC to ensure all urgent requests and needs are being properly addressed.

- Failure to communicate with the EOC could result in delays and lead to loss of life and property.

- Before closing an incident, the CERT IC/TL and the CERT Planning Chief should gather all documentation and ask for a status report from all CERT section chiefs. Documentation can include, Assignment Tracking Logs, Briefing Assignments, and Team Action Logs.

What would you do?

A small city has experienced a windstorm with speeds of 50-65 miles per hour for most of the afternoon. There have been reports of downed power lines, fallen trees, structural damage to houses and buildings, and injuries.

The winds have died down a bit as the evening rush hour is starting. Your CERT has been activated to help with the storm's aftermath

You are the first person there

Do you?

1. Assume the role of the CERT Incident Commander/Team Leader (CERT IC/TL)

2. Wait for the pre-designated CERT IC/TL to arrive.

What would you do?

You've assigned a CERT Logistics Chief to sign in team members as they arrive at the staging area when a team member reports structural damage to the command post.

Do you

1. Move the team to the back-up command post that your CERT pre-determined and leave a message for team members who have not yet arrived.

2. Immediately move on-site team to the back-up command post before the current one collapses.

What would you do?

You are the team leader for a Search and rescue team. Your CERT Operations Chief assigns you and your team to respond to a situation at a local mini-mall that has been damaged in the windstorm. The preliminary reports indicate that there are people injured on the scene due to shattered plate glass windows.

Do you

1. Head to the mini-mall with your team.
2. Review the Briefing Assignment, CERT Form #4a the CERT Operations Section Chief gives to you, before heading to the mall

Questions and Answers

- There is a test with 25 questions that must be passed in order to receive your IS-315 certificate. This course and test are online at: http://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-315

- A copy of this powerpoint, sample test questions, and CERT forms are located at: http://www.lealmancert.com/training.html http://www.lealmancert.com/sit-stat.html

Jeopardy