

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Incident Command System Job Aid Guide

“The success of all teams depends on team members’ attitudes towards the job as well as their ability to communicate with other team members.”

Qualities and Skillsets of Effective IMT Team Members

- Motivated and collaborative
- Familiar with ICS
- Leads, manages, and functions as a member of a diverse team
- Functions calmly in a high-stress environment
- Effectively delegates authority and tasks to meet objectives
- Sees service as an expression of responsibility

Agency Administrator: Chief executive officer (or designee) of the agency or jurisdiction that has responsibility for the incident. This is the person who gives the overall direction to the Incident Commander. For MDARD, this could be the Director, Chief Deputy Director, Deputy Director, Division Director, Deputy Division Director, Regional Supervisor, Program Manager, or Emergency Management Coordinator based on the size and scope of the incident.

Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site. ICs can use a four-step approach: 1) Know Agency Policy, 2) Establish Incident Objectives, 3) Develop Appropriate Strategy, and 4) Execute Tactical Direction.

Deputy Incident Commander: Person ready to step in and assume the IC role.

Qualities and Skillsets of an Effective IC:

- Thrives on interaction with others, strives to maintain positive relationships, and supports team members by giving them the tools they need to be successful
- Understands ICS and has command presence; bringing order to a chaotic situation
- Is a proven manager and is comfortable with directive communication and delegation, regardless of differences in day-to-day ranks vs. IMT roles
- Puts safety first and is willing and able to make tough decisions, using all information available to them to reach quick, decisive conclusions
- Proactive and decisive
- Actively listens and seeks out information from experts to aid in decision making

- Flexible and able to adapt plans on-the-fly based on rapidly changing situations
- Effectively manages time to ensure information flow and a regular cadence for updates
- Realistic about personal limitations
- Politically astute and understanding of authorities, parameters, and constraints

Command Staff: *The Command Staff consists of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander. They may have an Assistant or Assistants, as needed.*

Public Information Officer (PIO): Responsible for interfacing with the public and media or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The PIO will need assistance and support from the rest of the Department. Typical tasks include:

- Writing and editing talking points, fact sheets, press releases
- Conducting and coordinating media interviews
- Planning, coordinating and conducting press conferences, including virtual / social media / webinars
- Monitoring media and social media
- Creating / adapting content and posting on web & social media
- Internal communications, including materials for the call center

Qualities and Skillsets of an Effective PIO:

- Knows what's going on and joins in easily
- Stands out in situations that need common sense
- Nimble and able to think on the fly with all kinds of media
- Thrives on interactions with others
- Communicates clearly and concisely
- Politically astute
- Always has an ear to the ground

Safety Officer (SOFR): Responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations, and for developing measures for ensuring personnel safety. They can use emergency authority to stop any potentially unsafe actions. The Safety Officer may have Assistants, particularly in the field where operations are occurring.

Qualities and Skillsets of an Effective SOFR:

- Has technical expertise in safety directly related to the team's operations and workforce safety in general
- Demonstrates genuine concern for the health and safety of responders

- Willing and able to make tough and sometimes controversial decisions
- Maintains a proactive approach to safety in the incident and is present during key operational decisions, ensuring safety is a priority for the whole team
- Is decisive and tactful, as well as detail oriented

Liaison Officer (LOFR): Responsible for coordinating with representatives from other agencies and the private sector. The Liaison Officer may have Assistants. In some of our responses, the LOFR has as many if not more tasks to accomplish and would benefit from delegating liaison work so one person is not the primary point of contact for all stakeholder groups and partner agencies.

Qualities and Skillsets of an Effective LOFR:

- Has excellent interpersonal skills
- Understands risk communication, building consensus, and public relations
- Uses social skills and contacts to create and maintain effective relationships both within and outside the IMT
- Understands their organization and others
- Mediates, facilitates, and negotiates
- Adaptable, flexible and approachable

General Staff: *A group of incident management personnel organized according to function and reporting to the Incident Commander. The General Staff normally consists of the Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, and Finance/Administration Section Chief. These positions may have Deputies.*

Operations Section Chief (OSC): Responsible for all tactical (field) operations and procedures to meet the primary mission and objectives at the incident. Field operations can be divided up in many ways (see below) but all are under the oversight and direction of the OSC.

Deputy Operations Chief: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, could be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or perform a specific task. In some cases, a Deputy could act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position.

Operations may include various structures:

- **Branch:** The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions. The Branch level is organizationally between Section and Division/Group in the Operations Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman numerals or by functional name (e.g., medical, security, etc.).

- Division: Divisions are used to divide an incident into geographical areas of operation. A Division is located within the ICS organization between the Branch and the Task Force/Strike Team. Divisions are identified by alphabetic characters for horizontal applications and, often, by floor numbers when used in buildings.
- Group: Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division. Groups are located between Branches (when activated) and Resources in the Operations Section.
- Task Force: A combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need with common communications and a Leader.
- Strike Team / Resource Team: A specified combination of the same kind and type of resources with common communications and a Leader

Qualities and Skillsets of Effective Operations Section Staff

- Confident and have a natural tendency to assume command and control of groups
- Is a proven manager and leader with excellent interpersonal skills
- Use perception to sense details and current realities and insight to forecast meanings, patterns, and future possibilities
- Frank, decisive leaders who require little encouragement to make a plan to meet objectives
- Experienced in risk-based decision making, using all information available at the time
- Understands external issues and factors
- Ideally has operational expertise in the specific incident but can also use their training to think “out of the box”

Planning Section Chief (PSC): Responsible for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information related to the incident, and for the preparation and documentation of Incident Action Plans. The PSC has a close relationship to the Incident Commander (IC). The Section also maintains information on the current and forecasted situation, and on the status of resources assigned to the incident. Includes the Situation, Resources, Documentation, and Demobilization Units, as well as Technical Specialists.

Deputy Planning Chief: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, could be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or

perform a specific task. In some cases, a Deputy could act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position.

Planning may include the following units and positions:

- Situation Unit: Unit within the Planning Section responsible for the collection, organization, and analysis of incident status information, and for analysis of the situation as it progresses. Reports to the Planning Section Chief.
- Documentation Unit: Responsible for collecting, recording, and safeguarding all documents relevant to the incident.
- Resources Unit: Responsible for recording the status of resources committed to the incident. The Unit also evaluates resources currently committed to the incident, the impact that additional responding resources will have on the incident, and anticipated resource needs.
- Recorders: Individuals within ICS organizational units who are responsible for recording information.
- Demobilization Unit: Responsible for assuring orderly, safe, and efficient demobilization of incident resources.

Qualities and Skillsets of Effective Planning Section Staff:

- Organized and creative with a strong attention to detail
- Has “moxie,” and is persuasive; can get people who don’t report to them to get things done
- Sets schedules and deadlines to ensure the team meets goals and objectives, holds team members accountable
- Knows what needs to get done now and what can wait
- Uses knowledge of ICS and the planning cycle to bring order to the IMT
- Use perception to sense the current situation and insight to forecast future possibilities

Logistics Section Chief (LSC): Responsible for providing resources and other services to support incident management, including facilities, services, and materials

Deputy Logistics Chief: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, could be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or perform a specific task. In some cases, a Deputy could act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position.

Logistics:

- **Branch**: The organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of the Operations or Logistics functions. The Branch level is organizationally between Section and

Units in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman numerals or by functional name (e.g., medical, security, etc.).

- **Service Branch**: A Branch within the Logistics Section responsible for service activities at the incident. Includes the Communication, Medical, and Food Units.
 - **Communications Unit**: Responsible for providing the physical communication services and technology at an incident. A Communications Unit may also be a facility (e.g., a trailer or mobile van) used to provide the major part of an Incident Communications Center.
 - **Medical Unit**: Responsible for the development of the Medical Emergency Plan, and for providing emergency medical treatment of incident personnel.
 - **Food Unit**: Responsible for providing meals for incident personnel.
- **Support Branch**: Responsible for providing personnel, equipment, and supplies to support incident operations. Includes the Supply, Facilities, and Ground Support Units.
 - **Supply Unit**: Responsible for ordering equipment and supplies required for incident operations.
 - **Facilities Unit**: Provides fixed facilities for the incident. These facilities may include the Incident Base, feeding areas, sleeping areas, sanitary facilities, etc.
 - **Ground Support Unit**: Responsible for the fueling, maintaining, and repairing of vehicles, and the transportation of personnel and supplies.
- **Recorders**: Individuals within ICS organizational units who are responsible for recording information. Recorders may be found in Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Units.

Qualities and Skillsets of Effective Logistics Section Staff:

- Effective at establishing and using processes to keep people, resources, and supplies flowing within an incident
- A spontaneous and active “doer” that is good at on-the-spot problem solving
- Have a natural drive to complete tasks, including finding ways to make better processes and be one step ahead of the needs of the incident
- Strives to be one step ahead
- Understands financial, contractual, and other administrative details
- Organized and good at establishing processes to keep people, resources, and supplies moving

Finance/Administration Section Chief (FSC): Responsible for all incident costs and financial considerations. Includes the Time Unit, Procurement Unit, Compensation/Claims Unit, and Cost Unit.

Deputy Finance Chief: A fully qualified individual who, in the absence of a superior, could be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or perform a specific task. In some cases, a Deputy could act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position.

Finance:

- **Compensation/Claims Unit:** Responsible for financial concerns resulting from property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident.
- **Cost Unit:** Responsible for tracking costs, analyzing cost data, making cost estimates, and recommending cost-saving measures.
- **Procurement Unit:** Responsible for financial matters involving vendor contracts.
- **Time Unit:** Responsible for recording time for incident personnel and hired equipment.
- **Recorders:** Individuals within ICS organizational units who are responsible for recording information. Recorders may be found in Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Units.

Qualities and Skillsets of Effective Finance Section Staff:

- Highly organized with a strong attention to detail
- Has an understanding of budget, financial policies and procedures, parameters and constraints
- Uses perception of the current situation, principles of finance, and logic and to account and forecast incident costs
- Effectively communicates financial and recordkeeping requirements to all team members
- Works closely with the Incident Commander to ensure all team actions are within delegation of authority and financial limitations

Technical Specialists: Personnel with special skills that can be used anywhere within the ICS organization.