A. Policy

The command function of the Incident Command System is the most critical function in managing the response to tactical incidents. The Incident Commander establishes the ICS organization needed to handle the event. Whether handled by only one person or a complex organization of components, command of the incident is responsible for ensuring the proper operating characteristics, the proper establishment of management components, and the proper structure of response entities throughout an incident. In larger, complex incidents, the Incident Commander manages the organization and not the actual incident itself.

B. Procedure

1. The ICS structure develops from the "first in unit" at any incident. The command function is always established. The Incident Command System is used for any pre- planned or emergency event. Based on the incident's management needs and department protocols, the Incident Commander is designated as soon as practicable.

2. In an ICS organization, incident command consists of the Incident Commander and various Command Staff positions. The Command Staff are specifically designated, report directly to the Incident Commander, and are assigned responsibility for key activities that are not a part of the General Staff functional elements. Three Command Staff positions are typically identified in ICS: PIO, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. The Incident Commander may assign technical specialists as additional command advisors, depending on the nature, scope, complexity, and location(s) of the incident(s), or according to specific needs the Incident Commander or Unified Command establishes.

3. The Incident Commander's tasks are to:

   a. Initiate or confirm through the communications center that personnel and resources sufficient for the incident have been notified and are being mobilized.

   b. Establish a single Command Post.

      1) Ensure that the command post, staging area, or other incident facilities are established, are properly located, and are functioning.

      2) The Command Post (CP) is the location from which all incident operations are directed. The CP is the location from which direction, control, coordination, and resource management are exerted over the incident. Ideally, the CP will typically house the:

      Incident Commander / Unified Command

      Command and General Staff

      Other designated incident personnel

3) In some incidents, however, housing all of these persons at the CP may not be practical. In this case, separate areas must be clearly designated for that incident. Separate areas may include staging areas, media (PIO) area, medical area, or decontamination area.

   c. Determine need for mutual aid support from other agencies or entities. Establish Unified Command if necessary.

   d. Establish the initial Communications Plan.

   e. Evaluate the hazard environment for safety of personnel. Assign Safety Officer.

   f. Provide emergency public safety information through the Public Information Officer (PIO) and establish a media information center and / or media zones.

   g. Establish and staff the ICS organization command staff as needed, to include: Public Information Officer, Intelligence Officer, and/ or Liaison Officer.

   h. Delegate authority as appropriate by appointing Section Chiefs and establishing sections for Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance based on current incident priorities.

   i. Determine the need for and placement of the Intelligence function within the ICS organization.

   j. Determine consolidated incident response objectives and approve/communicate the Incident Action Plan (IAP). In large-scale incidents, a written action plan should be considered as soon as possible. Written action plans must be prepared when incident response exceeds one operational (12 hours) period.

   k. Identify needed resources.

      1) Establishes a single system for ordering resources.

      2) Determine need for mutual aid support from other agencies or entities.

      3) Request Emergency Operations Center (EOC) support and / or Multi- Agency Coordination (MAC)

   l. Identify Contingencies.

   m. Plan for orderly demobilization.

   n. Capture lessons learned and best practices. Prepare a documented After-Action Report.