**RACES ICS Class**
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*What is the Incident Command System?*
ICS is the model tool for command, control, and coordination of a response to an incident. By using a common management tool, individual agencies responding to an event may better coordinate the efforts of stabilizing the incident and protecting life, property, and the environment.
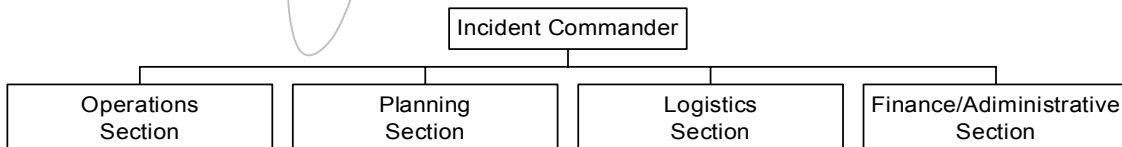
*History of ICS*
IC was developed in the 1970's in response to a series of wildfires in California. The response to the wildfires identified several problems associated with multiagency response including: nonstandard terminology, difficulty in communicating, and lack of consolidated action plans.

During this time local, state and federal fire authorities collaborated and formed the Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE) to address problems encountered during the wildfire response. FIRESCOPE created the foundation for modern day ICS.

*How is ICS organized?*
ICS organization is built around five major functions: command, operations, planning, logistics and finance/administration. These five components are the foundation upon which the ICS organization is formed. The structure is configured in a pyramid with command at the top of the pyramid and the other functions forming the base.



*The Command Function*
The incident commander, the person in charge of the incident, directs the command function. The responsibilities of command include: management of the incident, protection of life and property, control of resources, development and implementation of the incident action plan, development and control of the appropriate organizational structure, authorizing the release of information to the media, and tracking costs.

In a small event, the incident commander will manage several tasks. In a large event, specific activities may be delegated to other individuals to form a command staff.

*The Operations Section*
The operations section is responsible for the response activities outlined in the incident action plan. An operations section chief manages the operations section. The Operations

Section Chief is responsible for receiving and implementing the action plan. Other responsibilities include: direction, coordination and safety of operations personnel; assistance to the incident commander as requested; and request or release resources at the incident. The operations section chief reports to the incident commander. Should the situation warrant, the operations section chief may delegate responsibilities to other operations individuals and further divide the section into other organizational units.

*The Planning Section*
The planning section assists the incident commander is several functions. The planning section is primarily responsible for collection, evaluation, dissemination and information both about the incident and concerning associated resources. This section may also be involved in development of the incident action plan. The Incident Action Plan defines response activities and resource utilization for a specified time period. The planning section is managed by a planning section chief who reports directly to the incident commander. Should the situation warrant, the planning section chief may delegate responsibilities to other planning section individuals and further divide the section into organizational units.

*The Logistics Section*
The logistics section is responsible for providing facilities, services, materials, personnel or other resources necessary to manage the event. This section takes on great significance in long-term or extended operations. The logistics section is managed by a logistics chief who reports directly to the incident commander. The logistics section is further divided into task specific units (ex. Communications) geared to support the incident responders.

RACES falls under the logistics section – providing a valuable communications resource to the requesting entity.

*The Finance/Administrative Section*
The finance/administrative section tracks incident cost and maintains associated paperwork for reimbursement accounting. Unless costs and financial operations are carefully recorded and justified, reimbursement is next to impossible. The finance/administrative section is managed by a section chief who reports directly to the incident commander. Should the incident warrant, the section may be further divided into organizational units

*Strengths of ICS*
1. Predefined hierarchy, including chain of command and delineated responsibilities for every position
2. Common terminology
3. Modular organizational structure that is expanded or contracted as needed.
4. Incident Action Plans that are updated for each operational period.
5. Manageable Span of Control.
6. Use of standardized forms.
7. Ample flexibility and authority given to staff to accomplish objectives.
8. Cross-jurisdictional and cross-functional working relationships when ICS is used.

9.  Communications plan that is coordinated among responding agencies.
10. Clear decision-making process.
11. Process for transitioning command authority from one level of government to another as incident complexity changes.
12. Consolidated use of resources.
13. Consistency of implementation across agencies.

*Types of events that may use ICS*
- Fires – brush, residential, commercial
- Hazardous materials spills
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Terrorism incidents – biological, chemical, nuclear
- Natural disasters
- Mass Casualty Incidents
- Large events and festivals
- Field Day
- Explosive Incident