

FOUNTAIN OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM)



COFFEE BREAK TRAINING

Coffee Break Training #4

Topic: Unified Command

Learning Objectives:

- Applies ICS in incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies.
- Enables institutions and agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively

Unified Command

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure.

Unified Command Benefits

In a Unified Command, institutions and responding agencies blend into an integrated, unified team. A unified approach results in:

- A shared understanding of priorities and restrictions.
- A single set of incident objectives.
- Collaborative strategies.
- Improved internal and external information flow.
- Less duplication of efforts.
- Better resource utilization.

Incident Commanders Work Together

When implemented properly, Unified Command enables agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command make joint decisions and speak as one voice. Any differences are worked out within the Unified Command.

Unity of command is maintained within the Operations Section. Each responder reports to a single supervisor within his or her area of expertise. Within a Unified Command the police officer would not tell the firefighters how to do their job nor would the police tell campus personnel how to manage student notification.

Unified Command and NIMS

NIMS encourage the use of Unified Command.

“As a team effort, Unified Command overcomes much of the inefficiency and duplication of effort that can occur when agencies from different functional and geographic jurisdictions, or agencies at different levels of government, operate without a common system or organizational framework.”

Single Integrated Incident Organization: Command Staff

Unified Command results in a single integrated incident organization. Below is a sample Command Staff organizational chart for the campus protest incident. Notice that personnel from the different agencies often are assigned as Assistant Officers.



Single Integrated Incident Organization: Operations Section

In a Unified Command there is only one Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief should be the most qualified and experienced person available. Below is a sample Operations Section organization chart for the campus protest incident.



Unified Command Features

Collocated (shared) Facilities

In a Unified Command incident facilities are collocated or shared.

Bringing the responsible officials, Command Staff, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post can promote coordination.

Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan

Unified Command uses a single planning process and produces one incident Action Plan (IAP). The planning process for Unified Command is similar to the process used on single jurisdiction incidents.

Integrated General Staff

Integrated multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas may be beneficial. Incident Commanders within the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs. The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the Incident Action Plan.

Unified Command and Preparedness

For Unified Command to be used successfully, it is important that higher education institutions and agencies prepare by:

- Including Unified Command in local operations plans.
- Train often as a team. Incident Commanders who work and train together will be better able to manage incidents together.