Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Part #1 – Why is it important?

After over 30 years of service during all kinds of emergency incidents from one end of our country to another I can tell you there are three things that will destroy the ability of folks to respond well to any emergency situation…and that includes *grid-down*:

1. Lack of, or poor, communications.
2. Lack of, or top heavy, organization.
3. Lack of, or poor, plan and planning capability.

Yes, there are more aspects of emergencies and disasters that can contribute, or even drive, failure. However, these three are the ones that I have seen over the years -decades actually- that consistently prevent success and foster failure.

So why do I talk about them here and now? Come on, simple explanation if you know me very well.

I want you to succeed!

Yes, it is that simple; I want you to succeed in all you are doing with preparing for any emergency, disaster and especially for any "grid-down" event. And yes, I believe 100% that a "grid-down event" will occur here in the US, I just don't know when.

And to clarify, I didn't list the three factors of failure in any particular order. If there was going to be a #1 failure factor I would have to name "communications" without any hesitation. Why? Regardless of having everything else squared away, if you can't communicate among your folks, you can't succeed.

I have spent a lot of time writing articles about "communication" oriented solutions and ideas; and I will continue to do so. I have written a little bit about "planning" but not near enough. In my four books that I have written those concepts into the story lines. I have showed clearly how planning can be a huge help for success…and a overshadowing factor in failure. I will write more

on “planning” in the coming months. But for now I feel the strong need to share “organization” with you. I want to help you eliminate that *failure factor* from your preparedness quest.

About 4 months ago I was talking to a guy that runs a training program for Special Forces and we were talking about a number of current events. In the conversation he asked me again about ICS (Incident Command System). He had read some info I published awhile back and he wanted to know more. After about 45minutes he was infatuated with the ICS system. And I can understand why.

Over the last 10 or 15 years I have read many articles that touch on some aspect of prepper group organizing. Most have focused on security, and that is understandable since it is the #1 threat/risk to people in an emergency, disaster, or grid-down. However, all of the articles have been written for a “quick read” and superficial solutions. The whole “quick read” thing is based on the assumption that everyone now has ADD/ADHD and won’t spend the time reading a long article, regardless of its critical importance. So the authors devolve into providing quick fixes, usually with little actual experience and minimal forethought into what they are proposing. I will do no such thing.

I will explain why *organization* is important, what has failed in the past, what has actually proven to work, and why. Then I will go into detail outlining how you can apply a successful and proven organizational structure to your needs and wants. You may not do so now, but I do want you to print this document and stash it away with the rest of your SHTF notes. Then bring it out when the time comes. My preference would be you have read it, understood it and pre-organized at least your family if not a self-reliance or camping group…maybe your community or congregation.

Several years ago on a private members-only website I shared how ICS was a perfect match for preppers. It is the ultimate organizational system to deal with any type of, or any size of, emergency incident or disaster. It is scalable from a very small incident to something along the lines of the response to 9/11 in New York City.

How do I know that, and can speak with such confidence that it can scale that large? Simple, I attended an ICS academy over 15 years ago with a Battalion Chief from the FDNY who was on the scene when the towers went down. He was the senior fire department officer on the pile immediately after the collapse. We were on the same team at the 2003 NY ICS Academy and he

told me that after the collapse they, the FDNY, were lost because they didn't know ICS. He told me unequivocally that if they had understood and been using ICS they could have been far more able to effectively and efficiently respond to that horrific event.

I have participated in thousands of ICS incidents over my career, before that we used different organizational and command models. And then of course there was my military time where we had a very rigid command structure. So I have a pretty wide and deep pool of experience to draw from. Unfortunately, much of that experience was learning "what not to do" vs. "what to do."

So how does this tie into "prepping" again? Well, I am going to take the most extreme scenario and refer to a "grid-down event" that requires the highest degree of application of prepper skills and resources. But not to worry, the system can scale back to much smaller and less extreme applications.

Now, for the "name" of this system. I was leaning towards ZCS (Zombie Command System) but that didn't sound especially professional. Then I went with something that sounded more applicable POS (Prepper Organizational System). But "POS" has some negative connotations associated to it. And then there was the whole "command" word associated with what it was going to be called. In today's warm and fuzzy snowflake environment I thought that there may be some folks that took exception to being "commanded" and such. So I am will hold off with any official designation for the system. In the meantime I will refer to it as it is currently called in professional emergency services terms – ICS.

And "incident" will be the word I use for any emergency, disaster, or "grid-down" event. It will apply to your family, your neighborhood group, your self-reliance group, your congregation, your community, or your Constitution-based militia. It will make it easier for continuity purposes and you can apply it as you see fit. This may be one of the most important skills and information you will ever learn.

Part #2 – The Necessity for…

I will go over ICS system vs. military system (among others) and which is better and why. Then I will cover what the "grid-down" situation will look like and why people need a proven organizational structure. Then I will hit on the basic common "needs" that all incidents have. I will conclude this part by giving you an example of how quickly a grid-down situation could spin out of control if you don't have a solid organizational structure ready to be implemented.

For you military folks you may be wondering why I don't embrace the military organizational structure. One simple reason…it sucks!

Depending on the military report source there are approximately 10 – 15 support personnel for each combat person that ever sets foot on the field. In the ICS system the ratio is far-far less. In many instances a team of 28 – 75 support people can handle 3 – 6 times that many Operations Section personnel. So the ICS system is more efficient in providing effective support than a military system. Much of that is due to the streamlined organizational structure and removal of redundancy. And the military support system tends to be very inflexible and unable to adapt to rapidly changing conditions and situations with any speed or dexterity.

Now I want to take a moment and talk about the "grid-down" scenario that I am referring to when promoting the use of ICS. In such an event I see:

- An overall dangerous environment relative to the safety of people.
- Rapidly occurring and changing events with little to no advanced warning or knowledge of those events.
- Significantly unreliable information; both content and sources.
- Lack of reliable communications.
- Unknown and unpredictable future.
- Potential lack of any infrastructure.
- Confusion and uncertainty

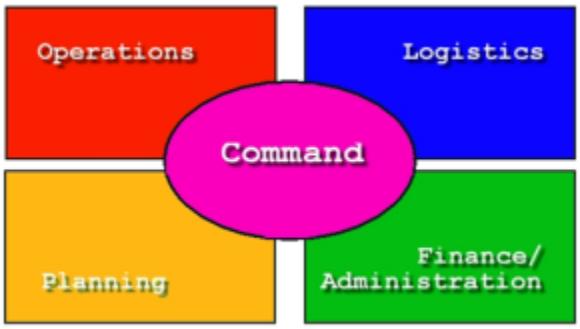
Before we can talk about how good the ICS system is, let's talk about the challenges that we will face as *preppers* trying to organize after an incident. Here is a partial list as it applies to organizing:

- Different backgrounds of people.
- Different level of professional and hobby skill sets.
- Different career/industry terminology.
- Different career/industry organizational structures.

ICS can address these issues. But before we get into all the details of that, let me list some of the benefits of ICS:

- ICS is based on matching common "needs" with people providing specific skills
- Scalable
- Flexible
- Single terminology
- Logic & practical
- Easy to learn
- Ensures accountability of people
- Ensures clear line of authority
- Ensures clear lines of communications and an organized communications plan

Common Needs – Every response to every incident always has a set of common "needs" that have to be addressed. Sometimes those needs are simple and easily met, other times it becomes much more complicated. But the common needs are:



- Leadership (a.k.a. command)
- Operations
- Logistics
- Planning
- Administration & Financial

Everyone who will be with you when the grid goes down has certain knowledge, skills, training and abilities known as "qualifications." ICS places the most qualified person in the position where they are needed most. Everyone is utilized and skills are maximized.

Scalable – ICS can be used in a very small application. We use it on single fire engine crew responses all the way to organizing 5,000 people on Oregon's largest wildfire in their state's

history. The key is…the "needs" mentioned above don't change, just the scale changes. And ICS can grow and shrink throughout the incident depending on the size and tempo of events.

Flexible – ICS can be utilized by EVERY possible kind of incident, event, disaster, emergency or even grid-down, and it works. The organizational structure is such that it can meet all the needs of any kind of incident. How well you understand ICS dictates how easy the process goes…and how successful the outcome.

Single Terminology – Regardless of the background of an individual, ICS provides terminology that unites everyone into speaking the same language. Industry or profession specific terminology is set aside and ICS terminology is used. This eliminates the potential for misunderstanding due to lack of common terms.

Logical & Practical – When the principles and application of ICS are understood it is easy to see how it all just seems "to make sense" when put into practice. There is logic and commonsense put into every aspect of ICS to make it as effective and efficient as possible.

Easy to Learn – Yes, this might be subjective; especially if you have to overcome or "unlearn" some other system. But the delegation of responsibilities and processes makes it "feel right" as you learn.

Accountability – This is one area where many organizational structures breakdown. Accountability is referred to in two ways; 1) Tasks and responsibilities can be dropped and forgotten by people thinking someone else is responsible for handling it. That is not the case with ICS. Responsibility is clearly identified and followed-up on. 2) The most important aspect of accountability is safety. With ICS everyone is "accounted for" as in everyone answers to someone above them. And that supervisory person has the responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone who works for them.

Line of Authority – Known in many organizational structures as "Chain of Command," the principle is the same. Each person takes orders from only one person and is only responsible/accountable to that person they take direction from. This facilitates the flow of directions, orders, reporting, and the proper exchange of information (communications).

Communications – As touched on in "Line of Authority," communications has a clear "route" in ICS. Status reports and orders flow between subordinate and supervisor. One is responsible and accountable for sending the information, the other person is responsible that it is received and processed accordingly. While there is formal communications in the form of *orders* and *reports*, there is also the informal free-flow of information between ICS functions to ensure that needs are coordinated and met.

Let's recap the benefits, ICS provides an organizational structure that outlines responsibilities and accountability using clear easily understood common terminology while maintaining as safe an environment as possible.

Sounds like a good organizational structure to me!

Let me touch on a couple other points before going on:

1. If you have an existing organizational structure, fine. I am not telling you that you have to change it. I am just saying that ICS has proven itself in hundreds of thousands of incidents of every size each year to be the single most effective way to handle emergencies and disasters of any type and size you can imagine.
2. If you belong to a religious organization and tell me "We will use the existing lines of authority that our church uses." ICS is based on needs and skills not on religious authority. I can tell you that in my lay-member run church (LDS) when we reviewed it at the Stake level (13 combined congregations) ICS was seen as a perfect match with the church organizational structure; no conflict at all. Commonsense and logic doesn't get tossed out when religion is thrown in.

So how and where does all of this "organizational stuff" get started? By defining the "needs" first. Without a need you don't have to do anything at all. But once a need is established then you begin organizing to meet that need.

"Form follows function. Function is based on need."

Caution, there will be some folks, maybe even highly respected folks, that will state that you have to be *flexible* and *adaptable* for post grid-down and not get locked into any one plan.

OK, so the next time you are going to have brain surgery ask the surgeon if he has a plan. Ask him how much planning goes into brain surgery. No doubt about it, he will be flexible and adaptable when performing the surgery, but I *guaran-damn-tee* you he had a plan or two in mind BEFORE he slices your head open.

So dismiss the folks that are "organizational nay-sayers" they are probably anti-organization based on their own personal failures with previous systems. But don't let them talk you into something that has failed in the past. There is a reason for the old saying "Fail to plan, plan to fail."

OK, back to defining the "need" and how to organize for it. The "need" always starts on the ground. Because everything <u>important</u> starts on-the-ground based on a *need*. Nothing important and relevant starts at the top of some bureaucracy. A quick look at any level of government can confirm that statement.

So a “need” is identified. For this “grid-down” conversation let’s set-up a scenario.

- An event has taken place.
- All transportation is disrupted and nothing is moving.
- All forms of normal communication is non-existent.
- Police and fire services are non-functional.
- Infrastructure is failing and will be non-operational soon.

So, what is you first “need” to be concerned with?

If you have studied any serious professional-level emergency and disaster response course material you are aware of L.I.P.S. Or you may have read about it on this website through my articles on the subject. But, a quick review:

Life Safety : The #1 priority during any incident or event is *life safety* – protecting people from death or injury – in that order.

Incident Stabilization : Don’t let an incident get worse than it already is. The idea is simplistic in nature; the incident is already bad, something has gone wrong, don’t take actions that makes it worse. Or, remove yourself from any situation, or circumstances, that will make the situation worse.

Property Conservation : Don’t destroy anything you don’t have to. While that makes all the sense in the world if you give it a second of thought, it escapes many while trying to deal with an emergency or event. Just don’t destroy anything you don’t have to. Everything is a potential resource!

Societal Restoration – That’s a mouthful but you just want to put everything back the way it was (or better) before the event or incident occurred. The community, neighborhood, congregation, family or individual was in a certain condition prior to an event or incident. The concept is to return that entity to the original condition; or in a better condition.

So you now know that the priority is always “life safety” and you must identify those issues/threats/risks that jeopardize life safety. Once that is done, then you decide how to mitigate those issues. The result is a list of “needs.”

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Take a very simple and basic "need" assuming that all members of your family are home when an event occurs – *water*. Water is a high priority item to have on-hand. When an event jeopardizing the water supply occurs you must try and fill every possible container with water while it is still running from the tap. Right? So who handles that task? Who is responsible that it happens…and that it is completed?

Let's make it a little more dramatic; your ten-family self-reliance group is located in your neighborhood. Now, who handles the water issue?

But going back to L.I.P.S., is that the #1 priority? No, it is not. Safety of the group is important. So who handles the safety? Safety from what? Do you put a "guard detail" into place? If so, who handles that? What about acquiring fuel for vehicles? Fuel will run out soon so you better get a bunch of it while it is still available…yes?

So I could keep going with this but it would provide little additional benefit. You already see how quickly this could spin out of control and become overwhelming with so many tasks that need accomplished. And responding to a grid-down event is not linear. You must be able to have your group working on and accomplishing multiple missions and tasks at once. Hence, the term "multitasking" but on a larger scale and with far more urgency…and potential downside.

The natural thing to do in the situation outlined above would be to start assigning people to the tasks. But who is responsible for making those assignments? Who ensures that the assignments get done? Who is ultimately responsible for the task accomplishment and the personnel assigned to it? Who makes sure the person is safe while working on the task? Do you break into groups to get things done? How are those groups organized? Who's in-charge of the individual groups? How do the groups coordinate and plan…or how do they even communicate?

A thousand questions! But there are more questions and they are all pertinent and could have fatal outcomes if not handled correctly. That is where ICS comes into play and outshines every other organizational model.

Part #3 – "Grid-Down" Needs

This is certainly one of the most creative parts in this document in regards to organizing for a "grid-down" event. ICS (Incident Command System) can be a dry and boring subject when presented in the classroom by dolts. In this case I am taking the best emergency and disaster response organizational model and applying it to the Zombie Apocalypse. Hardly boring!

I showed the benefits of the ICS system and hit the high points showing how it overcame the general problems associated with prior disaster and emergency response systems. All of which applies just as much to a grid-down event. And just an FYI – I am going with a grid-down event as the most extreme example of an event that ICS can be applied to. If ICS can work for a major grid-down event, then it can meet any lesser critical scenario.

That is one of the attributes of ICS – *scalable*.

Just to recap, the event we are talking about, grid-down, is a major breakdown of society, government, law enforcement and infrastructure. And for this exercise we will not involve the military just to ensure that our response is as "isolated" an incident as possible. Jumping right

into it…what is our #1 need? Or, should I ask, "Is there an actual way to identify *needs* in a systematic and reliable fashion?"

Yes!

L.I.P.S.

In L.I.P.S. articles I have shared a 100% valid and reliable way to set priorities and make sound decisions. I touched on it in the previous part of this document as well. The overall priorities in any incident are:

Life Safety
Incident Stabilization
Property Conservation
Societal Restoration

In articles (re: 7 Common Risks/Threats) I have listed the general risk/threats (i.e. "needs") of any incident. I will list them here again as a foundation to start from. They are, in order of priority, the threat of:

1. Violence
2. Injury/Sickness
3. No/Poor Communications
4. No/Poor Organization
5. Dehydration
6. Exposure
7. Starvation

Let's breakdown those individual risks/threats (needs) –

Violence

I am a big believer in "safety" and during any incident safety is always threatened. No matter it be from a hostile crowd, contaminated water, or threat of disease. All the prepper gear and equipment, all planning and learned skills, all the best of intentions means nothing if some gang-banger wanna-be comes along with a gangsta pistol and kills you and your family. So defense from violence is #1 priority when it comes to discussing the *needs* of an individual, family, group or community during grid-down.

If security needs are going to be met, someone has to be put in-charge of security. I am referring to the security of whatever is your base of operations. If you are a family prepper group, then it is your home. If your group has a farm they have retreated to then it is that farm. If your neighborhood has organized then it is the neighborhood bounded by the streets on the parameter of that neighborhood. If it is your whole community, then it is whatever those boundaries are. But the security of that piece of real-estate is of paramount importance. Without security, nothing else matters.

And this is not an essay on how to defend an area, it is simply me stating that *defense* is the #1 need to be met because it is the #1 risk/threat. And someone must be placed in-charge of

figuring it out as quickly as possible once the event has occurred. I think there are three general aspects to security:

1 – Parameter: keeping bad guys out of the area.
2 – Internal: keeping life and property safe from each other within the area.
3 – External: keeping people safe when they must travel outside of the protected area.

I will go into more detail on this as I outline ICS capabilities in future posts, but for now a single person can be put in-charge of all three aspects or it can be broken down to an individual placed over each of the three aspects of security.

The kind of people to look for to put in-charge of security would be: military, DOD guards, prison/jail guards, etc. Law enforcement personnel may not be the best choice for these positions of leadership. They may well be stuck on "law enforcement" vs. survival security. But having a badge at the front gate checkpoint might not be a bad thing. Just don't let them become "badge heavy" and overbearing to the group members.

Which brings me to the "Rules of Engagement" (ROE) that must be developed and then agreed upon by the group. ROEs must be established to give security personnel guidance on when use of force is authorized…or mandated. And not only authorized but the use of force will be backed by the entire group should a problem develop. You don't want to hang one or two gate guards out to dry when they open fire on someone trying to crash through the gate into the neighborhood. The group must be united and stand together…and support their security folks.

Another aspect of security will go beyond providing gate guards. A plan to deal with a parameter breach will need to be developed and folks trained on that plan. Communications between and among the security folks needs to be established. Shifts defined, the feeding of guards, bathroom breaks, and so much more. Someone who knows organization as well as physical security needs to be placed in this critical position of security and leadership.

Injury/Sickness

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This is another pet peeve of mine. Yes, I know, I have so many pet peeves I could open my own pet store. But being able to provide first aid within your group is extremely important. And I am expanding the “first aid” label to “medical aid” because the aid you may have to render might go far beyond traditional “first aid” treatments.

To accomplish being able to provide medical aid the first thing that has to happen is to find out who has medical skills within your group. I mean everyone; firefighters, EMT, nurses, doctors, even those trained at work for CPR. In a perfect scenario I hope you can find some combat medics, corpsmen and Emergency Room and trauma nurses in your group. Yes, doctors are great assets, don’t get me wrong. But they are seldom the best folks for immediate, on-the-ground traumatic injuries as gun-shots and such. They are much better suited to be in a more controlled environment providing more complicated and longer-term medical care.

Your #1 priority in this category is the “patch’em & move’em” folks; that saves lives immediately. Then you can work on the more complicated and longer-term medical care.

Once skilled people are identified then an assessment of what medical gear and supplies are available comes next. And here might be a bit of a problem – trust. I will speak for myself. If the grid went down and someone from my neighborhood knocked on my door and asked what kind of medical supplies I had and could they take them for use by the group…well, let’s say I would be “hesitant” to say the least. So tack and trust are going to be big factors here. But getting a feel for what kind of supplies are available is a must. Next would come the scheduling; who will be on-duty, where will they be, if a firefight breaks out what happens. All those kinds of things need to be worked out.

So this area needs some basic breakdown in responsibilities as well. I think it might be something like this:

1 – Immediate aid care: first aid stations and field responders.
2 – Hospital care: designated wound care facility, including surgery.
3 – Training: providing first aid training to everyone.
4 – Medical supply: central location for medical supplies

Obviously you won't have a real hospital, but a central location where the highest level of medical care can be provided might be more like it. Its location must be agreed upon and established.

Medical training is important, and it doesn't have to be extensive. Subjects such as; how to stop bleeding, how to transport, and CPR would be a good start.

If people are willing to donate medical supplies a person needs to be placed in charge of that function. That person can also be responsible for developing a list of what supplies are needed for external acquisition…if that option might be available.

The "Intimidate aid care" has a couple dimensions to it; 1) more regular, every-day kind of medical needs such as broken leg, cut finger, 2) then there is the more dramatic such gunshot wound during an attack on the gate. So a solid SOP (standard operating procedure) needs to be planned out for the different types of "immediate" that might come up. Example: Will EMTs be embedded with security personnel or will you set-up field aid stations for those folks to be transported to?

No/Poor Communications

I always have to start out talking about communications by referring to wildland firefighter line of duty deaths. All investigations into wildland firefighter fatalities shows that failure of communications played some part, if not a major part, in the event. And it is attributable to a breakdown in equipment, in the "process", or person's individual decision not to communicate properly. In other words, the equipment either failed entirely or partially, and/or people failed to properly communicate when and/or what they were supposed to. That being said…I have a special place in my heart for the need for quality communications in emergency preparedness. In grid-down it could easily mean the difference between life and death.

There are some distinct aspects to communications when it comes to emergency preparedness; 1) external, 2) internal and 3) language.

External – This category is where I refer to the ability to communicate with the world outside of your camp, home, group or community. In this situation it is assumed that everyday infrastructure can't be counted on to reliably handle these communication needs. There is only one true, reliable way to accomplish this, Ham Radio. And to have the best reach, viable options, and best chances of success I recommend a combination Ham radio rig. The Yaesu FT-897R. It is a combination of HF and UHF/VHF frequencies. But a good shortwave receiver is a great option as well. Whatever you decide to use, just remember it must be something that isn't based on the normal infrastructure.

Internal – I have seen that the ability of people to communicate reliably is absolutely essential to the success of any incident response. And it is imperative that you have multiple backup or redundant capabilities in whatever system you choose, or are forced to use. Example: if you have FRS/GMRS radios then have whistles as a back-up. If you use handheld Ham radios, then have FRS/GMRS radios as a back-up. And you can always use handwritten notes delivered by runners. But have a system, have a plan, and have at least one back-up option. And WRITE it down! If you fail to have reliable communications within your group your chances of success drops to near zero.

Language – I am not talking about some distinct language like English or Spanish. I am referring to a common set of terms that everyone in the group uses. This common terminology will avoid misunderstandings and reduce the volume of verbal communications. Example: A person that has been given instructions could say, "Yes, I understand what you have told me and I will do my best to follow your orders." Or, if your group has a solid Communications Plan and with just a little training they would say, "Copy."

Both responses means the same thing. One is far more efficient and reduces radio traffic for other messages.

Let me stress one more time – ***failure to be able to reliably communicate is almost a sure bet of accomplishing failure.***

No/Poor Organization

At first glance this may sound a bit silly, but trust me…it isn't the least bit silly. If you and your family aren't organized you will be wandering around trying to figure out who should do what. And if you wait until the emergency occurs to set into place the organization…you will more likely fail.

Also, I am not talking about organization in terms of lists, plans, maps, etc. I am talking about "who" does "what". Who will be the leader, who will handle logistics, who will handle defense, who will do the cooking, etc. If you are fortunate enough to be part of a larger group such as your church congregation or any other group, this becomes even more important. Having a way to organize any group of any size is vital to successfully overcoming any emergency. Fortunately you don't have to invent the solution…it is already there for you.

Problem: If your family or group is not organized to meet the needs of the group you are far more prone to suffer from problems of all kinds, especially violence, injury, and sickness.

Solution: Learn and adopt the Incident Command System.

Dehydration

Now we start touching on the rather mundane aspects of grid-down survival. The security and medical priorities always garner a lot of cool attention, and that is understandable. Lots of us like to consider ourselves trigger-pullers and combat medics. That is all well and fine, but the more everyday aspects of grid-down will need far more time and work…water being one of those.

Water is not a complicated or sophisticated need; it is quite basic. You need:

1 – A source of water
2 – Ability to store it
3 – Ability and equipment to filter & purify it
4 – Training to conserve it

Every house will have some water already stored in it, even if they are not a *prepper*. Most homes will have a hot water tank and toilets; that is the basics of getting started with storing water. Some homes will have bottled water and some may have rain catchment barrels. So there are some built-in sources. All potential sources of water storage need to be identified and folks need to be told to conserve that water at all costs. Historically speaking, water is usually one of the last utilities to go down. The reason being is most municipalities and districts store water in large water tanks that are elevated. This provides for water delivery even when the power goes out; water is delivered through the system via gravity. This is where "survival mentality" must kick in.

Every household within your group must acquire and store all that water they possibly can. Every possible container must be used regardless of condition or cleanliness. It is more important to store some kind of water, rather than storing only clean/safe/pure water. If you have read my articles on water then you have lots of ideas on how to store water.

And what I mean about "survival mentality" when it comes to water is simple, store all you can regardless of anything else. You may hear public service announcements asking to conserve water, only use what you need, don't horde water, etc. IGNORE IT! Store all the water you can until the faucets run dry. Yes, that may mean that someone else in another part of the city doesn't have any water because you stored/horded more than your fair share. But let me ask you this? What does "survival" mean to you? Does that mean you allow your children to die of dehydration so someone else across town lives another day or two before they die? You may be able to help them later, but for now…you are in survival mode.

Survival can be tough, it can be ugly, it can mean making decisions that go against the "societal norm" that you were raised with. But you are either committed to survival or not. If you are not, then please don't keep reading. Jump out now and be prepared to join the masses that aren't willing to survive.

So, back to water…

Let me touch on “source” for a minute. I am talking ANY kind of source of water, even if it looks nasty. A pure mountain fed stream would be nice. But I will take a muddy trash filled pond too. It is water!!

You will filter and purify ALL water prior to drinking it post-event. Why? Because you really don’t know what is safe to drink and what isn’t. So don’t take the chance; filter & purify it all!

Lastly, think about security for your water. If you have a pond or stream on your property, or municipal tank nearby, you may find yourself needing to guard it. Maybe guard it from internal abuse and/or external threat as well. Yes, in a grid-down situation, if I had a municipal water tank in my neighborhood I would break into the control room, shut the valves off and place a guard or two to ensure its preservation. That is called *survival*.

Exposure

This can be a tricky one, something that a lot of people may not think much about. But let me give you a couple of thoughts:

1 – What do you do for a family in your group whose house burns down and they need a place to live now?
2 – What about vacant or abandoned houses in your survival neighborhood?

3 – What about people who show up at the gate needing a place to live because they were driven out of their own home for some reason? Let's change it up…and you find they are a doctor, medic, Ham radio guru, and such.
4 – What about heating for homes as winter approaches?
5 – What about a single widow with a large home who offers to take people into her home?

Place someone in a position of responsibility over these kinds of issues. They don't have to come up with all the answers themselves; they can simply be the person who works at (i.e. coordinates) coming up with the solution(s).

Starvation

Man, here is a tough one. There are so many facets to the "food" priority that is hard to know where to start. And there is a huge hurdle here – *sharing*. I think that most people who have worked very hard to acquire food storage for their family are going to be somewhat reluctant to share with those people that haven't prepared. Now, if you are lucky enough to be part of a self-reliance group where all the member families have been prepping then you are probably okay here.

Let me give you an example: My family has enough food stored to last long enough to plant a garden and acquire other food sources. Let's say my drunken neighbor with the fancy Corvette and boat has three cans of soup and a box of Mac&Cheese for food storage. Do I share with his family or not? Well, my answer is "no" with zero qualifications to that answer…if he is demanding I share. Why? He is a drunk, a load-mouth, overbearing and no appreciable skills. He is an insurance salesman because he got kicked off the Sheriff's department. Really? I would want to supply my food to this guy? But…what about his wife and daughter who are both sweet folks?

However, if a Navy SEAL or trauma surgeon or electrical engineer shows up at my house and wants to barter skills for food, that's another situation entirely. More than likely, I am all

in. Why? Because they would have skills (force multipliers). And those skills…I see as having and adding value to the ability to deal with the situation.

Another aspect that might be hard to deal with is assessing how much food families have on hand. Yeah, an inventory. I am NOT going to share that information with some cobbled together neighborhood survival group. Correct, you read that right. I don't trust them. At least not yet. So I suggest doing an inventory of food *needs* vs. food on-hand. Then talk with group members on how/who might meet at least part of those needs.

Then there is the matter of using and preserving food that people may have in their refrigerators and freezers. Solutions of using it, trading it, and preserving it should be developed. Drying, smoking or canning solutions could/should be developed and assistance provided for participants.

Examples: someone with a generator who can keep someone else's freezer going should be entitled to some share of that food. A person with a dehydrator can work out a deal with the person who needs to preserve the 100 pounds of venison in their freezer. A person with a canner and jars should work out a deal with someone for fruit, vegetables or meat that needs canned. But someone needs to be put in charge of coordinating and organizing that activity. If not, how would you even imagine all that would get done? And the result if it isn't accomplished? A whole lot of spoiled and wasted food…and people who later starved due to lack of organization.

And then there is the potential for homes in the area where their owners were not home when the event took place; they may never come back home. So what happens to the food in those homes and who is charge of it?

Then let's talk about the acquisition of food. There will be sources of food for a limited amount of time post-event such as grocery stores, big box stores, quick-marts, etc. What food do you need the most? Who organizes that list? Do you set-up a community food bank with food acquired from outside sources? Where is it stored? How is it parceled out? Who goes to get it, provides security, how is it acquired?

Then there is the long-term supply of food that must be figured out. Individual gardens? Community garden? How to barter and trade with area farmers? Someone has to be put in-charge of planning and coordinating all of that. That is especially true for gardening.

What about other sources of food such as hunting and food available in the wild? Who knows what to do? Who can organize it? How is the food divided up when they return with a single deer? What about using snares?

Summary

I just went over some of the most basic needs that must be addressed in a post-event that throws your family, group and community into a survival situation. I didn't intend to provide you with every single thing that will need to be accomplished, or even specific roles and positions that people will need to fill. What I hope I was able to do is get you thinking. Thinking about what will need to be done and the scope of the challenges that you will face. With that understanding you now know that you will need to spread out the responsibilities.

Delegation is a beautiful thing!

However, along with delegating comes the inherent need for organizing. I am not talking about some fancy bureaucratic government layered type of organization. I am however talking about an organizational structure where needs are anticipated, planned for, and addressed in a way that ensures the potential highest degree of success. And I will show you how the ICS system will meet that challenge better than any other system out there.

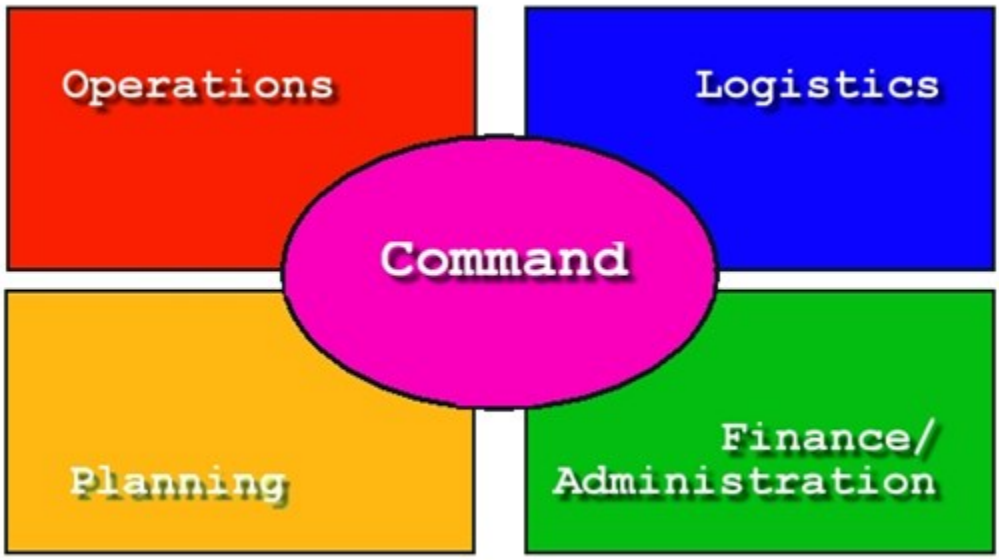
Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Part #4 – ICS Overview

In this part I will give a brief high level overview of the basic "sections" of the ICS organizational structure as well as the Incident Commander and how they interact with each section. It is important to remember the necessity for *responsibility* for tasks and the *accountability* to make sure they get done.

All incidents, events, including "grid-down" have basic needs regardless of what is happening. ICS meets all those needs in an organized, efficient and effective way. ICS is flexible and adaptable to meet any situation, large or small, regardless of cause of the incident.

Previously I went over the need for a good structural model for organizing a family or group in the event of a disaster, emergency or "grid-down." I also explained how ICS meets that organizational need in every way.



As mentioned previously, the ICS organizational model consists of four basic *sections* and the Incident commander. The sections are:

- Logistics
- Planning
- Admin & Finance
- Operations

Each section listed above has specific responsibilities to make any incident run successfully. In the case of responding to disasters and emergencies the goal is simple: provide sufficient relief

to victims to relieve immediate threat to life and then restore those affected to a state prior to the incident occurring. In the event of "grid-down" the first goal is to survive. Once that is accomplished, the next goal should be to thrive and restore.

Here is how the different sections work to make that happen –

Logistics Section

Mission – All service and support needs are provided by the Logistics Section.

Responsibilities –

- Acquires, stores and distributes supplies.
- Acquires and maintains facilities.
- Provides all transportation needs.
- Provides communications capabilities.
- Provides food services.
- Provides medical services.

Planning Section

Mission – The Planning Section collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information.

Responsibilities –

- Collects and process situation information.
- Supervises preparation of the Incident Action Plan.
- Tracks all resources.
- Determines need for any specialized resources for future operations.
- If requested, assemble and disassemble operational units not assigned to the Operations Section.
- Establish special information collection activities as necessary.
- Assemble information on alternative strategies.
- Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.
- Report any significant changes in incident status.
- Compile and display incident status information.
- Provide maps as needed.

Admin & Finance Section

Mission – Manage all financial and administrative aspects of an incident.

Responsibilities –

- Run the commissary.
- Establish monetary & barter policy, and oversee related disputes.
- Handle all other financial and administrative aspects of incident.

Operations Section

Mission – Responsible for all tactical activities outside of camp.

Responsibilities –

- Reducing the immediate external risks/threats/hazards.
- Saving lives and property.
- Establishing situational control.
- Restoring societal "norm."

Incident Commander

Mission – The individual responsible for the overall management of the incident.

Responsibilities –

- Sets objectives & goals.
- Responsible for, and authority over, all incident personnel.

Summary -

Knowing what each section does is not enough; you have to know “how” they do it. And the next parts will go over each section and exactly what they do and how they do it. There are processes involved that need to be learned as well. So if you are lazy and don’t like reading and learning this article is not for you. And to be very honest about it, if you are lazy, you probably will fail anyway because you are not willing to learn the difference of what works…and what doesn’t. You might think you are an expert and know what to do. But when was the last time you dealt with a raging wildfire or flooding that covers hundreds of square miles? I have, others have. Learn from us. We want you to succeed!

Part #5 – Logistics Section

Introduction & Note: *This is a long article on organization for a prepper group (emergency preparedness group). There is a lot of information to present. It comes from the national ICS model and I am adapting it to a "prepper" environment. While many positions, responsibilities, etc. stay the same, there are plenty that change. I have spent 5 years on a large national incident management team so I am including some first-hand experience modifications as well. Finally, this is a "work in progress" and the information will change and get updated. What you are reading is an initial "head dump." If you have questions, thoughts or concerns please feel free to leave me a "comment" and I will answer you. I have purposely left the Operations Section till last due to its complex and extensive nature. Thank you!*

Logistics Section

General – Remember the Logistics Section grows or shrinks as "needs" dictate. There is always someone in charge of logistics, maybe a single person for a small group/camp. When logistical requirements become more than one person can handle then more people are assigned to the position(s) required to fulfill those needs. If the incident is small you may only need one or two people, if your prepper group is large you may need dozens of people to fill various Logistics Section positions. But the principles and responsibilities remain the same.

Mission – All support needs are provided by the Logistics Section.

Responsibilities –

- Manage all logistics needs of the incident.
- Provide logistical input to the Incident Commander (IC) in preparing the Action Plan.
- Identify anticipated and known service and support requirements.
- Request/order additional resources as needed.
- Review and provide input to the Communications Plan and Medical Plan.
- Supervise requests for additional resources.

Leadership –

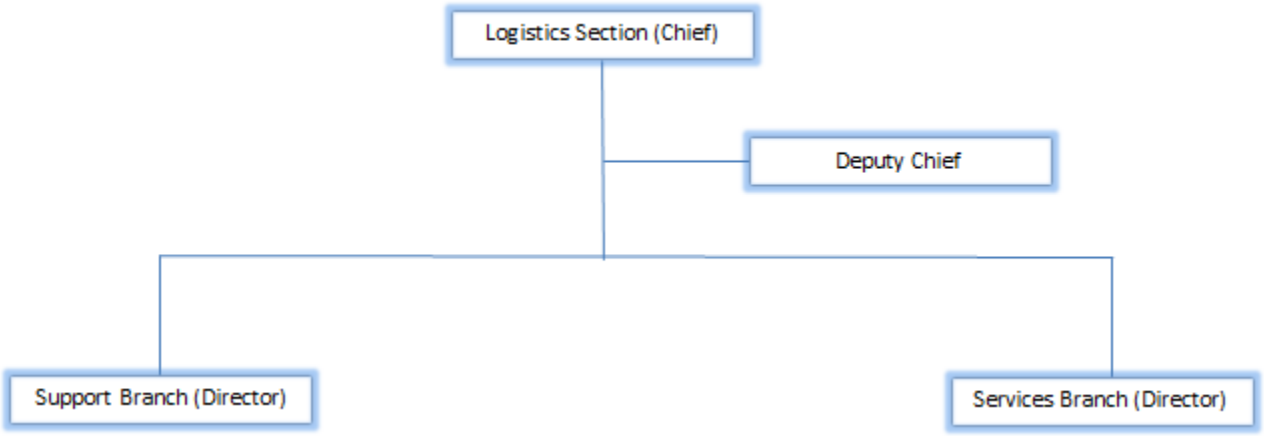
Logistics Section Chief

The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief (*LogC* or *Logs*) who is a member of the General Staff. LogC may have one or more Deputies to assist them. A Deputy is most often assigned when the leadership load for the LogC becomes too burdensome, when all Units are staffed, or when a night shift is required.

Deputy Logistics Section Chief

Qualified and able to make decisions in the absence of the LogC. Acts in behalf of and with the authority of the LogC. Used to reduce Span of Control conflicts or take responsibility for a specific purpose such as night shift. Can also be used as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) as needed.

Organization –



Logistics Sections consists of two *Branches*; “Support” and “Service”. Each Branch can be led by a Branch Director as needed based on size, Span of Control and/or other organizational requirements or needs.

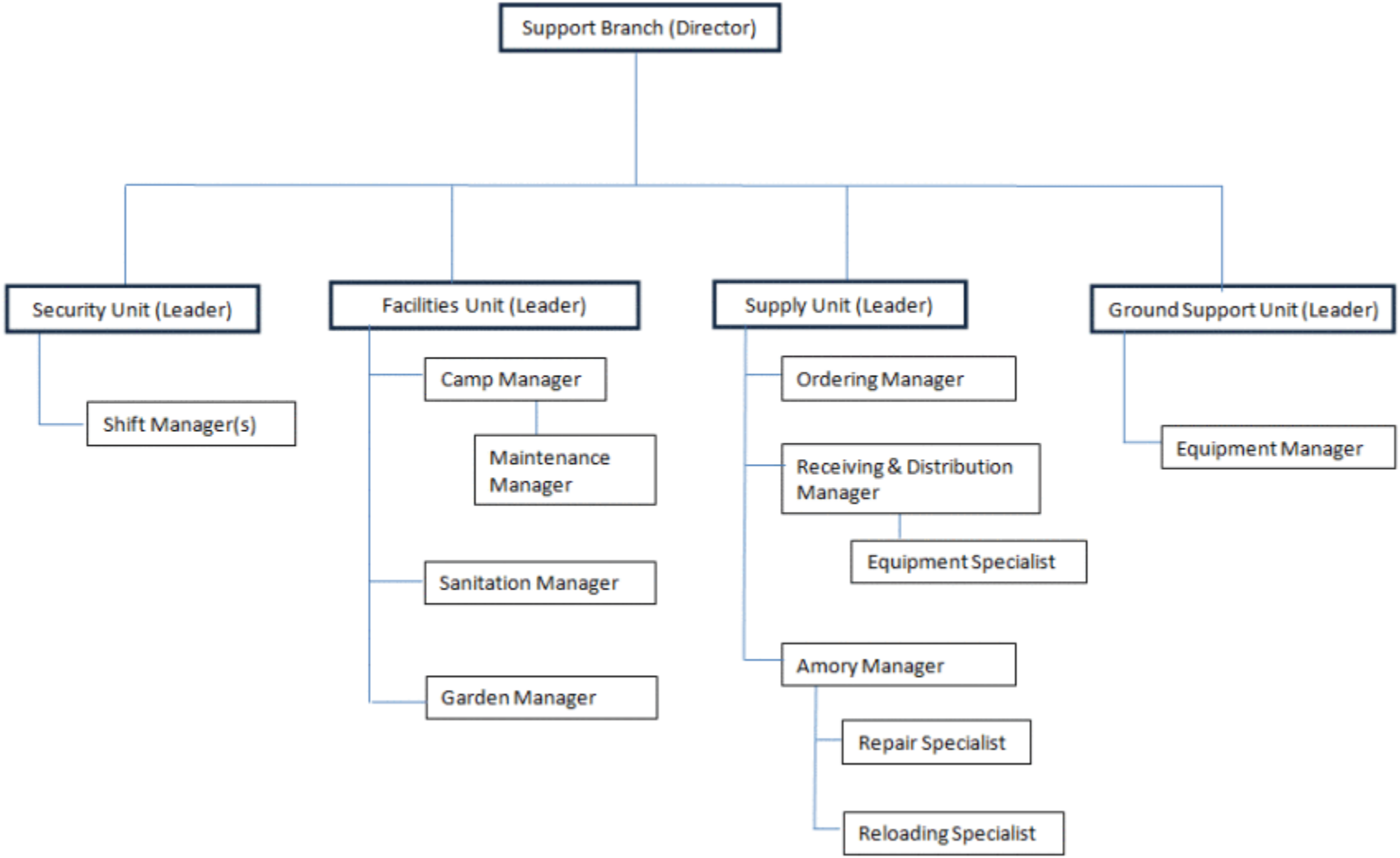
Support Branch

- Security Unit
- Supply Unit
- Facilities Unit
- Ground Support Unit

Service Branch

- Communications Unit
- Food Unit
- Medical Unit

Support Branch



- **Security Unit**

Provides safeguards necessary for protection of camp, personnel and camp property from loss or damage.

Responsibilities:

- Develop a security plan for the camp and camp facilities.
- Provide all camp security activities, internal and parameter.
- Keep the peace, prevent assaults, and settle disputes.
- Prevent theft of all property.
- Investigate and document all rule violations.

The Security Unit can consist of whatever numbers of personnel are needed to provide security for the camp. Example: Gate guards, perimeter guards, tower lookouts, Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), etc. Standard configuration model applies. Operations Sections personnel can act in the capacity of a RIT team, but they are under the command of the Security Unit during that operational period.

Organizational Structure – The Security Unit will have Shift Managers as needed. And will also organize similar to the Operations Section using crews, teams, divisions, and groups as needed.

- **Supply Unit**

The Supply Unit is responsible for ordering, receiving, processing and storing all resources. All external resources will be ordered through the Supply Unit. Including tactical and support resources (including personnel), and all expendable and non-expendable support supplies.

Responsibilities:

o Participate in Logistics Section & Support Branch planning activities.
o Provide supplies to all other Sections.
o Order, receive, distribute, and store supplies and equipment.
o Receive and store any Section's excess resources, equipment and supplies; coordinating the redistribution as needed.
o Receive requests for and acquire personnel, equipment, and supplies from external sources.
o Maintain an inventory of all supplies and equipment.
o Service reusable equipment, as needed.

- *Ordering Manager* — Places all orders for personnel, supplies and equipment from external sources. All requests (i.e. orders) for supplies, equipment and personnel go through the Ordering Manger. Supplies, equipment and personnel moved internally do not have to go through the Ordering Manager; they can be exchanged directly. Receives and stores any Section's excess resources, equipment and supplies; coordinating the redistribution as needed.

- *Receiving and Distribution Manager* — Receives and distributes all supplies and equipment from external sources and is responsible for the service and repair of tools and equipment.

- Equipment Specialist – Responsible for the servicing and repair of all hand tools.

The Supply Unit can utilize any number of personnel required to accomplish its mission. Standard configuration model applies.

- *Armory Manager* – Responsible for maintaining the camp's supply of non-personal weapons and ammunition. The Armory Manager shall also be responsible for the repair of any weapons in camp utilizing personnel able to perform those services. If reloading capability is available the Armory Manager shall oversee the camp's centralized reloading activity.

    - *Repair Specialist* – Person in-charge of repairing weapons (personal or non-personal).
    - *Reloading Specialist* – Person in-charge of non-personal camp reloading activities.

- **Facilities Unit**

This unit is responsible for set up and maintenance of all facilities except Staging Areas.
Responsibilities:

- Participate in Logistics Section & Support Branch planning activities.
- Determine requirements for each facility.
- Activate and prepare layouts of facilities; inform appropriate Unit Leaders of occupancy status.
- Obtain and supervise personnel to operate facilities, including the Base Manager and the Camp Manager.
- Provide facility maintenance services, e.g., sanitation, cleaning, lighting, etc.

- *Camp Manager* – Ensures that appropriate facilities and management services are in place at the Base.

Responsibilities:

o Determine requirements for establishing a Base.
o Understand and comply with established operational restrictions.
o Determine personnel support requirements.
o Obtain necessary equipment and supplies.
o Ensure that all facilities and equipment necessary for base support operations are set up and functioning.
o Make sleeping area assignments.
o Ensure compliance with applicable safety regulations.
o Ensure that all facility maintenance services are provided.

- *Facilities Maintenance Manager* – Responsible for the physical maintenance and cleaning of all base facilities.

- *Garden Manager* – Responsible for food production from gardens. Coordinates with the Food Supply Manager when deciding what to plant.

- *Sanitation Manager – Responsible* for all aspects of camp sanitation needs and requirements. Duties may include designating latrine sites and procedures, water disposal procedures, shower and hand washing stations, kitchen sanitary standards and other sanitation duties as assigned.

- **Ground Support Unit**

The Ground Support Unit is primarily responsible for the maintenance, service, and fueling of all mobile equipment and vehicles. The Unit also has responsibility for the ground transportation of personnel, supplies and equipment, and the development of the Incident Traffic Plan (traffic flow, parking areas, etc.) for camp.

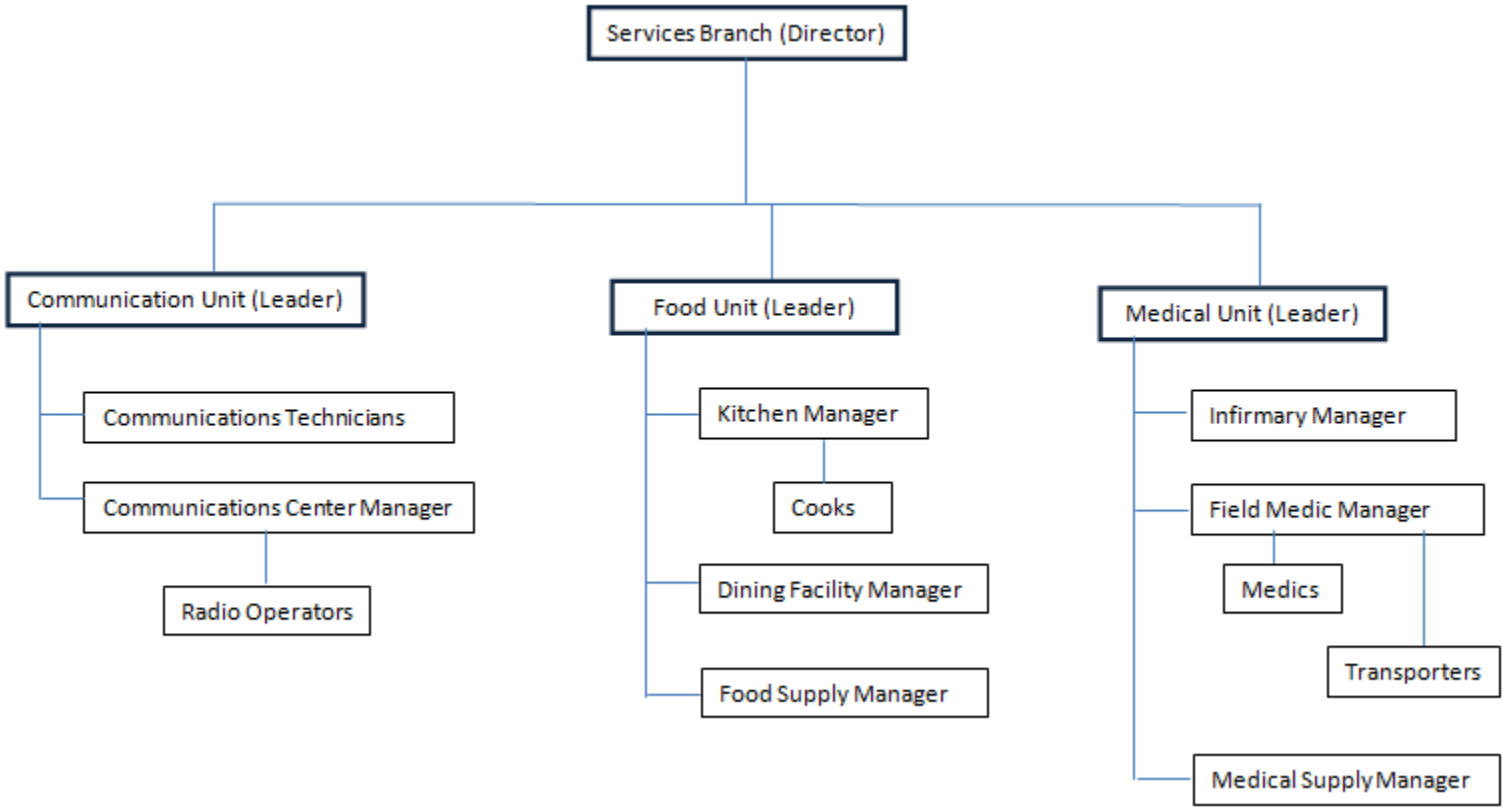
Responsibilities:

o Participate in Support Branch & Logistics Section planning activities.
o Provide support services (fueling, maintenance, and repair) for all mobile equipment and vehicles.
o Maintain an inventory of support and transportation vehicles.
o Update the Resources Unit Leader with the status (location and capability) of transportation vehicles.
o Maintain a transportation pool as necessary.
o Maintain roadways as necessary.

- *Equipment Manager* – Responsible for servicing, repairing, and fuel for all vehicles; maintains equipment use and service records.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Service Branch



- **Communications Unit**

The Communications Unit is responsible for developing plans for the use of communications equipment and facilities; installing and testing of communications equipment; supervision of the Communications Center (ComCenter); and the distribution and maintenance of communications equipment.

Responsibilities:

o Provide information on communications capabilities and limitations.
o Prepare and implement the Radio Communications Plan.
o Establish and supervise the Communications Center.
o Create and maintain communications procedures.
o Establish radio, telephone, computer links, and systems as needed.
o Install, test and maintain all communications equipment.
o Establish communications equipment distribution and maintenance locations.
o Oversee distribution, maintenance and recovery of non-personal communications equipment.
o Utilize an equipment accountability system as appropriate.

- *Communications Technicians* – COMTs are responsible for the installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of radio and other communications equipment.

- *Communications Center Manager* – Coordinates all communications in a central location. ComCenter is manned 24-hrs when needed.

- *Radio Operator* – Operates radios and other communications equipment under the direction of the Communications Center Manager.

- **Food Unit**

The Food Unit is responsible for supplying the food needs for the entire Camp (when/if implemented), including all remote locations, as well as providing food for personnel unable to leave tactical field assignment locations.

Responsibilities:

o Determine food and water requirements for all personnel.
o Determine method of feeding to best fit each facility or situation.
o Obtain necessary equipment and non-food supplies through the Ordering Manager.
o Obtain necessary equipment and food supplies through the Food Supply Manager.
o Establish cooking facilities coordinated through the Facilities Unit.
o Ensure that well-balanced menus are provided.
o Maintain an inventory of food and water.
o Maintain food service areas, ensuring that all appropriate health and safety measures are being followed.

- *Kitchen Manager* – Responsible for overseeing all kitchen operations, cooking, cleaning and sanitation compliance.

- *Cooks* – Responsible for preparing food in conjunction with planned menus.

- *Dining Facilities Manager* – Responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of the dining area and supplemental food serving area.

- *Food Supply Manager* – Responsible for ordering, receiving, storing, and inventorying food stored by the Food Unit. Ordering of outside food supplies will be done through the Ordering Manager. Coordinates internally grown food with the Garden Manager.

- **Medical Unit**

The Medical Unit will develop a Medical Plan (to be included in the Action Plan); develop procedures for managing major medical emergencies; provide medical aid to camp and field personnel, and establish medical facilities as needed.

Responsibilities:

- Determine level of emergency medical requirements.
- Acquire and manage medical support personnel.
- Prepare the Medical Emergency Plan.
- Establish procedures for handling serious injuries of personnel.
- Train all personnel to the first aid provider level.

Provide:

- Medical aid to incident personnel.
- Medical transportation of injured personnel.
- Order medical supplies as needed through the Ordering Manager.
- Embed medical personnel into Operations Section units as requested.
- Train additional personnel as needed/requested.
- The establishment of medical facilities as needed.

- *Infirmary Manager* – Responsible for all aspects of the camp medical infirmary facility; including all maintenance, staffing, supplying, etc.

- *Field Medic Manager* – Supplies and coordinates field medics embedded within the Operations Section. Will also coordinate all transportation of injured personnel from the field to the camp infirmary or other medical facility.

- *Field Medics* – Provide emergency medical care in the field to Operations Section units.

- *Transporters* – Provide transportation and emergency medical care of injured personnel from the field to the infirmary or other medical facility.

- *Medical Supply Manager* – Responsible for ordering, receiving, storing, and inventorying medical supplies stored by the Medical Unit. Ordering will be done through the Ordering Manager.

Summary –

What you just saw was an exhaustive review of the ICS Logistics Section. Do you need a person in each position? Probably not unless you have a large prepper organization (or church congregation) with lots of people and needs. But what you see above outlines most of the logistical needs that any prepper group has.

If your group is small, then maybe 1 or 2 people can do the job. But don't worry, if your group grows in number then just put additional people into the organizational chart to fulfill the specific needs. But this gives you "organization" for your group, and that is what is important and valuable.

Part #6 – Planning Section

Introduction & Note: *This is a long article on organization for a prepper group (emergency preparedness group). There is a lot of information to present. It comes from the national ICS model and I am adapting it to a "prepper" environment. While many positions, responsibilities, etc. stay the same, there are plenty that change. I have spent 5 years on a large national incident management team so I am including some first-hand experience modifications as well. Finally, this is a "work in progress" and the information will change and get updated. What you are reading is an initial "head dump." If you have questions, thoughts or concerns please feel free to leave me a "comment" and I will answer you. I have purposely left the Operations Section till last due to its complex and extensive nature. Thank you!*

Planning Section

General – Remember the Planning Section grows or shrinks as "needs" dictate. There is always someone in charge of planning, maybe just a single person for a small group/camp. When planning requirements become more than one person can handle, then more people are assigned to the position(s) required to meet that need. If the incident is small you may only need one or two people, if your prepper group is large you may need a dozen people to fill various positions. But the principles and responsibilities remain the same.

The Planning Section is alternatively (and kindly) referred to as the "Head Shed" or the "Brain Trust" in the organizational world. Smart people (brainiacs) tend to hang out in this Section because brain power is needed when it comes to planning. How much planning takes place in a prepper organization is going to depend on how much the group leadership wants to use them.

I will go into more detail explaining how the Sections work together in the Planning Cycle but suffice to say that group leadership provides "leaders intent" to the process and let those with the specialized skills -brain power- meet that intent.

Mission – Collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the camp/incident.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Responsibilities –

- Collect and process situation information about the current situation.
- Supervise preparation of the Action Plan.
- Provide input to the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief in preparing the Action Plan.
- Reassign unassigned personnel already on-site to organizational positions as appropriate.
- Establish information requirements and reporting schedules.
- Determine need for any specialized resources in support of the group.
- If requested, assemble and disassemble strike teams, task forces, crews, or squads not assigned to Operations.
- Establish special information and intelligence collection activities as necessary.
- Assemble information on alternative strategies in coordination with the Operations Section.
- Provide periodic predictions on situation potential.
- Report any significant changes in situation status.
- Compile and display incident status information.
- Oversee preparation of camp demobilization plan.
- Incorporate the incident traffic and movement plan (from Ground Support) and other supporting plans into the Action Plan.

Leadership –

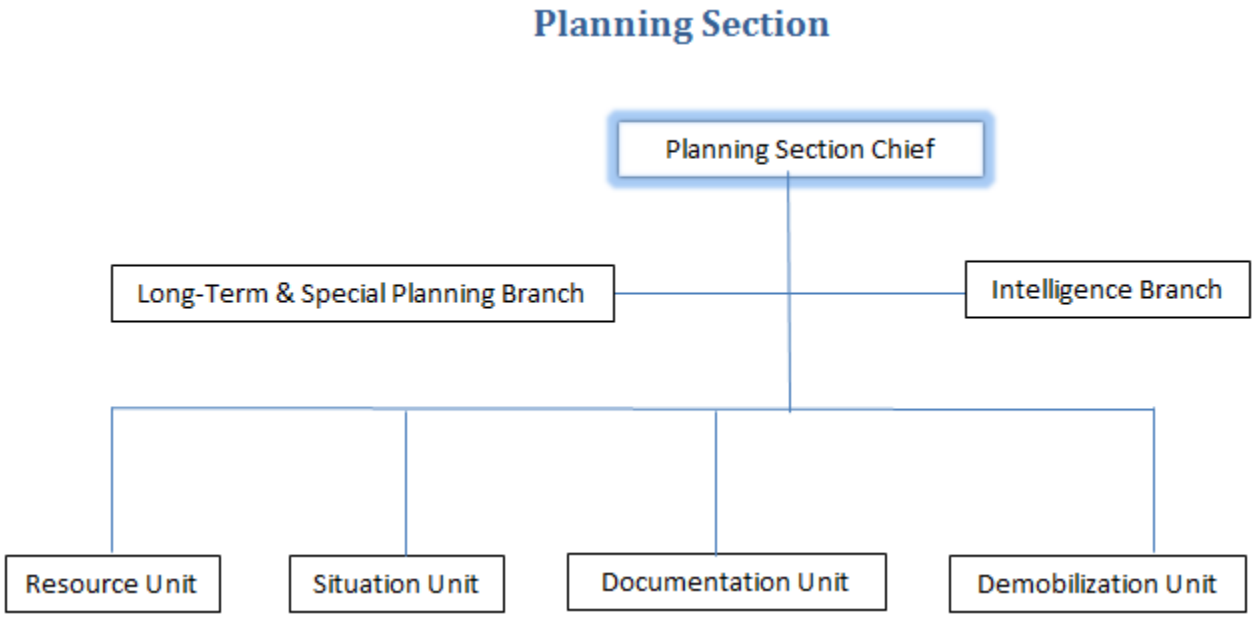
Planning Section Chief

The Planning Section is managed by the Planning Section Chief (PSC or *Plans*) who is a member of the General Staff. PSC may assign one or more Deputies to assist them. A Deputy is most often assigned when the leadership load for the PSC becomes too burdensome, all Units are staffed, or an Intelligence or Long-Term/Special Projects Planning Branches are required and introduces Span of Control or practical management.

Deputy Planning Section Chief

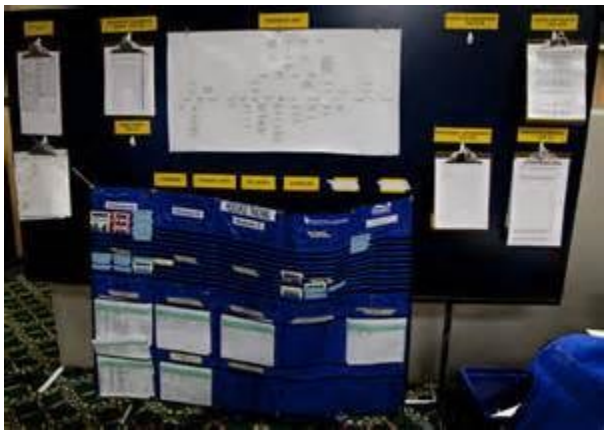
Qualified and able to make decisions in the absence of the PSC. Acts in behalf of, and with the authority of, the PSC. Used to reduce Span of Control conflicts or take responsibility for a specific purpose such as the Intelligence Branch.

Organization –



The Planning Section consists of four Units and two potential Branches. Each Unit is led by a "Leader". The Branches are led by a Branch Director as needed based on size, Span of Control, intelligence and/or special planning requirements or needs.

- **Resource Unit**



The Resources Unit is responsible for establishing all check-in activities; the preparation and processing of resource status information; the preparation and maintenance of displays, charts, and lists which reflect the current status and location of all resources.

Responsibilities:

- o Establish check-in function and oversee the check-in of all resources.
- o Maintaining a status-keeping system indicating current location and status of all resources.
- o Maintenance of a master list of all resource.
- o Prepare and maintain the Organization Chart.
- o Prepare documentation for appropriate parts of Operations Section – Division Assignment.
- o Prepare and maintain the Command Post displays (to include organization chart and resource and deployment locations).

Status Check-In Recorder

Status/Check-in Recorders are used at each check-in location to ensure that all resources assigned are accounted for. (Where practical, employ Demobilization Unit Leader as a Status/Check-in Recorder to ensure complete information is obtained at check-in.)

- o Obtain or develop work materials, including Check-in form.
- o Establish communications with the Communications Center.
- o Post signs so that arriving resources can easily find the check-in locations.
- o Record information on Check-in form.
- o Transmit check-in information to Resources Unit Leader on a regular, pre-arranged schedule.
- o Forward completed Check-in forms and information to the Resources Unit Leader.

- **Situation Unit**

The Situation Unit is responsible for the collection and organization of situational status and information; and the evaluation, analysis, and display of that information for use by appropriate personnel. The Situation Unit may prepare future projections of situation size, maps and intelligence information. The Situation Unit will also handle all *intelligence* matters is the absence of an Intelligence Branch.

Responsibilities:

o Collection and analysis of situational data as timely as possible.
o Prepare, post, or disseminate resource and situation status information as required, including special requests.
o Prepare periodic predictions of situation, or as requested.
o Prepare the Situational Status Summary in such format as appropriate for the situation.

Display Processor – Responsible for the display of situational status information obtained from field observers, photographs, and other collected data. Creating and printing maps. Develop required displays in accordance with time limits for completion. Support special requirements for development of incident maps.

Field Observer – Collects and reports on situation information from personal observations in the field. Assist in preparation of maps

Weather Observer – Collects current weather information from any available source. If possible, make weather predictions.

-

Documentation Unit

The Documentation Unit is responsible for maintaining accurate and complete incident files, providing duplication services to group personnel, and storing files.

Responsibilities:

- Organization of files.
- Establish duplication service; respond to requests.
- File all documents and reports.
- Provide documentation as requested.
- Store files for later use if appropriate.

- **Demobilization Unit**

The Demobilization Unit is responsible for developing the Demobilization Plan.

Responsibilities:

- Develop check-out function for all units.

Intelligence Branch

The Intelligence Branch is responsible for critical and time-sensitive, specialized info or classified information being used in or to develop the Action Plan. This choice (*Intelligence Branch*) may be most appropriate in those instances where there is a heavy influence by intelligence factors, or where there is a need to manage and/or analyze a large volume of classified or highly sensitive intelligence or other situation information. This option is particularly relevant to a potential violent situation, where intelligence plays a crucial role throughout the planning and operational life-cycle.

The Intelligence Branch can have as many personnel as needed to handle the workload. Personnel with appropriate skills (Field Observers) can be integrated into the Branch as needed but only after a thorough vetting process. The IC, Planning Section Chief, and the Intelligence Branch Director will make decisions as to the nature (i.e. classified, sensitive, etc.) of the information and material obtained, developed, and/or disseminated by the Branch. The Branch will work closely with the appropriate Operations Section leadership in the transference of intelligence information to the field for operational purposes.

Long-Term & Special Projects Planning Branch

This Branch is responsible for providing long-term planning as well as any special projects planning that require extensive commitment of existing resources or large-scale acquisition of new resources. The purpose of this Branch is to relieve existing Operations and Planning Sections personnel from the additional burden of specialized or long-term planning beyond their day-to-day activities and operations. This Branch can be initiated, grown, shrunk and disbanded as needed. The Branch can utilize any personnel necessary for the accomplishment of planning objectives as long as they have the required skills and expertise to perform successfully.

Summary –

What you just read was a review of the Planning Section. Do you need a person in each position? Probably not unless you have a large prepper organization with lots of people and needs. But what you see above outlines the majority of the planning needs that any prepper group would have.

If your group is small, then maybe 1 or 2 people can do the job. But don't worry, if your group grows in number then just put additional people into the organizational chart to fulfill specific needs. But this gives you "organization", an outline for your group. That is what is important and valuable, organization. Without it, your group's failure factor increases dramatically.

Part #7 – Administrative & Finance Section

Introduction & Note: *This is a long article on organization for a prepper group (emergency preparedness group). There is a lot of information to present. It comes from the national ICS model and I am adapting it to a "prepper" environment. While many positions, responsibilities, etc. stay the same, there are plenty that change. I have spent 5 years on a large national incident management team so I am including some first-hand experience modifications as well. Finally, this is a "work in progress" and the information will change and get updated. What you are reading is an initial "head dump." If you have questions, thoughts or concerns please feel free to leave me a "comment" and I will answer you. I have purposely left the Operations Section till last due to its complex and extensive nature. Thank you!*

Administrative & Finance Section

General – Remember the Finance Section grows or shrinks as "needs" dictate. There is always someone in charge of Finance, maybe the IC, maybe a single person for a small group/camp. When financial requirements become more than one person can handle then more people are assigned to the position(s) required to fulfill that need. If the incident is small you may only need one or two people, if your prepper group is large you may several people to fill various positions. But the principles and responsibilities remain the same.

A Finance Section is established when the management activities require finance support services. Some of the functions that fall within the scope of this Section are recording time, maintaining contracts, compensation and claims, and conducting all other finical aspects for the group.

Mission – All financial support needs are provided by the Planning Section.

Responsibilities –

- Manage all financial aspects of an incident.
- Provide financial analysis information as requested.
- Determine the need to set up and operate a group store.
- Ensure that all personnel time records are accurately completed.
- Ensure that all equipment usage records are accurately completed.
- Ensure that all financial documents are properly prepared, monitored and completed.
- Develop and maintain a group-based “money system” and/or a “barter system.”

Leadership –

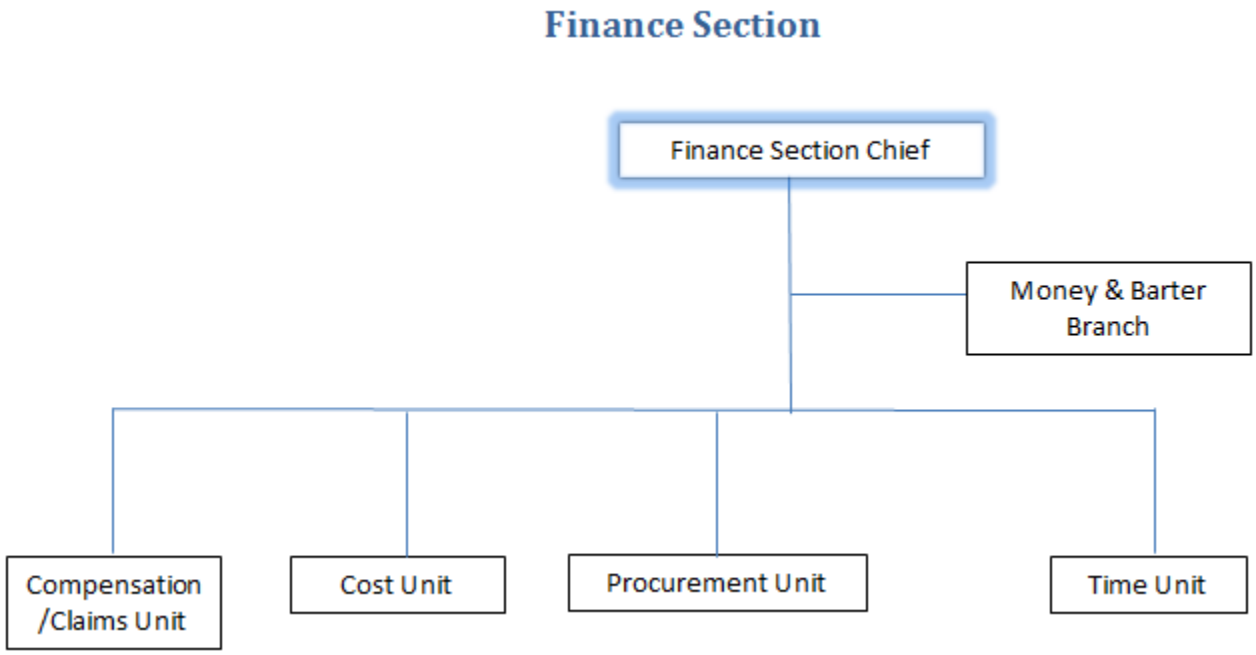
Finance Section Chief

The Finance Section is managed by the Finance Section Chief (*FinC*) who is a member of the General Staff.

Deputy Finance Section Chief

Rarely is a Deputy needed. However, in a specific case of setting up a group monetary and/or barter system one may be required.

Organization –



Finance Section consists of four Units. Each Unit is led by a “Leader”.

- **Compensation/Claims Unit:**

Responsible for financial concerns resulting from resources usage, property damage, injuries, or fatalities at the incident. Negotiating appropriate compensation for resource usage owned by group personnel. This Unit is also responsible for negotiating financial settlements between group members should the need arise. If group members are being compensated for their time, this Unit will coordinate that process.

- **Cost Unit:**

Responsible for tracking costs, analyzing cost data, making estimates, and recommending cost-saving measures.

- **Procurement Unit:**

Responsible for financial matters regarding paying or compensating for resources that are acquired externally. This Unit will handle the “payment” aspect of acquiring external resources, supplies, etc. This Unit, when established, will work closely with the Order Manger and Supply Unit in the acquisition of external resources, supplies, etc. in regards to payment.

- **Time Unit:**

Responsible for recording time for incident personnel and equipment and providing that information to the Compensation/Claims as needed. When activated this Unit tracks hours that group personnel supply their own time or other equipment time (i.e. generators, truck, etc.) and will be compensated for it. This Unit will supply the usage information to the Compensation/Claims Unit for processing.

Summary –

What you just read was a review of the Finance Section. Do you need a person in each position? Probably not unless you have a very large and sophisticated prepper organization with lots of people and needs. But what you see above outlines the majority of the finance needs that a prepper group would have.

If your group is small you probably won't need anyone in this Section. If you have a medium sized group then maybe 1 or 2 people can do the job. But don't worry, if your group grows in number then just put additional people into the organizational chart to fulfill specific needs. But this gives you "organization", an outline for your group. That is what is important and valuable, organization. Without it, your group's failure factor increases dramatically.

Operations Section

Part # 8 – Operations Section Organization for Churches & Preppers

Here is the final piece of the Preparedness & Organization (ICS – Incident Command System) puzzle…*Operations*. It has taken me a long time to finally get this part written. The Operations Section was a tough one. The Logistics, Planning, and Admin/Finance sections were relatively easy to get onto paper. The Operations Section was a whole lot tougher.

There is a fundamental difference between the church/religion implementation of the Operations Section and the prepper's implementation of the Operations Section. The nice thing is the fact that they are compatible. And both are also 100% compatible with the current ICS system used by government and non-profit agencies who respond to emergencies and disasters as part of their day job.

So what is that *difference* that I am referring to?

When ICS is adopted and implemented by churches it is clearly and obviously associated with religious beliefs. And with rare exception religion is associated with compassion and service to others. And prepper groups would hopefully lump themselves into that same category of "service to others" during emergencies and disasters as well. Voluntarily taking care of each other is a fundamental responsibility of the human race.

On the other hand, preppers will find themselves in a far different situation during a "grid-down" event.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS

I think that most church emergency and disaster response organizations could easily find themselves falling apart when faced with a "grid-down" scenario. I think the very thing that makes churches effective spiritually, could work against them when times get tough…when even tougher decisions would need to be made. I think preppers, especially organized prepper groups, would have no problem making tough choices and decisions. Hopefully those decisions would be made without forgetting the compassionate side of their soul.

So the fundamental difference is the ability to change from "*offensive*-service" to "*defensive*-protection" and then deciding to what degree the "protection" is implemented. With that difference in mind we end up with the same basic organization between the two groups and both are fully compatible with each other. And both are fully compatible with the standard implementation of ICS. It works out well, all the training and structural elements of both are familiar and useful to all.

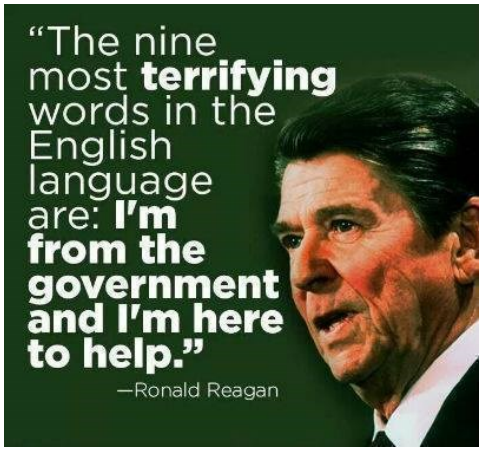
But, for this article I am going to break the two forms of ICS into the following:

1. **CICS** – Church Incident Command System for use by churches, religious, or service-based organization.
2. **PICS** – Prepper Incident Command System to be used by preppers individually, family, or any sized group of preppers.

First – Why do we need ICS, CICS, PICS or any other "system" when responding to emergencies or disasters? And especially why do we need something like this for a grid-down event?

"We're from the government and we're here to help!"

Preparedness & Organization: ICS



Those words bring more smiles, laughs, and other forms of cynicism than any other. We've all seen how badly government screws-up anything it touches, especially disaster and emergency response. Often times government will make a disaster much worse than it already is. And will always make it very, very expensive.

It has been my experience over the years that typically when local citizen expertise has been put to work by a community working together, a much better and a much more effective response can take place. But that can only come to fruition when people will organize themselves. And "organization" is one of two primary keys, the other being "communication."

If you have taken CPR training, especially if you have watched any of the CPR training videos, the person administering CPR will look at a person, point to them and tell them to call 911. Why not just yell for someone to call 911?

Exactly, "someone" will rarely act because everyone thinks that someone is not them. But when someone takes charge and organizes, tasks get done…and the mission gets accomplished. Same thing for responding to emergencies, disasters, and especially "grid-down." Organization is a primary key to being able to effectively respond to the challenges that you and your folks will face. ICS, SICS, and PICS will give you a ready-made answer and organizational structure.

Next – Let's remember what your goals are **L.I.P.S.**

Life Safety : The #1 priority during any incident or event is life safety, protecting people from death or injury, in that order.

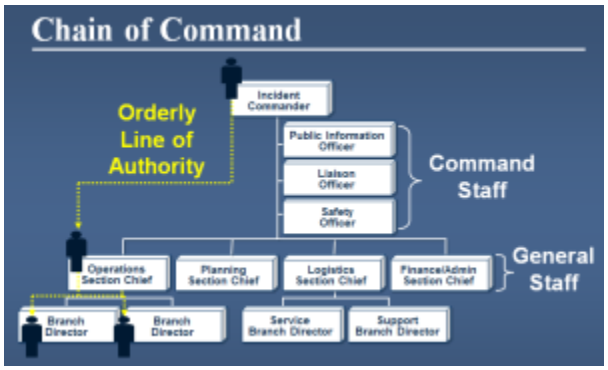
Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Incident Stabilization : Don't make an incident worse than it already is. The disaster is already bad, something has gone wrong; don't do anything that will make it worse.

Property Conservation : Don't destroy anything you don't have to. Don't damage or destroy any resource (or potential resource) you don't have to during a disaster or an emergency…you might need later.

Societal Restoration : That's a mouthful but you just want to put everything back the way it was (preferably better) before the disaster or emergency occurred. The concept is to return your family's (or group's or congrgaton's) daily life to the original or a better condition as soon as it is reasonable to do so.

Part of the "safety" aspect, both internal and external, is "accountability." Not, in a negative sense where people are "held accountable" but rather in the positive sense that no one gets left behind, gets left out, forgotten, ignored, or not taken care of. This is *accountability* where people are taken care of; the answer to that is organizational structure.

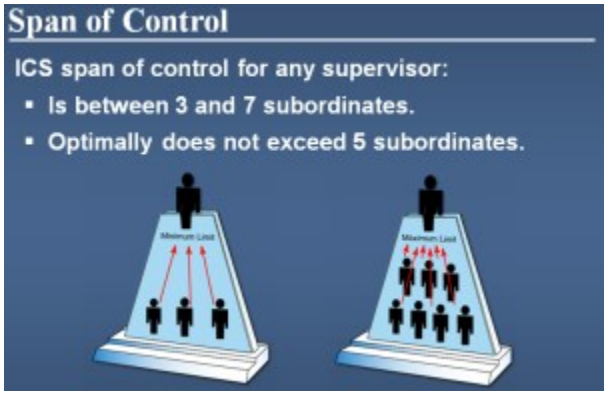


To ensure accountability we have chain of command where each person has a supervisor that they report to and receive information and tasking from. And only <u>one</u> person! This ensures that conflicting assignments and information are kept to a minimum, maybe/hopefully eliminated. This means that all important communication goes up and down the chain of command.

But this concept also means that each supervisor has specific responsibility for the people that they supervise. The supervisor is responsible for the safety of their people, their health, their food, their sleep, etc. This ensures that everyone is being watched out for, cared for.

No, this doesn't eliminate personal responsibility for oneself, it enhances it. It makes sure that everyone is taken care of as best as possible.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS

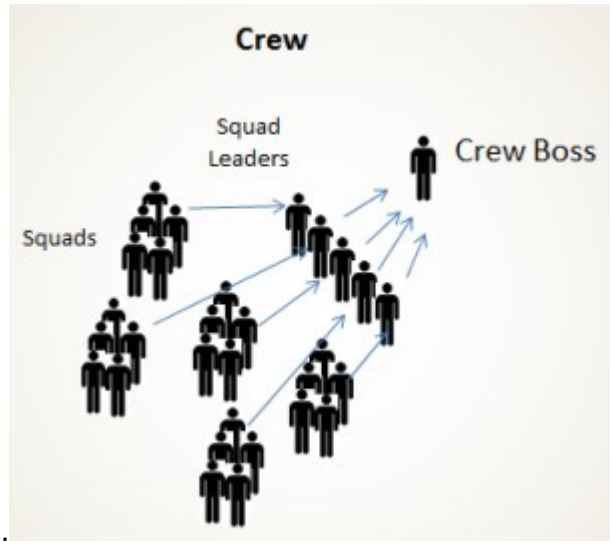


Another important principle that has proven to be true during emergency response and other stressful situations is “span of control.” Research and practical experience has shown that the average supervisor/leader can only effectively supervise 3 – 7 people at any one time under stressful situations. The more precise/average number that is used is 5 in the typical emergency situation.

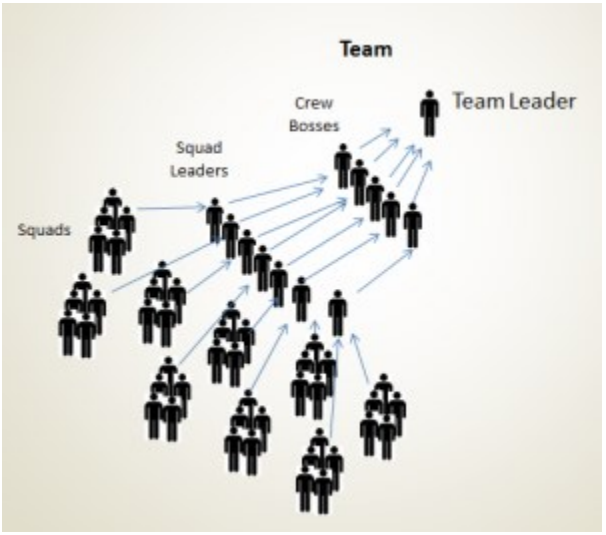
Yes, a person can lead more than 7 people, but all research and practical experience shows that effectiveness drops significantly beyond 7 direct subordinates. And when you are talking about a drop in “effectiveness” in an emergency situation you are talking about increase in not just mistakes, but injuries as well…maybe worse.

Span of control is the principle by which an organization grows or shrinks.

You have up to five people working an emergency response, then you must have a supervisor. We will call that group of up to 6 people (including the supervisor) a “squad” supervised and lead by a squad *leader*



When you get more than 1 squad (up to 5) they form a "crew" supervised and led by a crew *boss*.



When you get more than 1 crew (up to 5) they form a "team" supervised and led by a team *leader*.

Now, let's take a break from the span of control principle for a minute to look at two additional principles before returning and continuing to explain how span of control works.

Notice how the organization is growing from the bottom up? We start at the lowest functional level, a single worker/responder. They are referred to as a *resource*. Then as the need for more people (resources) grows, or the *need* for other skills grows, the operational organization grows with them. And "function" is based on what function(s) are being performed by people doing

the work. The "need" comes from what work needs to be done; or what work is required to be accomplished.

Form follows function. Function is based on need.

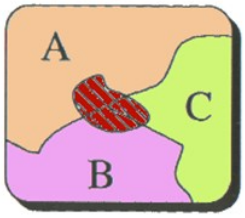
The operational organization grows from the bottom up, NOT the top down. And the organization only grows when there is a *need*. We want to avoid the pitfalls of too many chiefs and not enough Indians.

Next principle to touch on is *Divisions* and *Groups*. This is an easy concept to understand if the following is clearly absorbed…

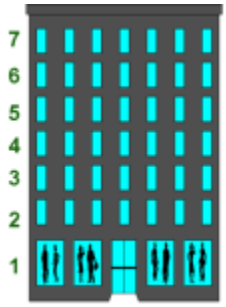
***Divisions* cover "dirt" and *Groups* cover "skills."**

Every incident or emergency response will have the area broken-up into areas of responsibility.

Example: Someone has responsibility for the north side of the river.



Or, someone has responsibility for the 4th floor.



This "dirt" denotes a geographically defined area of responsibility. There is a single person in-charge of that specific area, all activities that occur in that area are coordinated by that single person. The geographically defined area is called a "Division."

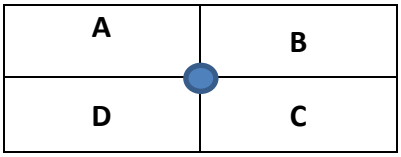
Every incident or emergency response will also have the need for specialized skills such as EMT's, search & rescue dogs, or maybe earth-moving equipment such as dozers, graders, excavators and dump trucks. These are all groups of resources with special skills or abilities. When you group together resources for special purposes they are called a "Group."

Both Divisions and Groups are supervised and lead by a "supervisor."

So a *Division* covers a specific geographic area of responsibility. A *Group* covers a specific skill set or function. A Group operates wherever they are needed at the request of a Division. So a Group may perform their work in any Division where they are needed. But when they are done with that specific work, they move out of that Division and on to their next assignment.

One last concept of Divisions and Groups – how they are named.

There are two guiding principles of naming Divisions – horizontally and vertically. Don't get confused or let it become overwhelming.

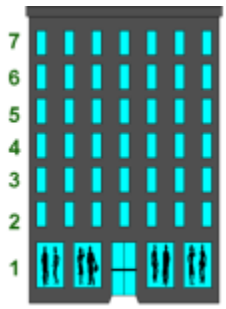


Look at a large Walmart parking lot with the building in the middle. We are going to place a Division in-charge of each side of the parking lot. Starting on the northwest side of the parking lot we name that division, Division A. The northeast side is Division B, the southeast side is Division C and the southwest side is Division D.

Notice how we started on the northwest end and then went around clock-wise naming the Divisions? First, it is compliant and consistent with the national naming convention. But it also makes travel much easier for people. If they are in Division A and are told to go to Division C to pick up drinking water, they know that they will travel clock-wise around a map, generally moving from north to south along the east side of the incident.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS

OK, back to the Walmart…we have the parking lot properly assigned by Divisions. Notice that they are named alphabetically, clock-wise. But what about the Walmart office building?



For this discussion let's say that there are 7 levels or floors to a building. The first level/floor would be identified as "Division 1", 2nd level/floor, "Division 2", the third level/floor would be identified as "Division 3" and so on. The divisions are identified vertically by numbers.

So, if you were assigned to Division 2 and told to go to Division 3 to retrieve a tool you would instinctively know you would be going up one floor.

The method Division assignments are made is simple and extremely logical. By doing so you automatically give people a relative understanding of where they are at an incident…geographically speaking. And more importantly, they have a pretty good idea where everyone else is or where they are going based on Division assignments.

Groups are named by the *function* they perform. If I was referring to the EMT Group, instinctively who do you think I would be talking about?

Yes, the people that are providing medical aid at the Emergency Medical Technician level.

Another example could be the Heavy Equipment Group what would you naturally think of?

Yes, heavy equipment such as dozers, graders, trucks, etc. that would be available to provide earth-moving services.

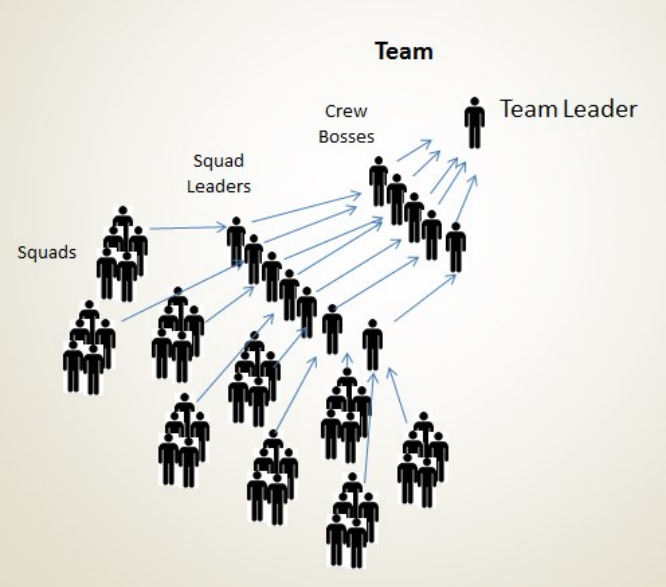
So why not assign EMT's and heavy equipment to Divisions? Actually, you could. But would that Division keep them fully engaged, working, and busy all day, day after day? Would it be an efficient use of that quipment?

If the answer is “yes” then the EMTs or the heavy equipment could be assigned to a Division until their work is done. But, if the work needs to take place in multiple Divisions but maybe only a partial day or two at a time, it is more efficient to put them in a Group with a single supervisor and move them around the different Divisions as needed.

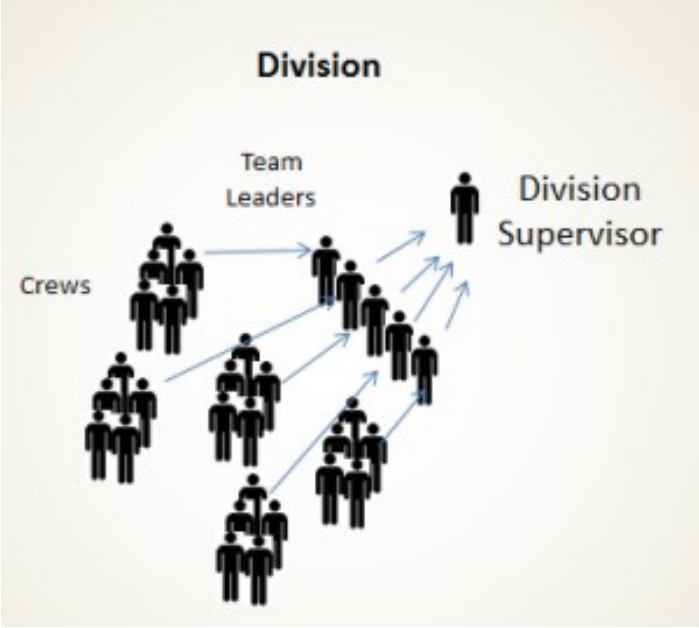
Preparedness & Organization: ICS

Now, back to the way an organization grows and develops…Remember where we left-off?

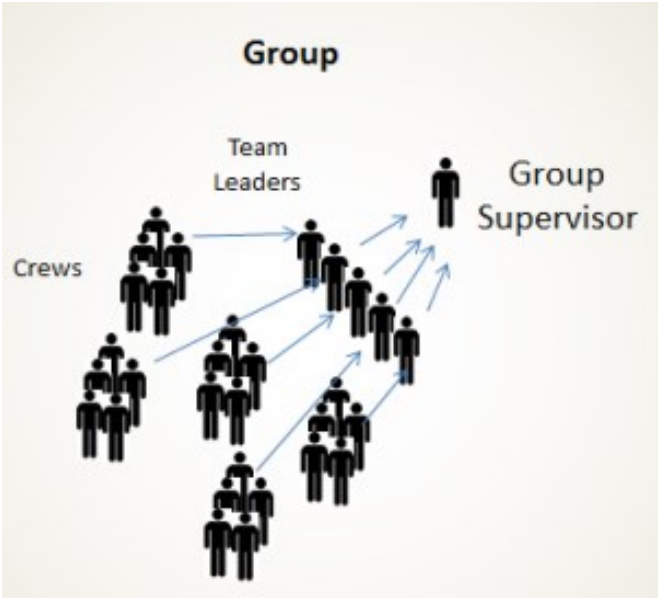
Back to span of control, we were talking about *Teams*…



So, when you get more than 1 team (up to 5) they form a “division” or “group” supervised and lead by a *supervisor*.

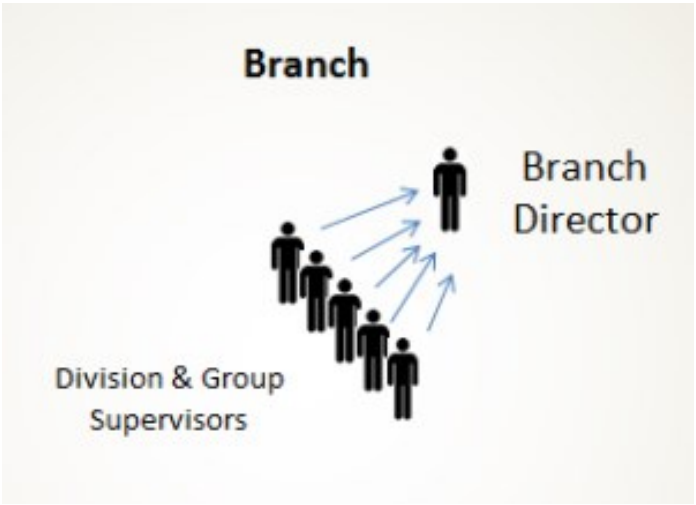


As I mentioned earlier, it is a *division* if it a *geographic area*.

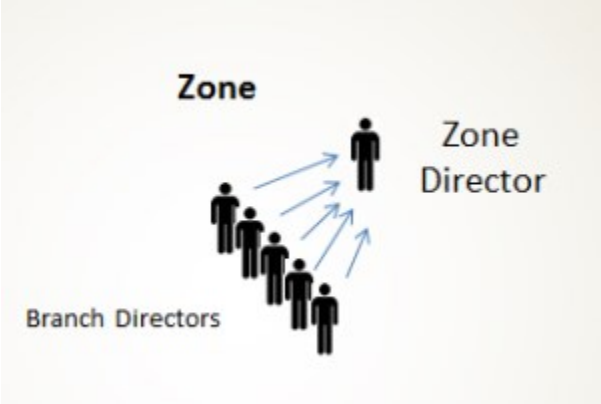


It is a *group* if it is a *function*.

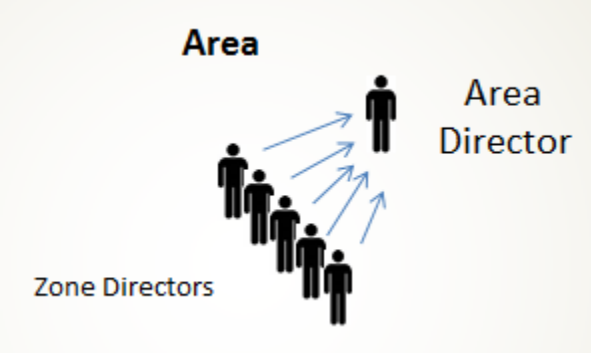
But they both look the same organizationally.



Each Division or Group reports to, is supervised by, the Operations Section Chief. But, when you get more than 5 divisions or groups they form a “branch” supervised and lead by a branch *director*. And that Branch Director report to and is supervised by the Operations Section Chief.

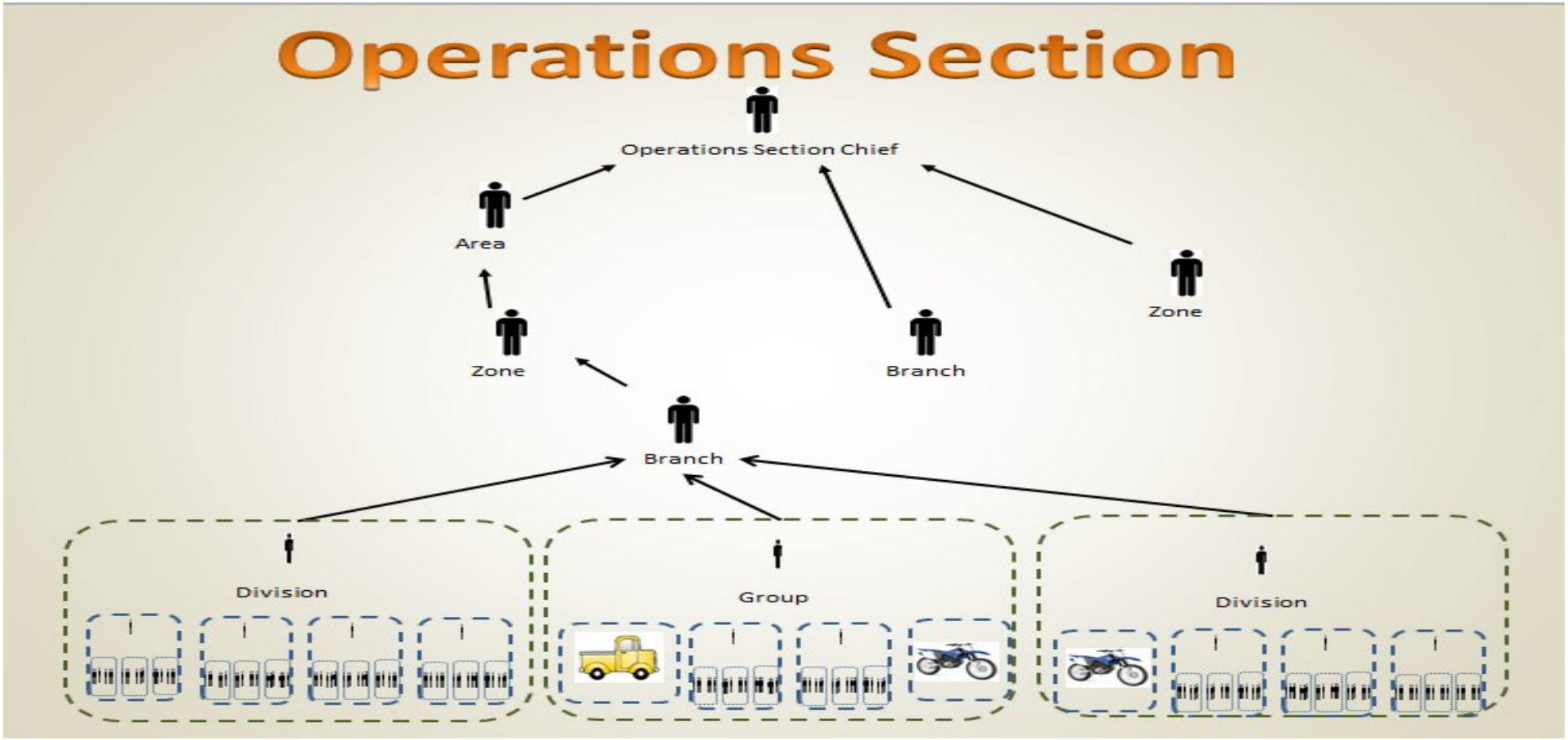


So, when you get more than 5 branches they form a “zone” supervised and lead by a *director*. And that Branch Director reports to and is supervised by the Operations Section Chief.



So, when you get more than 5 zones they form an “area” supervised and lead by a *director*. And that Area Director reports to and is supervised by the Operations Section Chief.

Preparedness & Organization: ICS



All Operations Section personnel are under the direction of the Operations Section Chief. If you have multiple Branches, Zones, or Areas, a Deputy Operations Section Chief is assigned to supervise some portion of them to take some of the pressure off the Operations Section Chief.

There is one strange part of the Operations Section that seems out of place at first, but is integral to the efficient and effective functioning of the Operations Section. There is a position called the Staging Area Manager. The STAM is in charge of, responsible for, the Staging Area. The Staging Area in a location where unassigned resources await an assignment. Those resources can be individual single resources, Squads, Crews, or Teams. When a resource is needed in a Division or Group, the Division or Group Supervisor contacts their immediate supervisor to make that happen. That need is communicated to the STAM who then dispatches the appropriate requested resources to the requesting Division or Group for a briefing and tasking.

A STAM may have one or more Assistants to help them manage the Staging Area. Any resource that is in a Staging Area is ready and available for assignment. Minimal logistics are provided by the Staging area (i.e. water, port-a-potty, etc.). There are no limitations to the number of Staging Areas that can be put into use. If there is going to be more than 1 Staging area, a Staging Area *Branch* or *Group* can be set-up. Alternatively, one or more STAMs can be supervised directly by a Deputy Operations Section Chief. Otherwise, a STAM reports directly to the Operations Section Chief.

But just remember, here are the approximate numbers you could be dealing with as various organizational levels. Decide how realistic it is for you to deal with any particular organizational situation.

UNIT	# DIRECTLY SUPERVISED	MAX # INDIRECTLY SUPERVISED
Operation Section Chief	5 Deputy OpsChief	1,953,125
Deputy OpsChief	5 Area Directors	390,625
Area Director	5 Zone Directors	78,125
Zone Director	5 Branch Chiefs	15,625
Branch Chief	5 Divisions or Groups	3,125
Division/Group Supervisor	5 Teams	625
Team Leaders	5 Crews	125
Crew Boss	5 Squads	25
Squad Leader	5 People	n/a

You can see how crazy the numbers can get. But that is also the beauty of the system as well. You can have over 390,000 people in the Operations Section but no single person supervises more than 5 people. Amazing!

And if you are wondering…yes, the system does work and it is used day in and day out, especially during wildfire season. I have personally been on incidents with over 5,000 people in

a single command structure. And that was just part of a larger fire organization of almost 10,000 people. I am telling you it works…and it works very well.