TRAININGS · TRAINING RESOURCES

Incident Command System (ICS) Guide

An overview of the ICS structure used during Lincoln County response efforts, for volunteers and staff who need a working understanding of how incidents are organized.

What is ICS?

The Incident Command System is a standardized approach to managing emergency response, used nationwide so that responders from different agencies and jurisdictions can work together smoothly. Lincoln County EMA uses ICS to organize its response to any incident, from a single-town power outage to a county-wide storm event.

The Five Major Functions

Command

Sets incident objectives, priorities, and has overall responsibility at the incident.

Operations

Directs all tactical actions needed to meet incident objectives.

Planning

Collects and evaluates information, tracks resources, and maintains documentation.

Logistics

Provides resources and services needed to support the incident, including supplies, equipment, and facilities.

Finance/Administration

Tracks incident-related costs, personnel time, and procurement.

Key Terms

- **Incident Commander (IC)** — the individual responsible for all incident activities.
- **Unified Command** — allows agencies to jointly manage an incident by establishing common objectives.
- **Span of Control** — the ICS recommendation that one supervisor manage no more than 3–7 people (5 is optimal).
- **Incident Action Plan (IAP)** — the plan for managing the incident during a specified operational period.

Recommended Training

For a complete introduction, complete FEMA's IS-100 and IS-700 independent study courses — see the Training Links page for direct access. Team leads and coordinators are encouraged to complete ICS-200 as well.