Incident Command System (ICS)
Review

Frank Pleshe - N3FRP

n3frp@arrl.net

What is ICS?

- ICS is the incident management model that has been adopted as the standard by the U.S. and state governments.
- ICS is the organizational component of the National Incident Management System, NIMS.
- NIMS provides a consistent, nationwide template to enable government and private-sector organizations to work together during domestic incidents.
- ICS is a major component of NIMS, but NIMS is a national plan that includes other facets.

Background of NIMS and ICS

- NIMS and ICS were developed by the Department of Homeland Security after 9/11 to provide a common organizational structure for a wide range of incidents and groups. Interoperability is the goal.
- ICS is a proven system that was originally developed in the 1970s in California by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. Over time, it evolved and was proven effective, so it was selected by Homeland Security as the basis for the ICS organization.

ICS Mandate

- **ICS is not just a good idea: it is the law**
  - **NC Governor proclamation, May 11th 2005**
- Federal rules (and funding stipulations) require ICS training and use by emergency agencies.
- Knowledge of ICS is essential to fit into an incident response team

Features of ICS

- ICS is a mature and proven system that has been used for many real-world incidents. **ICS works.**
- It is standardized across all agencies and jurisdictions in the USA. A person trained on ICS in Tennessee can fit into an organization in New York or Texas.
- It is flexible and expandable. An ICS organization can be as small as one person, or it can be large enough to handle the BP oil spill or hurricane's like Sandy.
- It is designed to facilitate cooperation between agencies, and it can span multiple geographic regions.

Universal Applicability

- ICS is used for emergency (unplanned) incidents and also planned events such as football games, parades, bike rides and VIP visits.
- Once you learn ICS, you will think of all types of situations where you can use it. For example, a ham radio public service event or a fundraiser for an organization.

Basic attributes of ICS

- Standardization
- Delegation of authority
- Chain of command
- Unity of command
- Span of Control
- Expandability
- Contraction

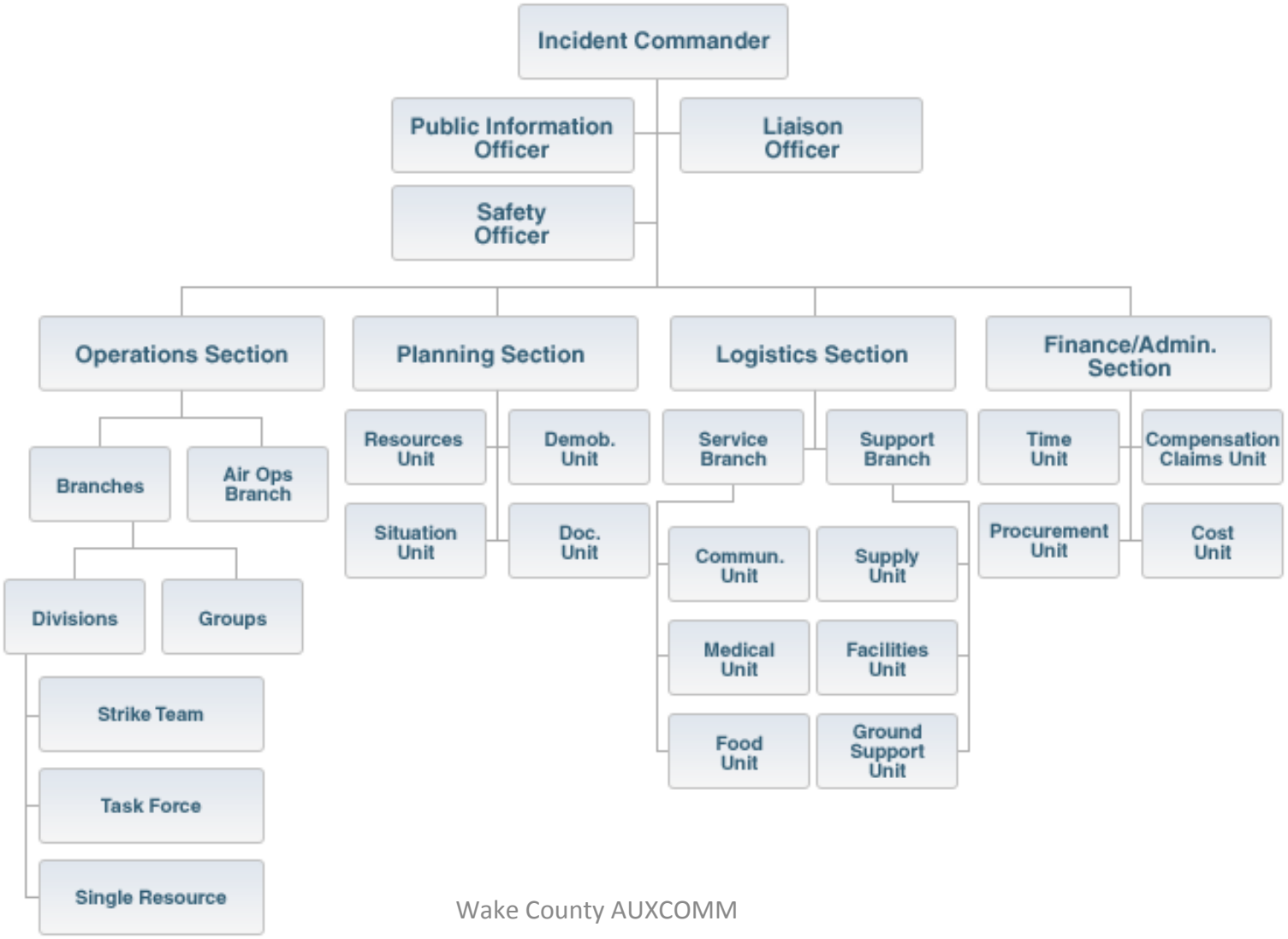
Operating in a ICS organization

- If you are deployed in an ICS organization, you take off your other hats at the door. People are deployed and utilized according to his or her skill set, not the organization they represent.
  - **You do NOT self-deploy**
  - **Ham radio badges, hats, shirts, etc… don't matter, your skills DO.**
- You must be willing to be assigned in the ICS organization and take instructions through the ICS chain of command, not some other group.

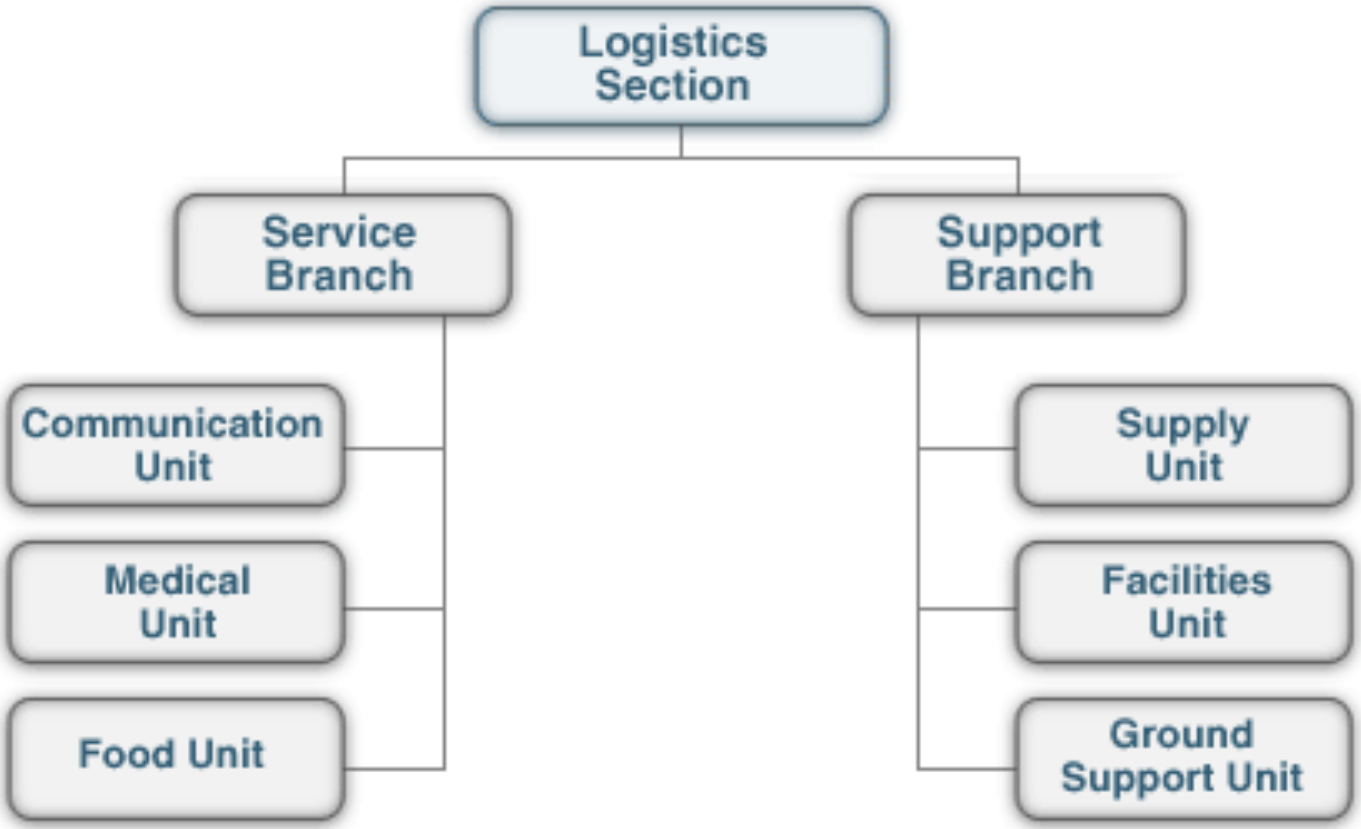
Serving in Emergencies

- Priorities: (1) save lives, (2) stablize incident, and (3) protect property
- You may end up taking more responsibility or doing different things than you expect
- Have an attitude of service not bossiness
- Dress, speak and act professionally. Your actions reflect on the entire ham and volunteer community.
- Be flexible and cooperative. Do what needs to be done.
- Be prepared for contingencies
- Expect the unexpected... But don’t count on it

Major ICS components



Logistics Section



Communications Unit

- The Communications Unit Leader (COML) manages the Communications Unit.
- Sets up the Incident Communications Center.
- Set up the communications plan including allocating frequencies and channels. Presented in form ICS-205.
- Communications technicians (COMT) install radios, repeaters, gateways, and program radios.
- Technical specialists (THSP) may be responsible for gateways, computers, and WINLINK computer systems.
  - **Auxiliary Emergency Communicator's**

Incident Communications Center

- The Incident Communications Manager organizes and supervises the Incident Communications Center
- Establish and equip the ICC
- Assign and supervise radio operators
- Maintain proper communications logs
- Radio Operators (RADO) report to the Incident Communications Manager

Interoperability

- The ability of two or more people to communicate and work together for a common goal.
- Must understand and use a common organization
- Must use the same language, terms and phrases
- Must have compatible communications equipment
- Must use compatible protocols
- WINLINK is a great interoperability bridge
- Must be able to cooperate and work together

Summary

- ICS provides a common structure for all incidents
- ICS is standardized and used across the USA
- ICS greatly facilitates interoperability
- ICS can handle small to enormous incidents
- ICS can be applied to *any* incident or event
- ICS has been proven over and over. It works.
- Knowledge of ICS is essential for fitting into an incident response team

Additional Resources

- FEMA NIMS
  - http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system
- AUXCOMM Overview
  - http://publicsafetytools.info/training/start_auxcom_v1.php
- FEMA Student ID registration
  - https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid/Home.aspx
- NIMS training homepage
  - http://www.training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp
- ICS Resource Center
  - http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/index.htm

Upcoming training

- Activation Procedures
- ICS forms (ICS-201,ICS-205,ICS-213, ICS-214,ICS-217a…)
- Net control operator
- WINLINK

Credit

- A very special thanks to Phil Sherrod (W4PHS) for the majority of the content in this presentation. **Great stuff Phil!**