ICS for LAUSD – EOC and DOC Operation

Below is some background information on the Incident Command System (used at our schools and in other field operations) and how it applies in an EOC environment.

From *ICS 100.SCa Introduction to the Incident Command System for Schools*

What Is ICS?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management approach. ICS:

- Is based on proven incident management practices.
- Defines incident response organizational concepts and structures.
- Consists of procedures for managing personnel, facilities, equipment, and communications.
- Is used throughout the lifecycle of an incident (e.g., from threat to parent reunification).

Why Use ICS?

ICS is designed to help school personnel ensure:

- The safety of students, staff, responders, and others.
- The achievement of incident objectives.
- The efficient use of resources.

The Bottom Line: ICS saves lives!

ICS Benefits

ICS:

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind or size.
- Allows school personnel and responders to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Is cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

ICS can be used to manage any of the following types of incidents:

- Disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, floods, ice storms, or earthquakes.
- Disease outbreaks and prevention measures.
- Search operations for a missing student.

- Hazardous materials accidents in chemistry labs.
- Hostile intruders or other criminal acts.
- Planned events, such as school drills, festivals, sporting events, and graduations.

Management by Objectives

Incident objectives are used to ensure that everyone within the ICS organization has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:

- Life Safety
- Incident Stabilization
- Property Preservation

Reliance on an Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

- Specifies the incident objectives.
- States the activities to be completed.
- Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period.
- May be oral or written—except for hazardous materials incidents (which require a written IAP).

Information and Intelligence Management

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence is an important component of ICS. Incident management must establish a process for gathering, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

Intelligence includes other operational information that may come from a variety of different sources, such as:

- Risk assessments.
- Threats, including potential for school violence.
- Surveillance of disease outbreak.
- Weather forecasts.
- Structural plans and vulnerabilities.

Accounting for Incident Resources

In ICS, resources refer to personnel, supplies, and equipment. During an incident, it is critical to know:

- What resources are needed and available.
- Where deployed resources are located.
- Effective resource management ensures that response personnel are safe and incident objectives are achieved.

Management Function Descriptions

Below is a brief description of the major ICS functions:

Incident Command	Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident.
Operations	Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes the tactics and directs all operational resources.
Planning	Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.
Logistics	Provides resources and needed services to support the achievement of the incident objectives.
Finance & Administration	Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Incident Commander

The Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident by establishing objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics. The **Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications.** On small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all management functions. The Incident Commander is responsible for all ICS management functions until he or she delegates the function.

Delegating Incident Management Functions

ICS organization is modular and has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. On a larger incident, the Incident Commander may create Sections and delegate the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration functions.

Remember . . . The Incident Commander only creates those sections that are needed. If a Section is not staffed, the Incident Commander will personally manage those functions.

Incident Commander

The Incident Commander must have the authority to manage the incident and be briefed fully. In some instances, a written delegation of authority should be established. Personnel assigned by the Incident Commander have the authority of their assigned positions, regardless of the rank they hold within the school administration.

Incident Commander's Overall Role

My job is to provide the overall leadership for incident response. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. I take general direction and receive my delegation of authority from school administration. However, at the incident scene, I am in charge.

Incident Commander Responsibilities

In addition to having overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.

- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders, such as parents.

- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.

The Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies. *Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.*

Incident Commander's Responsibilities

As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I delegate them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long term, I will need more staff. In addition, I may decide that I need a Deputy.

Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the school administration. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. Most simple incidents don't require written plans. If it were a complex incident, I would direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. The benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need.

Selecting and Changing Incident Commanders

As incidents become more or less complex, command may change to meet the needs of the incident. Rank, grade, and seniority are not the factors used to select the Incident Commander. **The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response.** For example, the school principal may not automatically be the Incident Commander. A formal transfer of command at an incident always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander.

Expanding the Organization

Operations Section Chief

Typically, the Operations Section Chief is the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand. The Operations Section Chief:

- Develops and implements strategy and tactics to carry out the incident objectives.

- Organizes, assigns, and supervises the response resources.

Operations Section Chief's Role

I take direction from the Incident Commander. I'm responsible for developing and implementing strategy and tactics to accomplish the incident objectives. This means that I organize, assign, and supervise all the tactical or response resources assigned to the incident. I would also manage the Staging Area, if one were established.

Planning Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section and if so, will designate a Planning Section Chief. If no Planning Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all planning functions. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any needed additional staffing.

Planning Section Chief's Role

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section, and if so, will designate a Planning Section Chief. In a school incident, the Planning Section helps ensure responders have accurate information, such as the number of students remaining in the building. We can also provide resources such as maps and floor plans. In addition to developing plans, we can provide an invaluable service by recording a chronology of incident events for legal, analytical, fiscal, and historical purposes.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident intelligence and information.

- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.

- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.

- Maintaining incident documentation.

- Developing plans for demobilization.

Logistics Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Logistics Section at the incident, and if so, will designate an individual to fill the position of the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistic Section Chief helps make sure that there are adequate resources (personnel, supplies, and equipment) for meeting the incident objectives.

Logistics Section Chief's Role

Logistics can make or break an incident response. I assist the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief by providing the resources and services required to support incident activities. During a school incident, Logistics is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient food, water, and sanitation supplies. We are also responsible for arranging buses for evacuations and communication equipment.

Logistics and Finance have to work closely to contract for and purchase goods and services needed at the incident.

Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs, including:

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.

- Providing communication planning and resources.

- Setting up food services.

- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.

- Providing support transportation.

- Providing medical services to **incident personnel** (**not injured students)**.

Finance/Administration Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident, and if so, will designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Finance/Administration Section Chief's Role

I'm the one who worries about paying for the response efforts. I'm responsible for all of the financial and cost analysis aspects of an incident. These include contract negotiation, tracking personnel and equipment time, documenting and processing claims for accidents and injuries occurring at the incident, and keeping a running tally of the costs associated with the incident. I work most closely with Logistics to be sure that we are able to contract for and procure the resources necessary to manage an incident.

Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Contract negotiation and monitoring.

- Timekeeping.

- Cost analysis.

- Compensation for injury or damage to property.

Note: On some incidents, the Finance/Administration function is not done at the incident scene but rather is handled by the school district.

EOC/DOC Operations

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) SEMS Definition: A location from which centralized emergency management can be performed. EOCs provide overall centralized coordination to ensure that there is an effective response. The EOC may also have a primary role in setting jurisdictional objectives and priorities, which may have an impact on resource allocations and incident level planning.

Department Operations Center (DOC) SEMS Definition: A facility used by a discipline or agency as a department level EOC. Examples are departments within a political jurisdiction such as fire, police, or public works, as well as agency divisions, districts or regional offices. DOCs can be used at all SEMS levels above the field response level, depending on the impacts of the emergency, demographic nature of the agency or organization, local policy and procedures, and configuration of communications systems.

Field Level Command

A key concept in all emergency planning is to establish command and tactical control at the lowest level that can perform that role effectively in the organization. In the Incident Command System (ICS), the Incident Commander, with appropriate policy direction and authority from the responding agency, sets the objectives to be accomplished, and approves the strategy and tactics to be used within the realm of available resources to meet those objectives. The Incident Commander must respond to higher authority. Depending upon the incident's size and scope, that higher authority could be the next ranking level in the organization up to the agency or department executive. This relationship provides an operational link with policy executives who customarily reside in the DOC or EOC, when activated. Similarly, department executives also report to a higher authority. That authority may rest in city or county administrative offices, with mayors, city councils, school boards, county boards of supervisors, or boards of directors.

As a rule, EOCs do not directly manage or "command" incidents. This would imply setting incident objectives, determining strategy and tactics and assigning and supervising tactical resources. Within the SEMS organizational structure, this is the role of the on-scene incident commanders using the component elements of the Incident Command System. Field Incident Commanders requests for additional resources, or a request to deviate from agency policy, will be directed to a higher authority within the discipline which has primary incident responsibility. This communication may be to the Department Operations Center or to the appropriate departmental authority within the EOC depending upon how the jurisdiction is set up.

The EOC has a role in all phases of emergency management. In the pre-emergency period, the EOC is developed and prepared for any contingency. It is used for orientations and for training and exercising. In the emergency response phase, EOCs along with Department Operations Centers (DOCs) serve as the central point for agency or jurisdiction coordination and overall management of the emergency. In the post emergency or recovery phase, the EOC structure and organization can be used to facilitate and direct the recovery operation.

In a major area-wide disaster, such as a major earthquake, there may be multiple incidents of various types within a single jurisdiction. Some incidents may be single discipline incidents, and others may be multidisciplinary incidents operating under Unified Command. The jurisdiction's EOC may be activated to coordinate the overall response, while Incident Command Posts are established for each incident. Incident Commanders may be linked (through dispatch centers) to DOCs which in turn will coordinate with the EOC. Alternatively, in some jurisdictions direct coordination and communications may be established between Incident Commanders and the EOC. Figure 2-9 illustrates Field - EOC reporting relationships in major disasters. For simplicity, the diagrams show only single discipline incidents. Unified Commands may be linked to DOCs or EOCs as described previously.

From FEMA *IS-775 - EOC Management and Operations*

Organizing an EOC around ICS

The EOC **Command** function is **not** quite the same as the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander or Unified Commander are on-scene command structures. The EOC Command function serves a similar role to the Policy Group and makes decisions that establish the overall strategy of the response.

The **Operations** function has responsibility for coordinating with and supporting on-scene responders. Branches, Divisions, and Groups assigned to the Operations function can be organized as necessary to support the incident(s).

The **Planning** function serves the same purpose as at the incident scene—gathering and analyzing information, keeping decision-makers informed, and tracking resources. Technical Specialists may be assigned to the Planning function or may be assigned elsewhere, as needed.

The **Logistics** function also serves the same purpose as at the incident scene, frequently serving as the single ordering point for the incident(s) in its purview, providing overall communications planning for the jurisdiction, coordinating transportation and housing, etc.

The **Finance/Administration** function provides a coordinated financial management process for the incident(s) in its purview.

The advantages and disadvantages of using an ICS organization in the EOC are shown in the table below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Clarity of roles and functional integrity. The ICS organization in the field has a clear contact point in the EOC.	**Potential for confusion about command authority at the incident scene versus in the EOC.**
Large incident logistical and financial support is often coordinated more easily from the EOC and may relieve the workload on incident and dispatch staff.	**No disadvantages**

Many jurisdictions have used ICS structure successfully in a EOC environment**.**

EOC Functions

EOCs serve several main functions within a Multi Area Coordination System:

- **Information collection and evaluation**—collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information from various sources.

- **Coordination**—coordinating the information flow and resources for complex incidents or multiple incidents occurring simultaneously.

- **Priority setting**—ensuring that response systems are interconnected and complementary, reinforcing interoperability among the various system components, making response more efficient and effective by coordinating available resources, and making decisions based on agreed-upon policies and procedures.

- **Resource coordination**—identifying and acquiring needed resources and allocating existing or known resources.

- **Communications facilitation**—establishing interoperable communications among all partners in the MACS and others, as necessary for the response.

EOC Benefits

An effective EOC:

- Helps establish a common operating picture.

- Facilitates long-term operations.

- Improves continuity.

- Provides ready access to all available information.

- Simplifies information analysis and verification.

- Promotes resource identification and assignment.

A single EOC facility functions more efficiently. With a single location, officials can meet, make decisions, and coordinate activities.

ICS/EOC Relationships

Incident Commanders have several critical needs with which EOC personnel can assist. These needs include:

- **A common operating picture**—critical during incidents that are large or complex, or involve personnel from multiple response agencies.

- **Policy direction**—critical when jurisdictions with differing policies are involved in a response.

- **Communication support**—critical in large, complex incidents or when multiple jurisdictions are involved in a response.

- **Resources**—includes people, equipment, and supplies required for a response.

- **Strategic planning**—allows the Incident Commander to focus on tactics.

- **Legal and financial support**—frees on-scene resources to focus on the response.

EOCs can help meet the needs at the incident scene by:

- **Providing the "big picture"** view of the incident.

- **Establishing policy** or resolving conflicting policies.

- **Providing communications** and messaging support.

- **Managing public information** issues and media requests.

- **Providing and prioritizing resources.**

- **Authorizing emergency expenditures,** when appropriate, and tracking incident costs.

Resource Management

Resource management can be an area of confusion between the on-scene command structure and the EOC. As shown in the table below, however, the role of the EOC complements that of the ICS structure.

Compare resource management at the Command Post versus the EOC:

Command Post	EOC
Identify needs	Receive requests
Order resources	Prioritize requests
Check in resources	Locate/order resources
Assign resources	Assign according to priorities
Track resources	Track resource use
Demobilize resources	Pay for resources

The on-scene command structure manages resources based on:

- Complete incident size-up.

- Subsequent incident objectives.

- Tactics.

The principles of ICS ensure an orderly approach to identifying incident resource needs.

When incidents grow in size and/or complexity and more tactical resources are required, the EOC and the entire multiagency coordination system (MACS) play an increasingly important role in resource management.

Switching Resource Ordering to the EOC

One common issue around resource managers is the question of when the Incident Commander should request resources from the EOC rather than from the dispatch center. Many jurisdictions have established triggers to help the Incident Commander make that decision. Possible triggers are shown in the table below.

Activation of the EOC	Some jurisdictions automatically switch their resource ordering and tracking to the EOC as soon as it is fully operational.
Dispatch workload increases beyond specified threshold	The call load for dispatch rises as an incident expands. Dispatch may reach a point where it cannot provide dispatch services and/or cannot provide large-incident logistical support.
Establishment of a Unified Command or Area Command	Multiple agencies with shared responsibility for a response, or multiple incidents with separate Incident Command structures, will need resource management from the EOC.
Normal mutual aid resources are exhausted	There is a need for increased delegation of authority to commit finances.

To help all personnel recognize triggers for switching resource ordering to the EOC, the process should be:

- Stated clearly in the jurisdiction's Emergency Operations Plan.

- Implemented through the jurisdiction's chain of command.

- Supported by dependable communications.

The procedures for switching resource ordering to the EOC should be trained and exercised regularly.

Would you like more detailed information? Take an online course through FEMA. Course links can be found at http://steps.lausd.net/fema.