

NIMS Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS) Course



FEMA

Plan of Instruction (POI)

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Version 1.0



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RATIONALE

IS100, Introduction to the Incident Command System, presents the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

GOAL

The goal of this professional development course, IS100 Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS), is to promote effective response by familiarizing personnel with the ICS framework, and the principles used to manage incidents. This course also prepares personnel to coordinate with response partners from all levels of government and the private sector.

OVERALL COURSE OBJECTIVE

By the end of this course, students will be able to recall, through knowledge checks and a Final Exam, the Incident Command System principles, structures, and applications of ICS to the different disciplines' incidents and events.

COURSE TERMINAL OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the principles and basic structure of the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Describe the NIMS Management Characteristics that are the foundation of the ICS.
- Describe the ICS functional areas and the roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.
- Identify the General Staff roles within ICS.
- Identify how the NIMS Management Characteristics apply to ICS for a variety of roles and discipline areas.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The intended audience(s) are personnel involved with emergency planning, response, or recovery efforts. This includes fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel as well as a large variety of disciplines including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), federal workers, health care workers, higher education, law enforcement, public works, and schools.

COURSE DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

Robert Gagne's Nine Levels of Instruction served as a model for the development of this course. This course is online and self-paced, and includes:

- *Content Presentation:* Content to address the course objectives.
- *Resources:* Additional resource links to provide students with additional course related content for their examination.
- *Expandable Content:* Topics expand to include application to different disciplines for response partners.
- *Knowledge Checks:* Multiple choice, true/false, and scenario questions are used throughout the course to allow students to get feedback on their retention and recall of the content.
- *Videos:* Videos provide overviews of select topic areas.

COURSE DEPLOYMENT

The time allotment for the online course is two hours and fifteen minutes. It is designed to be delivered as an asynchronous on-line course as part of the Emergency Management Institute's Independent Study Program. Occasionally, this course will be offered in a flexible delivery format in the classroom.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Table 1. Course Schedule – Online version

Lesson	Length	Title
Lesson 1:	20 minutes	Course Welcome and ICS Overview
Lesson 2:	30 minutes	NIMS Management Characteristics
Lesson 3:	25 minutes	ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles
Lesson 4:	30 minutes	General Staff Roles
Lesson 5:	30 minutes	How ICS Applies to You
Total Hrs.	2 hrs. 15 mins	

Table 2. Course Schedule – Flexible Delivery Format – Classroom version

Lesson	Length	Title
Unit 1:	1 hr.	Course Welcome and ICS Overview
Unit 2:	1 hr. 30 minutes	NIMS Management Characteristics
Unit 3:	1 hr.	ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles
Unit 4:	1 hr. 20 minutes	General Staff Roles
Unit 5:	2 hr.	How ICS Applies to You
Total Hrs.	6 hrs. 50 minutes	

EVALUATION PLAN

An online multiple choice course exam shall be administered after the course completion. The exam measures and assesses the student's learning of the course's content. Exam items will be linked to the course objectives.

REQUIRED PREREQUISITES

None.

CORE CAPABILITIES SUPPORTED

This course supports the following Core Capabilities:

Operational Coordination (Response and Recovery Mission Areas)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES SUPPORTED

This course supports the following Emergency Management Competencies:

DF-8 Emergency Management Functions, Roles, and Responsibilities

SS-1 National Incident Management System

SS-3 Response Operations

LESSONS OF INSTRUCTION

Lesson 1: Course Welcome and ICS Overview

Table 1. Lesson 1 Sections and Descriptions

Section	Description
Time	20 minutes (1 hr. flexible delivery format)
Objective	<p>Terminal Objective Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to explain the principles and basic structure of the Incident Command System (ICS).</p> <p>Enabling Objectives To support the terminal objective, students will be able to: 1) Describe the Whole Community approach to ICS. 2) Identify the basic concept and benefits of ICS.</p>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Community • Course Goal • Overall Course Objectives • Screen Features • Navigating Using Your Keyboard • Receiving Credit • Course Structure • Whole Community • What is the Incident Command System? • When is ICS Used? • Incident Command System: Promoting Response Partnerships • ICS as a Component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) • Activity 1.1: ICS Benefits (Flexible delivery format) • Benefits of ICS • ICS: Built on Best Practices • Knowledge Check • Lesson Summary
Methodology	<p>This lesson uses audio files, knowledge checks, and user interaction.</p> <p>This lesson introduces the Incident Command System (ICS), explains how ICS supports the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and explains how it is used for incidents of varying sizes and by many types of organizations. A video describes how ICS integrates response partners into an organized approach.</p> <p>For the flexible delivery version of the course, there is an Activity. The purpose of Activity 1.1 is to discuss the benefits of ICS. This activity provides the students with a scenario and they must identify the</p>

Section	Description
	<p>challenges official must manage in the scenario. They also discuss how ICS could address those challenges.</p> <p>Knowledge checks are strategically embedded throughout the lesson so students may assess their level of retained and recalled learning of the instructional content. For the flexible delivery format, the knowledge checks will be in the form of discussion questions.</p>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Incident Management System (NIMS) Doctrine

Lesson 2: NIMS Management Characteristics

Table 4. Lesson 2 Sections and Descriptions

Section	Description
Time	30 minutes (1 hr. 30 minutes flexible delivery format)
Objective	<p>Terminal Objective Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to describe the NIMS Management Characteristics of the ICS.</p> <p>Enabling Objective To support the terminal objective, students will be able to: 1) Describe the 14 NIMS management characteristics.</p>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making ICS Work • ICS Management and Coordination Characteristics Overview Video • Common Terminology • Modular Organization • Management by Objectives • Incident Action Planning • Activity 2.1: Incident Action Plan (Flexible delivery format) • Knowledge Check • Manageable Span of Control • Incident Facilities and Locations • Comprehensive Resource Management • Integrated Communications • Knowledge Check • Establishment and Transfer of Command • Unified Command • Chain of Command • Unity of Command • Knowledge Check • Accountability • Dispatch/Deployment • Activity 2.2: Dispatch/Deployment (Flexible delivery format) • Information and Intelligence Management • Knowledge Check • Lesson Summary
Methodology	<p>This lesson uses audio files, a video, user interaction, and knowledge checks.</p> <p>This lesson provides basic information about ICS in terms of 14 NIMS management and coordination characteristics. These include the use of common terminology, modular organizations, Incident Action Plans,</p>

Section	Description
	<p>standard incident facilities, etc. The lesson describes continuity of structure and a standardized approach across a variety of organizations.</p> <p>For the flexible delivery version of the course, there are two activities included. The purpose of Activity 2.1 is to illustrate how to develop an IAP. The students are given a scenario and asked to identify four IAP items on chart paper. The purpose of Activity 2.2 is to reinforce the participants' understanding of the importance of dispatch and deployment. The students are given a scenario and are asked a question regarding dispatch/deployment.</p> <p>Knowledge checks are strategically embedded throughout the lesson so students may assess their level of retained and recalled learning of the instructional content. For the flexible delivery format, the knowledge checks will be in the form of discussion questions.</p>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Incident Management System (NIMS) Doctrine

Lesson 3: ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles

Table 5. Lesson 3 Sections and Descriptions

Section	Description
Time	25 minutes (1 hr. flexible delivery format)
Objectives	<p>Terminal Objective</p> <p>Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to describe the ICS functional areas and the roles of the Incident Commander and Command Staff.</p> <p>Enabling Objectives</p> <p>To support the terminal objective, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the five major ICS functional areas. 2) Describe the role of the Incident Commander. 3) Describe the selection of and transfer of command between Incident Commanders. 4) Identify the position titles associated with the Command Staff. 5) Describe the roles of the Command Staff. 6) Differentiate between command and coordination.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS Functional Areas and Command Staff Roles • Five Major ICS Functional Areas • ICS Functional Area Descriptions • Intelligence/Investigations Function in ICS • Knowledge Review • ICS Structure • Incident Command Definition • Incident Commander • Incident Commander Responsibilities • Selecting or Changing Incident Commanders • Knowledge Review • Delegating Incident Management Responsibilities • ICS Command Staff • Command Staff Overview Video • Knowledge Checks • Activity 3.1: Command Staff Roles (Flexible delivery format) • Incident Coordination • Emergency Operations Center Role • Joint Information Center • Management and Coordination • Knowledge Check • Lesson Summary
Methodology	This lesson uses user interaction, a video, and scenario-based knowledge checks.

Section	Description
	<p>This lesson focuses on the functional areas of ICS and describes the role of the Incident Commander and the typical members of the Command Staff, which includes the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. The basic functions of the Emergency Operations Center and Joint Information Center are also explored. Knowledge Checks in the form of “Who am I?” descriptions and identification help participants reinforce their understanding of the responsibilities of Command Staff members.</p> <p>For the flexible delivery version of the course, there is one activity. The purpose of Activity 3.1 is to illustrate how ICS can be used to address incident management issues. The students are given a scenario and asked what specific activities would you, as the Incident Commander delegate to each Command Staff member?</p> <p>Knowledge checks are strategically embedded throughout the lesson so students may assess their level of retained and recalled learning of the instructional content. For the flexible delivery format, the knowledge checks will be in the form of discussion questions.</p>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Incident Management System (NIMS) Doctrine

Lesson 4: General Staff Roles

Table 6. Lesson 4 Sections and Descriptions

Section	Description
Time	30 minutes (1 hr 20 minutes flexible delivery format)
Objective	<p>Terminal Objective Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to identify the General Staff roles within ICS.</p> <p>Enabling Objectives To support the terminal objective, students will be able to: 1) Identify the ICS titles used for General Staff members. 2) Describe the major activities of the four general staff sections.</p>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Staff • General Staff Overview • General Staff Overview Video • Operations Section • Operations Section: Major Activities • Planning Section • Planning Section: Major Activities • Logistics Section • Logistics Section: Major Activities • Finance/Administration Section • Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities • Activity 4.1: Section Chiefs (Flexible delivery format) • Discipline-Specific Links • Knowledge Checks • Activity 4.2 General Staff Functions (Flexible delivery format) • Lesson Summary
Methodology	<p>This lesson uses audio files, a video, user interaction, and knowledge checks.</p> <p>This lesson describes the functions and responsibilities of Operations, Planning Logistics, and Finance/Administration, and describes the General Staff roles of each Section Chief.</p> <p>For the flexible delivery version of the course, there are two activities included. The purpose of Activity 4.1 is to review the General Staff Section responsibilities. The students review several statements and are asked to identify the correct Section Chief for each statement. The purpose of Activity 4.2 is to reinforce participants' understanding of General Staff functions. Working in groups, the students are given a scenario and asked to answer questions related to General Staff functions.</p>

Section	Description
	Knowledge checks are strategically embedded throughout the lesson so students may assess their level of retained and recalled learning of the instructional content. For the flexible delivery format, the knowledge checks will be in the form of discussion questions.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Incident Management System (NIMS) Doctrine

Lesson 5: How ICS Applies to You

Table 7. Lesson 5 Sections and Descriptions

Section	Description
Time	30 minutes (2 hrs. flexible delivery format)
Objective	<p>Terminal Objective Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to identify how the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Management Characteristics apply in various situations.</p> <p>Enabling Objectives To support the terminal objective, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify how the NIMS Management Characteristics apply in specific roles. 2) Identify how the NIMS Management Characteristics apply in specific situations.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerald City Flood Scenario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #1 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #2 • Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #3 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #4 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #5 • Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #6 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #7 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #8 • Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #9 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #10 • Emerald City Flood Scenario: Update 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #11 ▪ NIMS Management Characteristic Knowledge Review #12 • Lesson Summary
Methodology	<p>This lesson uses a threaded scenario, user interaction, and embedded knowledge reviews.</p> <p>Using a threaded scenario, which builds in scope and complexity, this lesson provides practice in determining the management functions that apply as an incident expands and progresses. The Emerald City Flood scenario begins with a description of heavy rains and the potential for flooding. In Update 1, flooding occurs and evacuations begin. In Update 2, a chemical processing plant reports flooding, and incident facilities are fully operational. In Update 3, patients are transported from a nursing</p>

Section	Description
	<p>home to a community hospital, and discipline-specific concerns (i.e., Public Works, Law Enforcement) are fully engaged. In Update 4, river levels are receding and activities are shifting from response to recovery.</p> <p>Scenario-based knowledge reviews are embedded after each update for students to identify the demonstrated NIMS management characteristics.</p> <p>For the flexible delivery format, the knowledge checks will be in the form of discussion questions and discussed after each scenario update.</p>
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Incident Management System (NIMS) Doctrine