INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM PUBLICATION

Managing Large Scale Incidents – Area Command

ICS 420-1.3

January 2020

This document contains information relative to the Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS) and the Incident Command System (ICS), developed by FIRESCOPE and adopted as the framework of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). ICS products are designed to be compatible with and compliant with NIMS, as directed by the National Response Plan and adopted by the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors.

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The information contained in this document has been approved by the Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors for application in the statewide California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System.

This material is a development of the FIRESCOPE Program

Contents

MANAGING LARGE SCALE INCIDENTS AREA COMMAND

PURPOSE OF AREA COMMAND

This section describes why, when, where, and how Area Command is established and the organization, facilities, and communications required. It describes the organizational relationships between an Area Commander and Incident Commanders and between Area Commander(s) and agency communication centers. The demobilization process under an Area Command organization is also described. Experience has shown that in some large-scale occurrences, it is advantageous to implement a level of command between the agency communication center and the various incident commands. Area Command can often be gainfully used when there are a number of incidents, generally in the same geographic area, typically requiring the similar types of resources.

Area Command is implemented based upon the needs of the jurisdiction. Examples are as follows:

- Multiple incidents that are each handled by an ICS organization. Area Command is used when there are a number of incidents in the same general area and often of the same general kind (e.g., multiple structure fires, multiple wildland fires, collapsed buildings, medical incidents, civil disturbance, planned events, earthquakes, etc.). Typically, these kinds of incidents compete for the same resources. Area Command can also be used for a large planned event, e.g., a large parade, air show, political convention, etc.

- Very large incidents that have multiple Incident Commanders assigned. For example, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, civil disturbances, planned events or wildfires that cause extensive damage over a wide area may call for an Area Command. Many after action reports have suggested the need to establish an Area Command to more effectively prioritize resources for competing incidents.

Incidents within a single jurisdictional area that are not in close proximity to an impacted area and/or do not have similar resource demands would more appropriately be handled as separate incidents through the agency communications center.

Area Command has been used in response to such diverse incidents such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Los Angeles civil disturbances, Northridge earthquake, Newcastle Disease, Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery, and planned events such as the Presidents' Cup Golf Tournament, the Los Angeles Democratic Convention, celebration parades, to deliver supplies during the high tides and flooding of "Sandy", and many wildland fires.

In situations where multiple incidents are occurring, the need for an Area Command allows Incident Commanders and Agency Administrators to be more effective for the following reasons:

   a. Much of the inter-incident coordination normally required of each Incident Commander will be accomplished at the Area Command level, allowing the Individual Incident Commanders within the identified area to focus attention on their assigned incident.
   b. Area Command sets priorities between incidents and allocates and reallocates critical resources according to established priorities.
   c. Area Command helps agency administrators by ensuring that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being communicated to the respective Incident Commanders.
   d. Area Command reduces the workload of the agency administrator, especially if there are multiple incidents occurring simultaneously.

The following criteria may be used to determine appropriate circumstances to activate an Area Command:

   a. Several major or complex incidents are in close proximity.
   b. Critical human or property values are at increased risk when multiple incidents are competing for limited resources.
   c. Difficulties with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination are encountered.

Incident Commanders must recognize critical priorities established by an Area Commander. Incident Commanders may not always concur with Area Command decisions on priorities and critical resource allocations; however, it is essential that each Incident Commander understand that the ability to obtain critical resources and services is balanced with the priorities established for the geographic area of impact. It is also essential for Incident Commanders to understand that they may have to adjust incident strategies, tactical objectives, and resource assignments due to a change in the resource available during a given operational period.

It is important for the Area Commander to maintain communications with agency administrators, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other affected or interested groups through the appropriate channels. This function, if accomplished at the Area Command may reduce the level of coordination that Incident Commanders' staffs must perform and will increase the flow of information to all interested parties. A Command and tactical radio channel must be identified.

Area Command has six primary functions:

   a. Provide agency direction or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.
   b. Ensure that Incident Commanders have a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to the incident(s).

    c. Establish priorities for use of critical resources between various incidents based on incident needs and agency policy and direction.
    d. Ensure appropriate incident management organizations and staffing for the type and complexity of the incidents involved.
    e. Maintain contact with the agency officials in charge, assisting and cooperating agencies, and other interested groups.
    f. Coordinate the demobilization and/or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.

<u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>

The Area Commander, working in cooperation with the agency/ jurisdictional administrator and the assigned Incident Commanders, has the authority and the responsibility with respect to Individual Incidents within the Area Command to perform the following:

    a. Set overall strategic objectives.
    b. Set overall agency incident-related priorities within the identified geographical area managed by Area Command.
    c. Allocate and reallocate critical resources based on priorities within the identified geographical area managed by Area Command.
    d. Ensure that incidents within the identified geographical area managed by Area Command are properly managed.
    e. Ensure that objectives for incidents within the identified geographical area managed by Area Command are met and do not conflict with each other or with agency policy.

The Area Commander should allow the respective Incident Commanders as much flexibility as possible in implementing their respective Incident Action Plans (IAPs).

It is important to ensure that Incident Commanders have a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints related to incidents. It is possible that the assigned Incident Commanders may not have had a full briefing on agency/jurisdictional expectations related to their incidents prior to the time that Area Command is established.

The Area Commander is responsible for the overall direction of Incident Management Teams assigned within their Area Command. This responsibility includes ensuring that conflicts are resolved, incident objectives are established, and strategies are selected for the use of critical resources.

Area Command also has the responsibility to coordinate with local, state, federal, and volunteer assisting and/or cooperating organizations. Area Command will be required to coordinate with the dispatch center and a Department Operations Center (DOC) if activated.

AUTHORITY

When Area Command is activated, an Area Commander will be designated and given appropriate delegated authority. Area Command should be established by the Agency Administrator based on established agency policies. The authority given to the Area Commander should be written as a standard operating procedure prior to implementation of Area Command. This will eliminate confusion and provides the Area Commander with authority to oversee management of the incidents.

IMPLEMENTATION

Because of the proven value of Area Command, considerable work has been completed to describe the manner in which an Area Command functions. An agency/jurisdiction that anticipates implementing an Area Command should develop a standard operating policy for implementation, including applicable policies, objectives policies, objectives, limitations, and constraints. These policies will require development at the time Area Command is established if they are not prearranged.

Area Command can function in two modes. It can prioritize resources between the multiple incidents only, or it can allocate re-sources within the identified impact area.

When a large-scale escalating incident occurs or is anticipated, it may be most practical to have Area Command assume the responsibility of allocating resources into the impacted area. For example, in a torrential rain storm that creates flooding, a dispatch center will routinely dispatch resources to all reported incidents. An Area Command that accounts for and allocates to all the incidents within the impacted area permits the Area Command to focus on repetitive calls for service in the same area through communication with nearby resources, thus preventing duplicate dispatches and providing a more effective and efficient response for incidents in the same proximity. A dispatch center and available resources could easily become overwhelmed if multiple incidents are continually created in an impacted area.

In the above situation, with an established Area Command, the dispatch center must be capable of efficiently identifying incidents within any established impacted area, assigning these incidents to the established Area Command for allocation of resources and maintaining continuous communications with Area Command. Any incidents transferred to Area Command that are determined to be outside the identified tactical area are immediately returned to the department Dispatch Center.

Once Area Command has been established, the Area Commander should ascertain the following:

  a. General situation
  b. Incidents and geographic area assigned to Area Command
  c. Jurisdictional delegation of authority
  d. Time of assumption of Command and notifications procedure
  e. Names and qualifications of assigned Incident Commanders
  f. Incidents operating under Unified Command
  g. Limitations on the Area Commander's authority over Incident Commanders (should be predetermined)
  h. Incident Action Plan is available
  i. Policies, political factors, or other constraints (should be pre-determined)
  j. Names of agency advisors assigned
  k. Area Command facility designated
  l. Status of communications systems that operates between the agency dispatch center to Area Command and between Area Commanders to Incident Commanders
  m. Designated radio channels for communication
  n. Critical resource designations
  o. Policy and expectations for interaction with the media
  p. Area Command reporting responsibility to agency
  q. Schedules for required briefings and contacts

Agencies should be proactive when considering the use of Area Command. An agency should understand and conduct exercises using the Area Command concept prior to actual implementation. Often, agency dispatchers will be the first to recognize inter-incident coordination problems.

It may take some reaction time to establish the Area Command. If a local department develops a plan and conducts exercises to test the plan, the activation time can be significantly reduced. If there are existing facilities that have an established communication system (fixed or mobile) that can be used, e.g., designated police and fire stations, the time needed to establish the Area Command can be reduced.

When Area Command is established, Incident Commander(s) for each of the incidents under the authority of the Area Command will report to and brief the Area Commander. Initially, such reports and briefing may be conducted by cell phone, landline, or radio on a command channel. The Area Commander is designated by and accountable to the agency or jurisdictional executive or administrator.

The following should apply to the implementation of an Area Command:

  a. Incident Commanders subordinate to the Area Command must be notified that an Area Command is being established.

    b. The Area Command staff should consist of qualified personnel with respect to their functional areas. The functions of Area Command require personnel who have training and/or experience in and are qualified to facilitate resource allocation and incident management.

    c. The Area Command organization operates under the same basic principles as used in the Incident Command System.

The following Area Command positions may be assigned on an as-needed basis, as follows:

    a. Area Commander
    b. Assistant Area Commander, Planning Chief
    c. Assistant Area Commander, Logistics
    d. Area Command Aviation Coordinator
    e. Resource Unit Leader
    f. Situation Unit Leader
    g. Public Information Officer
    h. Liaison Officer
    i. Area Command Staging/Mobilization Center Manager
    j. Safety Officer
    k. Finance/Administration Technical Specialist
    l. Staging Manager/Mobilization Center Manager

Specific position established will be determined by the Area Commander. For example, the Area Commander may determine a need for Technical Specialists. This need will depend on the types of incidents involved. Technical Specialists within the Area Command provide specific information and expertise, for example:

    a. In incidents involving the use of aircraft, an Aviation Specialist
    b. Where hazardous materials are involved, a Hazardous Materials Specialist and an Environmental Specialist
    c. In situations where multiple agencies are involved, a Communications Specialist
    d. In situations involving structural collapse, a Structural Specialist

The Area Commander will determine the need for and assignment of a Safety Officer and Assistant Safety Officers.

It is important to remember that Area Command does not in any way replace incident level Incident Command System organizations or functions. Any of these positions established within the area command, if established, are strictly related to Area Command functions.

Incident Commanders under the designated Area Commander are responsible to and part of the overall Area Command organization. These Incident Commanders request and receive resources from the Area Commander.

The Area Command should, to the extent possible, be located in close proximity to the incidents under its authority. This will facilitate meetings and direct contact between the Area Commander and Incident Commanders.

Communications must be maintained with the local dispatch center to provide information on reported incidents within the identified geographic area. Area Command must have the ability to communicate to the resources assigned to the Area Command. Area Command should be located in a facility (mobile or fixed) that has sufficient communication capability to meet these needs. It is best not to co-locate Area Command with one of the incidents it is managing. Doing so can cause confusion with the management of that incident.

Area Commands must maintain records of service requests, allocation of resources, and status of all resources within its identified geographical area. This may be a complex undertaking.

During a large civil disturbance or planned event where a large number of fire and medical incidents are occurring, Area Command may be faced with multiple incidents. Responding resources may, where practical, receive guidance to only use defensive tactics at fires, with exposure protection as the primary objective. This allows resources to make themselves available for further allocation by Area Command immediately after a knockdown is accomplished. Normally, Area Command is used to prioritize resource requests from several Incident Commanders. Experience has shown that it can also be used to allocate resources for a single large-scale event. Each incident would have an Incident Commander, but the number of incidents is so large that dispatch to all incidents in an identified geographic impacted area must be coordinated. In the case of multiple incidents: medical; fires, debris removal, and law enforcement, resources at each individual incident may become available in a relatively short period of time and be reallocated. Because training to become proficient in operating an Area Command is required, an Area Command needs to be capable of maintaining an effective allocation system, accountability of resources, and the overall management of the area command incidents. The Area Command will prioritize the number of resources it allocates to each incident occurring within a large impacted tactical area. The strategy and tactics must be understood by all officers operating within the Area Command.

Wildland Application

In a wildland application, an Area Command is normally established based on the need to oversee the management of several large Incidents, and individual Incident Commands. A major advantage is that allocation and reallocation of resources between several Incident Commanders may occur based upon the needs of the Incidents.

Municipal Application

One example is a significant natural disaster in a metropolitan setting, such as an earthquake, hurricane, or a flood. The local fire department should have plans to identify the impacted area in a timely fashion. Fire Companies or other public safety agencies driving through pre- assigned areas conducting windshield surveys, checking critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and multi-story or large buildings for damage is a common method used in identifying an impacted area. This can also be accomplished, in whole or in part, by using air resources available from law enforcement, fire departments, military, public/private utilities, news media coverage, etc. To ensure response to all reported incident locations, a draw down, or degraded dispatch mode may be established to initially conserve the number of resources allocated to incidents under normal circumstances. Once an impacted area is identified with multiple, simultaneous incidents [by a geographic area, e.g., fire station district, battalion, division, or other easily Identified geographic area] an Area Commander should be established to provide for more effective management.

The Incident facility or location hosting the Area Command organization should be of sufficient size to accommodate the entire Area Command staff. Ideally, the location should have the capability to accommodate meetings between the Area Command Staff, Incident Commanders, Agency Administrator(s), and news media representatives. When radios are a primary means of communication, the Area Command facility should have line of sight coverage to Incident Command Posts or to repeaters serving those incident facilities. The facility should allow for suitable locations to temporarily install radio equipment, including antennas.

Public buildings, such as police and fire stations, have proven to be effective Area Command Posts. Some agencies utilize trailers and/or motor-driven units that have been specially equipped to accommodate the Area Command positions.

The Area Commander should also develop procedures to be followed within the Area Command. These procedures should be re-viewed with the respective Incident Commanders. Procedures could include the following:

  a. Incident and agency/jurisdictional priorities.
  b. Priorities for assignments of critical resources and a management plan.
  c. Schedules of meetings and briefings.
  d. Reports and IAPs from incidents under their command.
  e. Points of contact with Agency Administrators.
  f. Media relations and contact procedures.
  g. Unusual situation or emergency procedures reporting processes.
  h. Demobilization procedures.
  i. Designated radio channels or methods of communications.

The Area Commander should have an initial meeting with Incident Commanders at one location. In rapidly escalating incidents, this may be conducted by cell phone, landline, or

radio transmission to obtain situational awareness. The meeting should be brief and follow a prescribed format. The agenda for a meeting should include:

a. Obtaining concise individual incident briefings.
b. Explaining the role and responsibilities of an Area Commander.
c. Reviewing the general policy and direction for the incidents as stated by the Agency Administrator.
d. Resolving any conflicts that may exist between Agency Administrator policy and situations at the incidents.
e. Reviewing appropriate procedures as previously outline
f. Being open for questions and input.
g. Collecting available essential information regarding each incident or IAPs.

The Area Commander must ensure that all appropriate decisions and procedures are made clear to agency dispatchers and any other organizations involved in the Area Command

Concerns or unresolved issues raised at the meeting should immediately be discussed with agency administrator(s). These may include environmental issues, political sensitivities, fiscal concerns, etc.

Establishing priorities is one of the most important functions an Area Commander performs. In order to make timely decisions when two or more incidents are competing for critical resources and services, priorities must be established among various incidents based on incident needs, agency policy, and an objective analysis. The intent is to establish critical priorities for the common good of the entire situation.

There are three different priorities that Area Command may establish:

a. Priorities among the incidents within Area Command (often related to the life and property values at risk).
b. Priorities related to allocation of resources within the identified impacted area.
c. Priorities related to demobilization of resources.

The Area Commander is responsible for the overall management of the assigned incidents. At the earliest opportunity, the Area Commander should review with the Incident Commanders their respective organizations' primary Command and General Staff assignments. It is important to ensure that incident management staff assignments, organizations, and resources are appropriate for the type and complexity of the incidents involved. The Area Commander can recommend or make appropriate changes and shifts in personnel or re-source assignments as necessary.

It is possible that one incident may have resources assigned that would be better suited for a different incident, such as hazardous materials or urban search and rescue incidents.

The following are three major coordinating functions of the Area Command.

1. Between agency/jurisdictional administrators and Incident Commanders. Once an Area Command or a Unified Area Command is established, contact between agency/jurisdictional administrators and the respective incidents should be channeled through the Area Command. This will ensure a proper chain of command and help to eliminate confusion.

2. Between Area Command, incidents, and assisting and cooperating agencies who are assisting and/or cooperating on more than one of the incidents but are not part of the Command, should provide a representative to the Area Command. These representatives should be fully integrated into the Area Command organization as Agency Representatives and report to the Area Command Liaison Officer.

3. Between the media and the incident's media relations will be especially important in an Area Command setting. Incidents of significant size or scope are likely to attract tremendous media attention.

The agency or jurisdiction administrators should establish a policy with the Area Commander for handling the media. These decisions should be passed on to Incident Commanders and Public Information Officers. An Area Command Public Information Officer may be utilized to coordinate with individual Public Information Officers at individual incidents.

One solution related to keeping the media informed is to schedule periodic media briefings at the Area Command facility location that will update the situation for all incidents. Public Information Officers from the various incidents can provide the updates and schedule future media tours as appropriate.

DEMOBILIZATION

Demobilization planning will start at the incident level. The role of Area Command is to identify to the respective Incident Commanders what the priorities will be for demobilization, coordinate the demobilization of critical resources with the respective Incident Commanders and what, if any, resources will be required to re-deploy to other assignments. Teams, crews, companies, task forces, or strike teams from an agency or jurisdiction that has been divided to support incidents should be reassembled prior to departure.

The Area Command Demobilization Plan should be provided to the Incident Commanders so that incident level demobilization planning can proceed. Incidents should provide verbal information or copies of their demobilization schedules to the Area Command prior to actual demobilization and wait for approval.

UNIFIED AREA COMMAND

Some incidents operating under an Area Command may be multi-agency and/or multi-jurisdictional and may have a Unified Command structure in place. If this is the case, then the Area Command should also be a Unified Area Command. This will require full jurisdictional representation at the Unified Area Command. It is essential that all parties are clear on agency/jurisdictional Area Command Guidance.

The following are examples of Area Command Guidance used **in a civil unrest situation**:

  a. Protection of civilian, responder, and police personnel lives shall be the priority.
  b. Protection of schools, libraries, hospitals, churches, police and fire stations, industrial, and commercial occupancies shall be of primary concern to fire commanders.
  c. Fire personnel shall not assume any crowd control functions.
  d. Police and Public Works personnel shall not assume any firefighting functions.
  e. Responders shall not be unnecessarily exposed to hostile action, e.g., on aerial ladders used for elevated streams.
  f. No salvage operations shall be undertaken.
  g. No overhaul operations shall be undertaken.
  h. Except in extremely aggravated circumstances, arrests should not be attempted by police personnel supporting fire suppression operations.

The Area Command becomes a Unified Area Command when incidents are multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional. Major disasters such as earthquakes, floods, multiple fires, or severe storms may create a large number of incidents affecting multi-jurisdictional areas. Due to the size and potential impact, these incidents provide an appropriate environment to designate an Area Command to manage the impacted area.

AREA COMMAND SUMMARY

Establishing Area Command for a spontaneous event requires a significant period of time in that personnel need to be mobilized to assist Area Command prior to its activation. Experience has demonstrated that In a natural disaster such as an earthquake, agency('s) have found it beneficial to go into an Area Command immediately to manage an impacted area. This requires agencies to develop plans and practice these ahead of a natural disaster.

Area Command is a management tool and that should be implemented on an as-needed basis. Resources assigned to Area Command remain assigned until released by the Area Commander. As time permits, a Guidance Document for the entire area should be developed that will be provided and used for each operational period. In those circumstances where Area Command allocates resources, the function of dispatching resources should be returned to the individual dispatch centers and consideration for deactivating Area Command be considered.

Some of the criteria that should be considered when selecting an Area Command location include the following:

    a. Close proximity to incidents
    b. Sufficient space for staff, displays, and meetings
    c. Suitability for continuous operation
    d. Adequate capabilities to support radio and other communication with incidents and agency offices, such as phone, facsimile, and computer connections
    e. Availability of backup power
    f. Adequate and secure parking
    g. Proximity to commercial sources of support for food and lodging

POSITION CHECKLISTS

AREA COMMANDER

(<u>Single or Unified Area Command</u>) – The Area Commander (ACDR) is responsible for the overall direction of incident management teams assigned to the same incident or to incidents in close proximity. This responsibility includes ensuring that administrative issues are resolved, compatible incident objectives are established and strategies are selected for the use of critical resources. Area Command also has the responsibility to coordinate with local, state, federal, tribal, and volunteer organizations and agencies that are operating within the incident area:

    a. Obtain a briefing from the agency executive(s) on agency expectations, concerns and constraints.
    b. Obtain and carry out delegation of authority from the agency executive for overall management and direction of the incidents within the designated Area Command.
    c. If operating as a Unified Area Command, develop working agreement for how Area Commanders will function together.
    d. Delegate authority to Incident Commanders based on agency expectations, concerns, and constraints.
    e. Establish an Area Command schedule and timeline.
    f. Resolve conflicts between incident "realities" and agency executive "wants."
    g. Establish appropriate location for the Area Command facilities.
    h. Determine and implement an appropriate Area Command organization.
    i. Determine the need for a Staging Area/Mobilization Center.
    j. Determine the need for Technical Specialists to support Area Command.
    k. Obtain an incident briefing and Incident Action Plans from Incident Commanders.
    l. Assess situational awareness information prior to Area Command strategy meetings.
    m. Conduct a joint meeting with all Incident Commanders.
    n. Review objectives and strategies for each incident.
    o. Periodically review critical resource needs.

p. Maintain close coordination with the agency executive.
q. Establish priorities for use of critical resources.
r. Review procedures for interaction within the Area Command.
s. Approve Incident Commanders' requests for and release of critical resources.
t. Coordinate and approve Demobilization Plans.
u. Maintain a log of major actions/decisions.

ASSISTANT AREA COMMANDER, PLANNING

The Assistant Area Commander, Planning (ACPC) is responsible for collecting information from incident management teams in order to assess and evaluate potential conflicts between established incident objectives, strategies and the priority use of critical resources:

a. Obtain a briefing from Area Commander.
b. Assemble information on individual incident objectives and begin to identify potential conflicts and/or ways for incidents to develop compatible operations.
c. Recommend the priorities for allocation of critical resources to incidents.
d. Maintain status on critical resource totals.
e. Ensure that advance planning beyond the next operational period is being accomplished.
f. Prepare and distribute Area Commander's decisions or orders.
g. Prepare recommendations for the reassignment of critical resources as they become available.
h. Ensure Demobilization Plans are coordinated between incident management teams and agency dispatchers.
i. Conduct a strategy meeting with Incident Commanders (may be by phone) to assist in the planning processes.
j. Prepare Area Command briefings as requested or needed.
k. Maintain a log of major actions/decisions.

ASSISTANT AREA COMMANDER, LOGISTICS

The Assistant Area Commander, Logistics (ACLC) is responsible for providing facilities, services and material at the Area Command level, and for ensuring effective use of critical resources and supplies among the incident management teams:

a. Obtain a briefing from the Area Commander.
b. Provide facilities, services and materials for the Area Command organization.
c. In the absence of the Area Commander Aviation Coordinator, ensure coordinated airspace and temporary flight restrictions are in place and understood.
d. Ensure coordinated communication links and frequencies are in place. \
e. Assist in the preparation of Area Command decisions.
f. Ensure the continued effective and priority use of critical resources among the Incident Management Teams.
g. Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

OPTIONAL POSITIONS
An Area Commander may have the need to implement the following positions based on Incident scope, complexity and span of control.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
The primary function of the Public Information Officer is the coordination of information across the incident with agency Public Information Officers (PIOs), Incident PIO's, and Joint Information Centers (JICs), when implemented. The Public Information Officer is responsible for the coordination of a consistent, accurate, and timely message about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and the public.

Normally, detailed information regarding response specifics will be referred to and handled by the appropriate incident-level PIO. The Public Relations Officer will generally provide information on overall progress and status of the response.

Major responsibilities of the Public Information Officer include:

   a. Obtain a briefing from Area Commander on expectations, concerns, and constraints.
   b. Provide coordination to ensure consistent, timely, and accurate information is provided by the PIOs and JICs on the incident(s) to the media and other interested parties.
   c. Identify and communicate to the Area Command organization and IMTs the Area Commander's policy and procedures regarding release of information.
   d. When directed, establish and manage the Area Command JIC.
   e. Coordinate with applicable incident-level PIO(s) to obtain information and to ensure consistency in release of information.
   f. Closely coordinate with incident-level PIOs to develop and establish an effective public information strategy.
   g. Evaluate public and media perception of response effectiveness and keep the Area Command organization and IMTs informed.
   h. Keep the Area Commander staff informed of news releases, press conferences, and community meetings.
   i. Prepare briefing materials and coordinate the press conferences and community meetings.
   j. Provide speaker preparation and coaching to members of the Area Command staff.
   k. Carry out the protocol function for visiting dignitaries, including coordination and conduct of briefs and site visits. As much as possible, Area Command will coordinate VIP site visits in an effort to minimize the impact on specific IMTs.
   l. Participate in agency administrator/executive close-out/after-action review.
   m. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.

LIAISON OFFICER
The Liaison Officer is responsible for establishing liaison, as needed, with representatives of assisting /cooperating agencies and stakeholders. This could be with

the same agencies represented at the incident level, but will typically be a link to a more senior organizational level than represented at an incident.

Major responsibilities of the Liaison Officer are:

a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander on expectations, concerns, and constraints.
b. Establish liaison, as needed, with assisting/cooperating agencies and stakeholders including environmental, economic, and political groups. It is anticipated that the majority of stakeholder service and support will be handled at the incident level.
c. Support incident-level Liaison Officer(s) efforts to establish strong ties and communications with assisting/cooperating agencies and stakeholders keeping Area Command advised regarding their issues and concerns.
d. Maintain liaison with all responding agencies to minimize impact on incident response operations.
e. Coordinate Area Command site visits with IMTs and Incident Commanders.
f. Participate in agency administrator/executive close-out/after-action review.
g. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.

SAFETY OFFICER

The Safety Officer function is to develop and recommend measures for ensuring personnel health and safety and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations. The Safety Officer generally provides information on overall safety issues and progress/status of the response.

Major responsibilities of the Safety Officer include:

a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander on expectations, concerns, and constraints.
b. Develop Area Command Facility Safety Plan and monitor for compliance.
c. Evaluate thoroughness of incident-level Site Safety Plan(s).
d. As requested, provide assistance to incident-level Safety Officers and IMTs in investigating accidents, injuries, fatalities, etc.
e. Prepare and present health and safety briefings.
f. Review IAPs for safety implications for common health and safety issues.
g. Participate in agency administrator/executive close-out/after-action review.
h. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.
i. Conduct incident wide safety analysis.
j. Ensure Safety Officers have necessary specialists.

AREA COMMAND AVIATION COORDINATOR

The Area Command Aviation Coordinator (ACAC) is a Technical Specialist responsible for ensuring effective use of critical aviation resources among multiple management teams:

a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander.

b. Coordinate with local unit(s) aviation managers, dispatch centers, and aviation facility managers.

c. Monitor incident(s) aviation cost, efficiency, and safety.

d. Ensure agency rules, regulations, and applicable procedures are followed.

e. Provide to incidents local initial attack forces and other interested parties an area aviation plan that outlines Area Command aviation procedures and specifics of the area aviation operation.

f. Allocate air and ground based aviation resources according to Area Command priorities and objectives.

g. Ensure inter-incident movement of aircraft is planned and coordinated.

h. Coordinate with local and adjacent initial attack aircraft bases and local dispatch to ensure that procedures for transiting incident area and corridors are in place. Ensure flight following procedures, entry/exit routes and corridors, hazards, frequencies and incident airspace are known to all affected.

i. Coordinate with Incident Air Operations Branch Directors, dispatch, FAA, DOD, and local aviation authorities and administrators to ensure that Temporary Flight Restrictions are in place, coordinated, and do not overlap. Ensure that potential risks of operating on, near, or within Military Training Routes and Special-Use Airspace have been mitigated.

j. Ensure that a process is in place for timely transmittal of incident reports and oversee the process to ensure corrective action is taken.

k. Coordinate with incidents, dispatch centers, and coordination centers to determine availability and status of committed and uncommitted aviation resources, give status reports and situation appraisals for aviation resources.

l. Coordinate with Incident Air Operations Branch Directors, Communications Unit Leaders, frequency coordinators, coordination centers and initial attack dispatch to establish coordinated aviation communications plans to ensure aviation frequency management.

m. Coordinate and manage aviation program and operations if aviation assets are assigned to Area Command.

n. Coordinate the scheduling and movement of aviation safety assistance teams among incidents.

o. Assist incidents by coordinating with Contracting Officers, local aviation managers, and vendors concerning a variety of issues (fueling, contract modifications, contract extensions, etc.).

p. Coordinate with military officials and Agency Representatives concerning the assignments, utilization, status, and disposition of military aviation assets.

q. Maintain log of major actions/decisions.

FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

The Finance/Administration Technical Specialist is responsible for all financial, administrative, and cost analysis aspects of the Area Command.

Major responsibilities include:

a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander on expectations, concerns, and constraints.

b. Ensure the collection of relevant information from outgoing Finance /Administration Technical Specialist.

c. Determine Area Command requirements for cost accounting.

d. Coordinate with incident-level Finance/Administration Section Chief(s) to assure methodology for reporting cost information.

e. Collect, analyze, and summarize cost data.

f. Participate in preparation of the Area Command Management Plan.

g. Keep the Area Command organization briefed on response costs.

h. Ensure response costs are managed within the established financial ceilings and guideline.

i. Coordinate and advise the Area Command organization on financial ceiling adjustments when necessary.

j. If required, develop cost sharing agreements with members of the Area Command organization.

k. Monitor use of high cost specialized equipment and keep the Area Command organization advised.

l. Assist in development and implementation of the Area Command Demobilization Plan.

m. If required, coordinate processing of claims resulting from response actions.

n. Participate in close-out with agency administrative representative.

o. Participate in agency administrator/executive after-action review.

p. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.

STAGING AREA MANAGER/MOBILIZATION CENTER MANAGER

The Staging Manager is responsible for managing all activities within a designated Staging Area or Mobilization Center when resources may be deployed.

The major responsibilities of the Staging/Mobilization Manager include:

a. Obtain a briefing from the Area Commander.

b. Determine types and numbers of resources to be maintained in Staging.
c. Confirm process for requesting additional resources for Staging.
d. Confirm process for reporting status changes.
e. Coordinate with Assistant Area Commander, Finance/Administration to determine procurement procedures.
f. Establish Staging Area or Mobilization Center layout and needs.
g. Post areas for identification and traffic control.
h. Determine any support needs for equipment, food distribution, sanitation, and security to include staged resources.
i. Establish check-in function as appropriate.
j. Determine environmental impacts/ownership.
k. Request maintenance service for equipment at Staging Area, as needed.
l. Respond to requests for resource assignments.
m. Obtain and issue receipts for radio equipment and other supplies distributed and received at Staging.
n. Maintain the Staging Area/Mobilization Center in orderly condition.
o. Demobilize the Staging Area/Mobilization Center in accordance with the Incident Demobilization Plan.
p. Participate in agency administrator/executive close-out/after-action review.
q. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.

DEPUTIES

The Area Commander, Assistant Area Commander Logistics, and Assistant Area Commander Planning may have Deputies. Deputies must be ready to take over the position at any time, and, therefore, must have the same qualifications as the person for whom they work.

Major responsibilities of the Deputies include:

a. Obtain briefing from Area Commander on expectations, concerns, and constraints.
b. Assist Area Commander or Assistants in the execution of their duties/ responsibilities.
c. Perform duties in the absence of the designated Area Commander or Assistants.
d. Oversee and facilitate Area Command organizational functions on behalf of the Area Commander or Assistants.
e. Administer special projects as assigned.
f. Participate in agency administrator/executive close-out/after-action review.
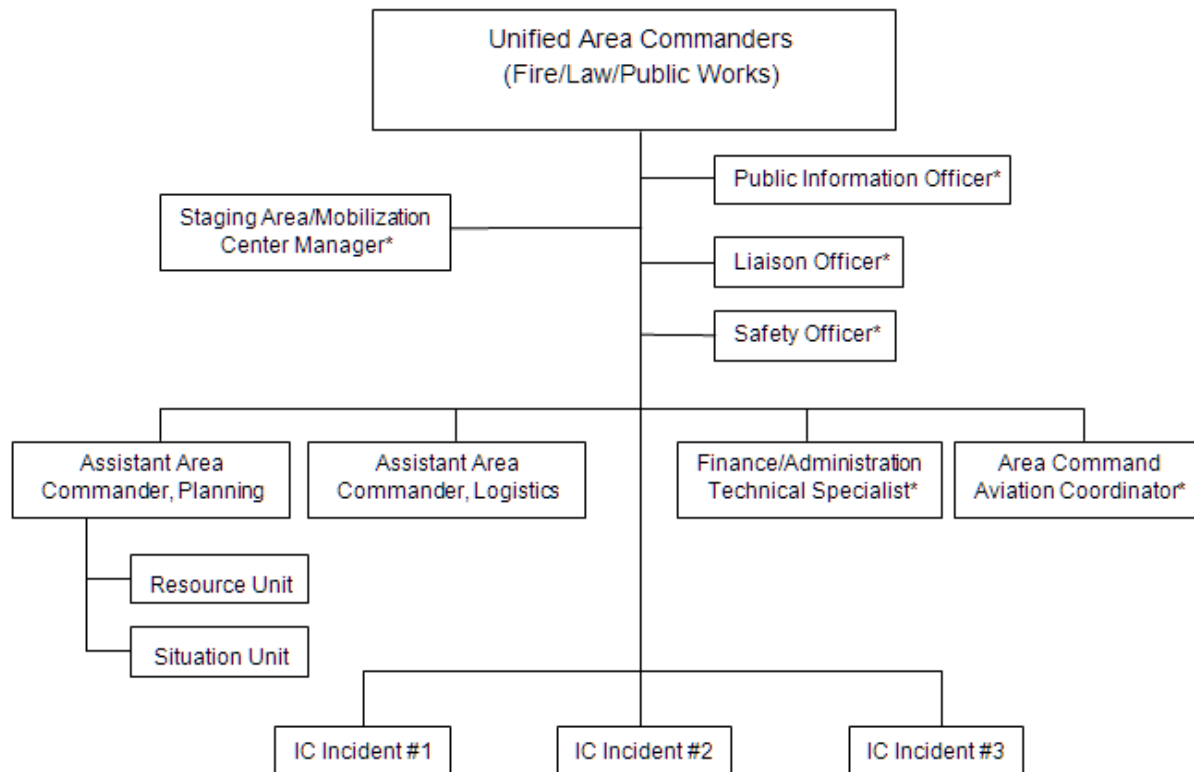g. Ensure coordinated and efficient transfer of command.
h. Perform other duties as assigned.

AREA COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Example 1: The following organization chart below of a Unified Area Command with an Assistant Area Command for Planning, Logistics, and an Aviation Coordinator is established to manage two to seven incidents. Area Command may be established as Unified Area Command when the incident is multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency. This is a typical organization for a wildland incident.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Unified Area Commanders │
                    │  (Fire/Law/Public Works) │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ├──────────┤ Public Information Officer* │
   ┌──────────────────────┐      │
   │ Staging Area/Mobilization │──┤
   │  Center Manager*     │      ├──────────┤ Liaison Officer* │
   └──────────────────────┘      │
                                 ├──────────┤ Safety Officer* │
                                 │
   ┌──────────┬──────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ Assistant Area│ │ Assistant Area│ │ Finance/Administration│ │ Area Command │
│Commander,Planning│ │Commander,Logistics│ │ Technical Specialist*│ │Aviation Coordinator*│
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────┘
   │
   ├─┤ Resource Unit │
   │
   └─┤ Situation Unit │

            ┌──────────────┬──────────────┐
      │ IC Incident #1 │ │ IC Incident #2 │ │ IC Incident #3 │
```

An Area Commander may have the need to implement a Liaison Officer, Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, Area Command Aviation Coordinator, Finance/Administration Technical Specialist, or a Staging/Mobilization Manager. An Area Command may have the need to pre- position resources prior to allocating them to individual incidents. This can be a Staging Area when it is desirable to have the resources ready deployment within three minutes or a Mobilization Center when resources are being held for an assignment, reassignment, or demobilization.

Example 2: The following example is how a Unified Area Command involving several disciplines may be utilized for localized disasters and events that may result in several individual incidents each having a rapidly changing demand for different agency resources. The organizational chart below depicts an organization to establish a multi-discipline Unified Area Command with a Deputy from Fire, Law, EMS, and Public Works. Each discipline could be allocating resources to their respective discipline within the identified impacted area.
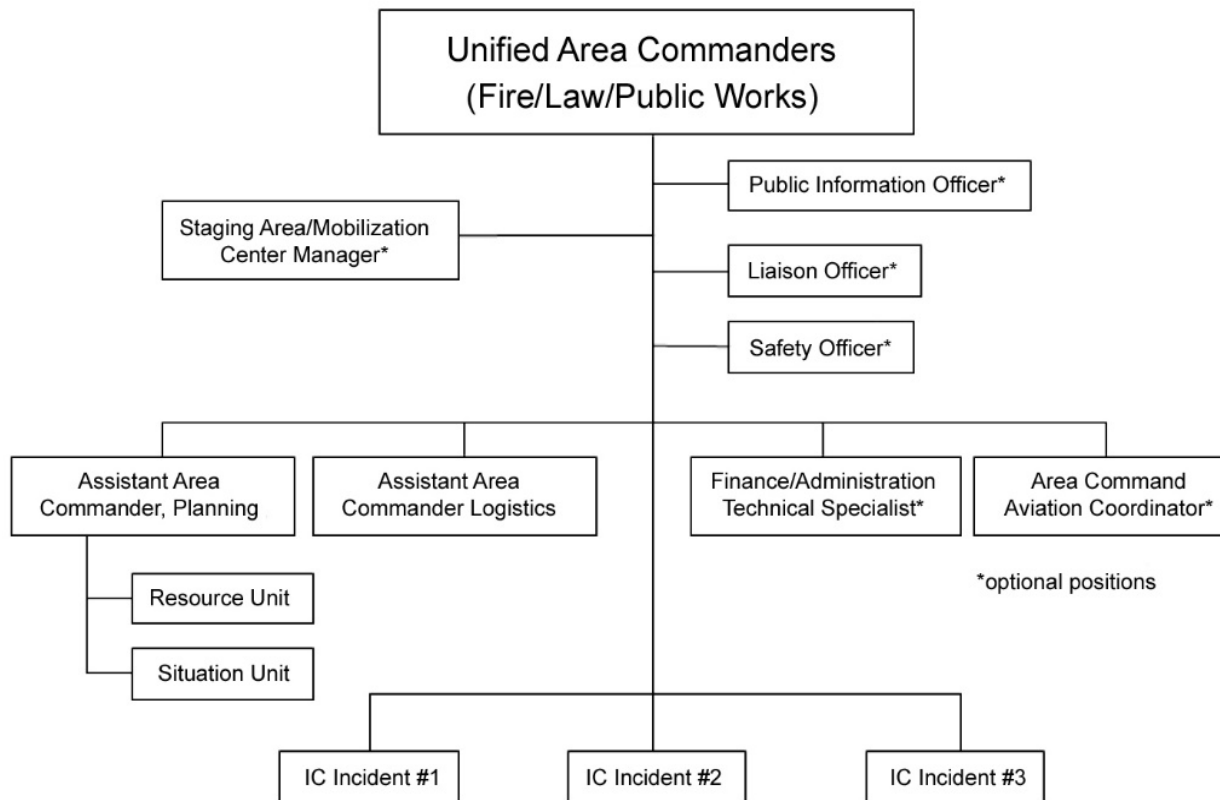
Natural Disaster - A community experiences a natural disaster such as an earthquake that involves the local jurisdiction. After an assessment is conducted an impacted area is determined to Involve three fire department Battalions, a geographic impact area is established. This area could have numerous buildings on fire along with collapsed structures. Experience has demonstrated that it will be advantageous to establish a Unified Area Command in proximity to the impacted tactical area along with staged resources. This Unified Area Command will involve the fire department, EMS agency, and law enforcement. These three agencies will co-locate and establish a Unified Area Command Post.

The responsible dispatch center(s) immediately requests resources to provide for fire, medical responders, specialized vehicles, and law enforcement personnel. They are asked to stage at or near the Unified Area Command location.

In this community, the fire department has established pre-designated secure locations for an Area Command site. It is decided to use a fire department Division office (a geographic area of the community). Because of the widespread area of impact involves three battalions and the need to continually provide adequate protection for the remainder of the community, Unified Area Command will perform all allocation functions for fire, medical, law enforcement within the impacted area.

The involved agencies notifies their dispatch centers of the establishment of the Unified Area Command and directs dispatch to forward all requests for fire, medical services, and law enforcement, within this impacted tactical area to Unified Area Command by fax, mobile data terminal, dispatch teletype, or telephone for dispatch. Radio channel will be used as a last resort because available radio channels will be very limited and will be needed to communicate with assigned resources. Each agency supervisor will advise the individual dispatch center that Area Command will notify them when the Unified Area Commander is setup and be ready to take over dispatch responsibility.

The Unified Area Commander will request the number of fire companies, ambulances, law enforcement officers, and other discipline vehicles deemed appropriate for the initial situation. This request will be reviewed for approval by each involved agency. As incidents develop, the dispatch center is advised to make preparations for additional resources as determined by the Unified Area Commander. Based upon these projections, each dispatch center /EOC will request assistance from other agencies through mutual aid if needed.

For this type of situation, each discipline has previously determined the following: Fire Department will form Task Forces comprised of three engines (or two engines and a truck company) with a leader (typically one of the company officers) or a five engine Strike Team with a Leader (Battalion Chief) is the most viable option. This provides accountability through the tracking of resources and providing the appropriate level of safety for their personnel. For medical incidents, the use of Medical Task Forces comprised of one engine and two ambulances (one Advanced Life Support and one Basic Life Support) or one engine and one ambulance along with a medical Squad apparatus will be used. Law Enforcement will assemble Law Enforcement Task Forces

to meet the needs of the Unified Area Command. A preplanned resource numbering system is used to identify the Task Forces and Strike Teams. The Involved agency has previously determined the following: The goal is to have one officer in charge of each Task Force/Strike Team. Law Enforcement will use a mixture of resources formed in a task force configuration to meet the needs of the incident.

A standard operating procedure for Unified Area Command is in place. The region's fire and law agencies have conducted exercises to enhance their Unified Area Command operations and have pre-designated personnel that routinely train on taking calls, allocating and tracking resources. Radio channels are identified for use by Area Command to include a separate communication and command channels as a minimum. A system has been put in place so that new incidents transmitted to Area Command/Unified Area Command from field resources operating within the impacted area are dated, timed, and numbered at Area Command and then at a later time officially numbered by the dispatch center. The system used for all incidents given to Area Command by field resources within the identified geographic area will be numbered using the Division number and then followed with a sequence of numbers (Division 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3) and recording a date and time of the incident.

The Unified Area Command agrees on a Public Information Officer to handle inquiries from local news and establish an area for press briefings that may include politicians' attendance. At the conclusion to the high incident activity, Unified Area Command returns the responsibility for impacted area back to each department's dispatch center.

A communication plan is part of the management plan for the identified area. The Area Command, working in cooperation with the jurisdictional agency(s) dispatch center, identifies pre-designated radio channels for use during the event. This includes sufficient channels to facilitate dispatch, command channel, and a tactical channel. These can be used in a direct if radio coverage is maintained (vs. repeat mode), as channels may be limited to the agencies. The jurisdictional agencies may be using other city agency radio channels that are available for use during the event. It is very important to facilitate the necessary communications between dispatch and Unified Area Command.

The community is organized in fire department Division and Battalion boundaries. The Area Command Post is established at the Administrative Division office location in close proximity of the impacted battalions. Existing tools, equipment, and communication systems are preinstalled to reduce the setup time for Area Command Post. In the event the pre-designated location becomes non-operable, a Command Officer's vehicle or a special communication unit will be available for use.

An Area Commander may have the need to pre-position resources prior to allocating them to individual incidents. This can be a Staging Area when it is desirable to have the resources ready for deployment within three minutes or a Mobilization Center when resources are being held prior to assignment, reassignment, or demobilization.

ZONE

A zone is a tool that may be used in Area Command. A planned or standardized Area Command implementation and operating policies and procedures should be developed, fully integrated, understood, and exercised prior to implementation. Pre-incident planning, coordination, training, and exercises are defined as Preparedness Elements of NIMS.

Zone – A defined geographic area or function utilized to support the management of an Incident (i.e., Area Command). A Zone may be assigned an Incident Management Team(s) or IC to provide management of a defined area or function. Zones may be identified geographically, numerically, or by functional name.

Geographic Zones are primarily used to provide an effective span of control. Area Command can use Functional Zones by assigning resources or Assisting/Cooperating Agencies in a logistical support role. This can also be used during Pre-Planned Events, Natural Disasters, or Public Health emergencies for the distribution of equipment and/or supplies from defined points with or without being involved in actual incident operations.

Example 3 - Unified Area Command with subordinate Zones and assigned IMT's or IC's managing each Zone.

In this example, this configuration could be used for the fire service and a Zone could represent a geographical Battalion.
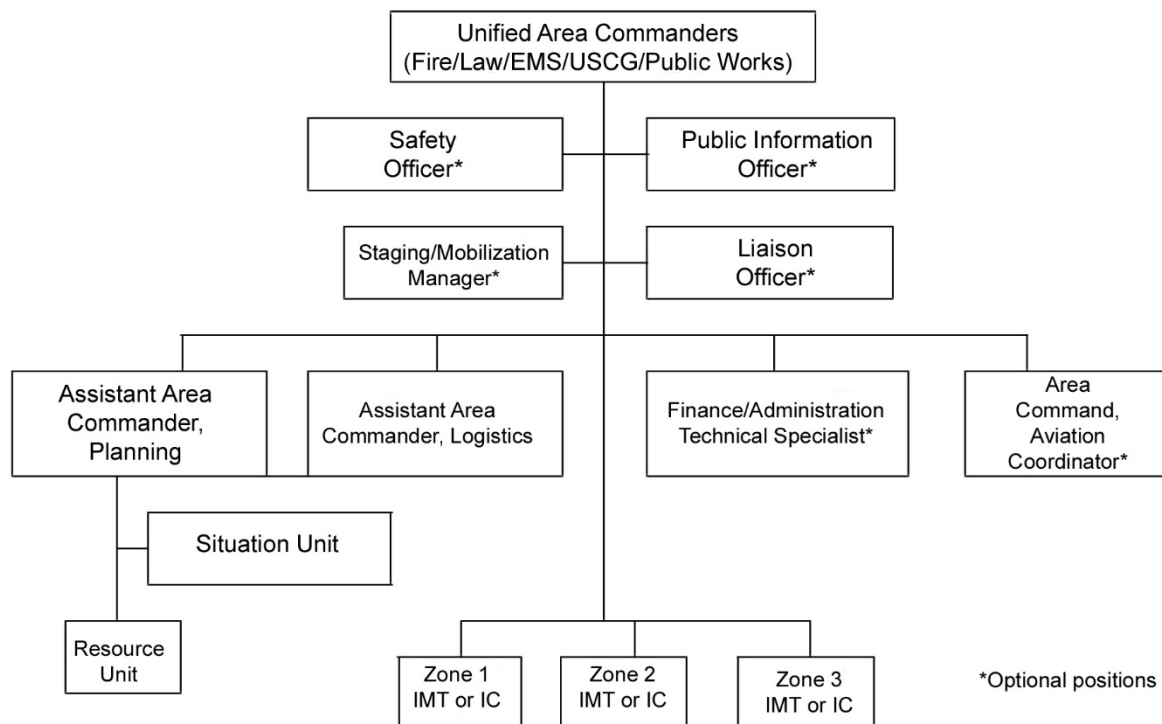
INCIDENT INTERFACE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER/DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER/AREA COMMAND & MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION SYSTEM

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

During certain periods of high service demand or critical threats to the community, there is a need to bring together the senior leadership (e.g., Mayor, Department Heads, City Manager, County Executive, etc.) of government at a central EOC location to support the Department Operations Centers (DOCs) and Area/Incident Commander(s) and make broad policy decisions beyond the authority and responsibility of Area/Incident Commanders. In some cases, the disaster may have multiple "impact" sites (incidents) throughout the community with multiple Incident Commanders and may have an Area Command established. The EOC should not become involved in the management of specific incidents, and the EOC's role is strictly a support function. The management of an incident for directing on-scene emergency management and maintaining command and control is the role of the Area/Incident Command or a Unified Area/Incident Command.

This organization chart indicates two things: in the initial phase when an Area Command has not been established, the EOC can communicate directly with the Incident Command Post; and if a DOC or Area Command is established, then the EOC would communicate through the DOC or Area Command to the Incident Command Post.

The benefit of an EOC is that elected and appointed leaders of the community assemble at a facility equipped to carry out the functions of government during emergencies. Policy decisions can be made quickly with input of timely, ac-curate information from appropriate parties. Information from all sources and impact sites can be consolidated for a global view of the disaster allowing analysis and appropriate and timely decision-making that provides effective support to the DOCs and Area/Incident Commander(s) in the field. While the term EOC often identifies a specific location where people assemble, it is critical that the functions of the EOC are not dependent on a single specific facility. That specific structure may be damaged and not be available at a time of need; therefore, a backup facility with appropriate capabilities needs to be available.

EOCs may be permanent organizations and facilities or established to meet temporary, short-term needs. The physical size, staffing, and equipping of an EOC will depend on

the size of the jurisdiction, resources available and anticipated incident management workload. EOCs may be organized and staffed in a variety of ways.

Regardless of the specific organizational structure used, EOCs should perform the following core functions to support Incident Commanders:

    a. Coordination
    b. Communications
    c. Acquiring and tracking resources
    d. Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information

MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION SYSTEM

GENERAL MAC SYSTEM PURPOSE

Incidents requiring participation by multiple agencies and jurisdictions can rapidly approach a size and complexity that exceeds the capabilities of a complex single incident or multiple incidents. The use of a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) System promotes the scalability and flexibility necessary for the coordinated response during large, multiple and/or escalating events. As an incident grows in size or complexity, or if it begins as a large scale event, resource needs may quickly exceed local, county, tribal, or State agencies' capabilities and mutual aid/assistance agreements. Dispatch centers may be overwhelmed by having to support the incident(s) at hand in addition to coordinating daily emergency response operations. Available resource levels needed to support normal or initial emergency response operations may be stretched thin due to incident resource needs. There may also be competition among multiple jurisdictions for those available critical resources.

Finally, Incident Command may be engaged with the incident and not be fully aware of available resources. In those cases, implementing a MAC System to assist Incident Command is necessary.

The purpose of a MAC System is to support the efforts of Area or Incident Commanders and support the continuity of operations of the agencies or organizations within the affected area. When initiated, a MAC System operates as a support function and does not communicate on a direct basis with Area or Incident Commanders.

Successful MAC System partnerships can be implemented to include:

  a. Federal
  b. State
  c. Territorial
  d. Tribal
  e. Sub-state regional
  f. Local governments
  g. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., Salvation Army, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and American Red Cross)
  h. Private-sector organizations
  i. Critical infrastructure owners and operators
  j. All other organizations and individuals who assume an emergency management role

GENERAL OVERVIEW: MAC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS AND COMPONENTS

i.   MAC System Functions

The primary functions of the MAC System are to support resource coordination, incident-related intelligence/information and to coordinate interagency and intergovernmental activities regarding incident management. A MAC System assists in coordination of field operations by performing a number of core functions. In the context of this guide, the term function is defined as "a specific process, action, or task a system is designed to perform." **Section II** provides additional instructions regarding each of the functions.

The seven core MAC System functions include:

a. Providing decision support information (Situation Assessment)
b. Incident priority determination
c. Critical resource acquisition and allocation
d. Support for incident management and interagency activities
e. Coordination with other MAC System components
f.   Coordination with elected and appointed officials
g. Coordination of summary information

ii.   MAC System Components

A MAC System is similar to other systems in that it requires specific components in order to produce the intended output or execute its assigned functions.

MAC System components include a combination of:

a. Facilities and Infrastructure
b. Equipment (e.g., communication and data input/output devices)
c. Personnel
d. Logistics/Maintenance/Transportation
e. Intelligence/Security
f.   Procedures (e.g., processes, protocols, agreements, and business practices)

Working in mutually collaborative environments, these components integrate into a common system to support the MAC System stakeholders. The components, in turn, aid in the performance of the functions listed above. MAC Systems tend to operate more efficiently in separate facilities or areas designated for MAC activities.

The components include entities in which MAC System functions can occur. This may include MAC Groups, which coordinate decision-making and resource allocation among participating agencies, assist in prioritizing incidents, and provide guidance and direction to support Incident Command. Components also include coordination centers, which provide central locations for operational information sharing and resource coordination in support of on-scene efforts.

It is important to note MAC Groups refer to personnel involved in the decision-making process and is one component of a MAC System.

Section III of this guide provides additional information about the specific MAC System components.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A MAC GROUP AND AREA COMMAND

To avoid confusion between MAC Groups and Area Command:

- *MAC Group* (Support) is an expansion of the <u>coordination function</u> needed to support a jurisdiction's response to an expanding, large, or complex incident(s).

- *Area Command* (Operational) is an expansion of the <u>incident command function</u> primarily designed to manage complex or large incidents or events or an area that has multiple incident management organizations assigned.

Both MAC Group and Area Command operations will adjust as needed as resource demands, incident support requirements, and/or continuity of operations requirements change.

Selected MAC System functions are carried out by the MAC Group that interacts with agencies or supporting jurisdictions, not with incidents. Area Command is organized to oversee the management of multiple incidents handled individually by separate Incident Command System (ICS) organizations or to oversee the management of a very large or evolving incident engaging multiple Incident Management Teams (IMTs). An Agency Administrator(s)/Executive(s) or other public official(s) with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident(s) usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. Area Command is activated only if necessary, depending on the complexity of the incidents and incident management span-of-control considerations. Area Command can reassign resources from incidents under its control and can also provide strategic direction.

Area Command is responsible for management oversight of its assigned incidents. In contrast, MAC Groups coordinate support and resources for the incidents and maintain continuity of operations for the various agencies/jurisdictions or the region. The MAC

Group also provides information flow both upward and downward among the various parties impacted by the event. Lastly, as resources are demobilized from incidents, the MAC Group reallocates those critical resources to other incidents where needed. MAC Groups will often be located some distance from the incident site(s) and have no direct incident authority or responsibility. A MAC Group may operate out of any facility designated by the Agency having jurisdiction.

As **Table 1** illustrates, there are several significant differences between a MAC Group and Area Command.

MAC Group	Area Command
Off-scene coordination and support organization with no direct incident authority or responsibility.	Management function of ICS with oversight responsibility and authority of IMTs assigned at multiple incidents. Area Command may be established as Unified Area Command.
Expansion of the off-site coordination and support systems.	Expansion of the on-Incident Command functions of the ICS.
Members are trained Agency Administrators/ Executives who can act regarding allocation of resources on behalf of their agency or designees from the agencies involved or heavily committed to the incidents.	Members are the most highly skilled incident management personnel.
Organization generally consists of multiagency coordination personnel (Agency Administrators/Executives), MAC Group Coordinator, and an intelligence and information support staff.	Organization generally consists of an Area Commander, an Area Command Planning Chief, an Area Command Intelligence Chief, an Area Command Logistics Chief, and an Area Command Aviation Coordinator.
Is the Agency Administrator/Executive or designee.	Is delegated authority for specific incident(s) from the Agency Administrator(s)/Executive(s).
Prioritize incidents based upon complexity, impact and severity; and allocate **unassigned** or transitioning resources based on incident need and priority to support incidents and continuity of management.	Assigns and reassigns and or demobilizes critical **assigned** resources allocated to Area Command by MAC or the normal dispatch system organization. Provides management and command direction to Incident Commanders.
Coordinate Agency Administrator/Executive level decisions on issues that affect multiple agencies.	

Table 1 Differences between a MAC Group and Area Command

Figure 1 below illustrates an example of how the chain of command and reporting relationships within a MAC System configuration may function. It is important to note, under some circumstances based upon the size and scope of the event and the resources required, Agency Administrators/Executives might provide guidance and direction directly to the Incident Command/Area Command.
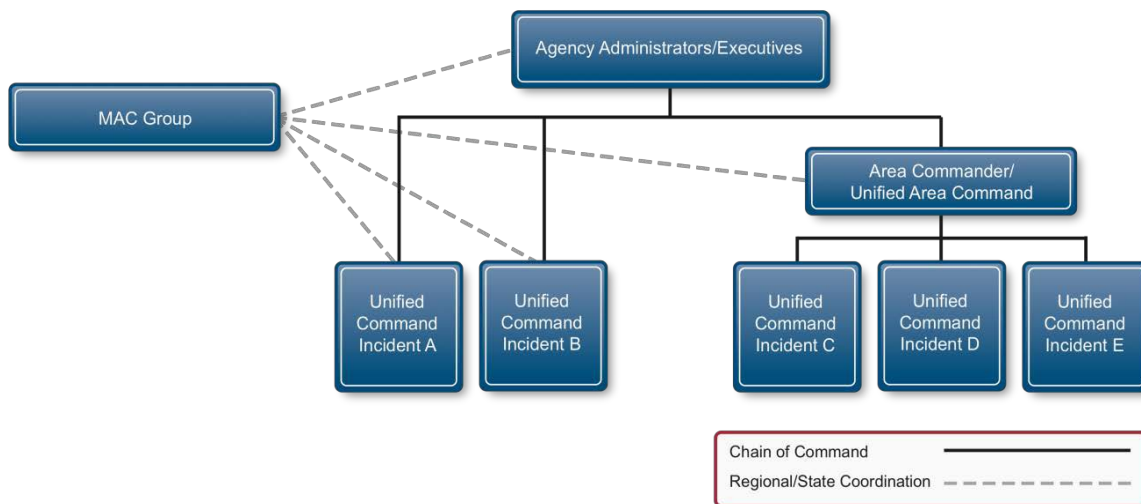
Figure 1 Example Chain of Command/Coordination Reporting Relationship

BASIC MAC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

MAC System functions support the management of resources and coordination of resources and information above the field level. This helps to ensure all parties possess the common operating picture needed to make sound decisions for the respective roles performed during incident response. However, not all functions will be performed during every incident, and those functions performed may occur in any order or sequence.

Common MAC System functions:

    a. Decision Support Information (Situation Assessment)
    b. Incident Priority Determination
    c. Critical Resource Acquisition and Allocation
    d. Relevant Incident Support
    e. MAC System Components Coordination
    f. Coordination with Elected and Appointed Officials
    g. Summary Information Coordination

DECISION SUPPORT INFORMATION (SITUATION ASSESSMENT)

The Decision Support Information (Situation Assessment) function includes the collection, processing, and display of all information needed to make sound resource decisions in support of Area/Incident Commanders.

This may take the form of:

    a. Collecting, consolidating, analyzing and disseminating situation reports.
    b. Obtaining supplemental information such as weather and other environmental information.
    c. Resource ordering and status tracking and reporting systems or processes.
    d. Completing the Incident Status Summary (ICS Form 209) or similar form.
    e. Making calls through established communication.
    f. Commanding the incident.
    g. Managing control systems and structures.
    h. Reporting to live or near-real time media.
    i. Preparing of incident maps and status boards.
    j. Receiving of intelligence-related information through Intelligence Community channels such as State or regional fusion centers

This decision-making information helps to identify and determine operational needs for the development of the common operating picture.

i.   Common Operating Picture

Decision Support Information (Situation Assessment) helps define critical factors that develop the Common Operating Picture. A common operating picture is established through situational awareness by gathering, collating, synthesizing, and disseminating incident information to all appropriate parties. Information input may come in the form of weather reports or forecasts, traffic conditions, actual and potential damage, resource availability, and communications (e.g., voice and data) with other agencies and organizations with the intent of collecting information to support decision–making.

Achieving a common operating picture allows on-scene and off-scene personnel such as those at the Incident Command Post, EOC, or within a MAC Group, to have the same information about the incident. This information includes the availability and location of resources and the status of assistance requests. Additionally, a common operating picture offers an incident overview that enables the Area Commander/Unified Area Command, Incident Commander/Unified Command (UC), and supporting agencies and organizations to make effective, consistent, and timely decisions. In order to maintain situational awareness, communications and incident information must be updated continually.

ii.   Decision Support Information Sources

Depending on incident-specifics, Decision Support Information is provided through a combination of three different sources. These sources are briefly discussed below.

   a. **Incident Information and Analysis** - This is the most commonly used and understood source of Decision Support Information and addresses incident-wide issues. The collection, analysis, and sharing of incident information and analysis is critical to successful development and maintenance of a common operating picture and MAC System execution.

b. **Intelligence and Investigation (I&I) Information** - A MAC System establishes a function and system for collection, analysis, and sharing of data developed during intelligence, security, and investigative activities. The I&I function deals with specific issues such as development of information and/or evidence regarding criminal aspects of the incident as opposed to normal incident-centric data.

c. **Public Information** - Part of Decision Support Information involves the gathering, verification, coordination, and dissemination of accurate and timely information pertaining to the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other factors bearing on incident status for both internal and external use. Public information input to Decision Support Information occurs through a Joint Information Center (JIC).

The purpose of a JIC is to ensure coordination of public information for incidents involving multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions. The JICs are often established as components of Federal, State, tribal, or local MAC Systems.

iii.   Type of Decision Support Information

Regardless of whether Decision Support Information is the accumulation of incident, I&I, or public information (or some other combination thereof); there are three primary categories or types of information that make up Decision Support Information. The three information types include:

a. **Situation Information**- Situation information addresses current incident status and represents the real-time situation. Situation information includes factors such as percentage of incident containment, current damage assessment, weather conditions, known fatalities, and primary hazards to name just a few.

b. **Incident Potential Information**- This type of information provides predictions or projections of incident status for future timeframes, such as 12-hour, 24-hour, and 48-hour, and 72-hour projections. Incident Potential predictions are based on available incident information, I&I (restrictive caveats), and public information, and include all future factors that affect the incident, such as anticipated resource status, projected weather forecasts and assessed threats and hazards.

c. **Resource Coordination Information**- Examples include critical resource requirements, shortfalls, availability, usage, limitations, and assigned locations, etc. Resource types include personnel, equipment, supplies, and other assets needed for incident response.

Figure 2 depicts the information flow for situation assessment, which is an ongoing process throughout the life of the incident(s) and is shared equally among all sources.
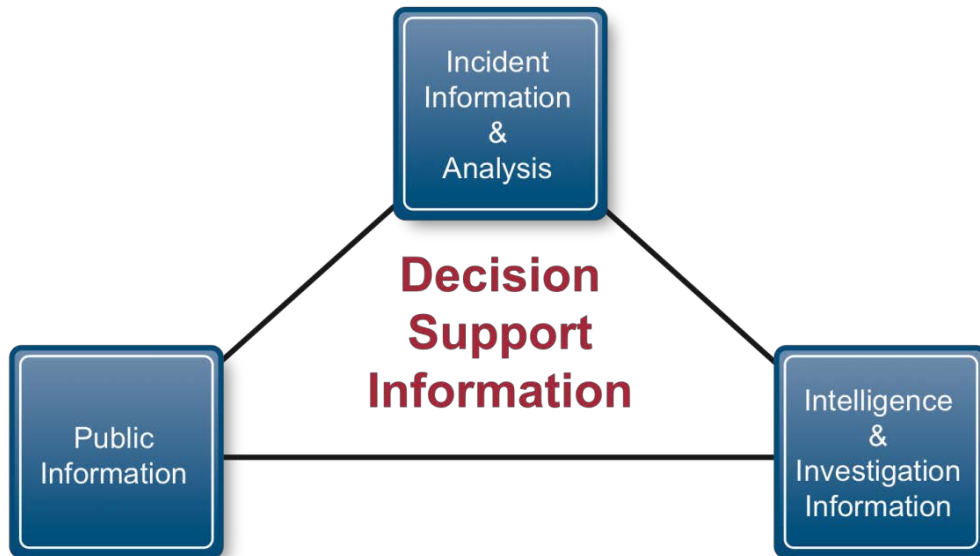
iv.   **Geospatial Information**

Geospatial information is another aspect of Decision Support Information. For the purposes of this guide, geospatial information is not considered a separate source of information, such as incident information and analysis or intelligence/investigation information. Since geospatial information is not limited to a single information source type, it is a type of facilitation tool that can be used effectively to present information regardless of the particular source from which the information was derived.

Geospatial information is defined as information pertaining to the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features and boundaries. It is often used to integrate assessments, situation reports, and incident notification into a common operating picture and as a data fusion and analysis tool to synthesize many kinds and sources of data and imagery. Geospatial information allows users to view, interpret, analyze, and visualize information in a manner that facilitates understanding of patterns, trends, inter-dependencies, and relationships.

Geospatial information presents consolidated information and data into an easy-to-understand visual format.

INCIDENT PRIORITY DETERMINATION

Establishing priorities among incidents within the defined area of responsibility is a component of a MAC System. This is done to provide continuity of operations and to allocate unassigned or reassignment-ready resources to new and ongoing incidents. Ideally, processes and procedures are established to coordinate with Area or Incident Commands to prioritize incident demands for critical resources. A MAC System requires information from the incidents and lower-level MAC System Organizations to prioritize and allocate resources in support of respective incident(s). A MAC System also requires information from a higher-level MAC System in order to execute higher-levels decisions and implement the overall incident strategy. It is imperative decisions determining incident priorities be based on and supported by Decision Support Information as discussed earlier in this section.

Executed in this manner, incident priority decisions are driven by an accurate common operating picture supported by situational information, resource information, and incident potential information. With an accurate common operating picture, decision makers can better prioritize and choose the prudent courses of action based on the most urgent needs and requirements, and greatest current/potential threats. In this manner, decision makers are basing resource prioritization decisions on sound risk management principles.

Common considerations for determining priorities include;

a. **Life threatening situation**
   - Defined as events that increase complexity of the situation, resulting in high potential for serious injury or death.
   - Includes both public and emergency responders.
   - Protection of emergency responder and public lives is the highest priority.
   - Threat ratings are based on factors such as evacuation status, road or highway closures that exacerbate the situation complicating removal from danger areas, and extreme incident behavior or weather events.
   - Threat ratings are based on current and anticipated threats (12, 24, 48 and 72-hour projections).

b. **Threat to property**
   - Defined as potential for damage or actual impact to communities or other high value investments that contribute to dwellings, commercial workplaces and critical infrastructure that supports human life, income or support to the general population.

- Threats under this category should not be listed unless there is significant potential to impact these elements and an imminent that is recognized within a 48-hour timeframe. Threat categories are organized in separate categories such as:

  ➢ Structural (e.g., residential, commercial, vacation, other) with weighted ratings based on the number of structures threatened
  ➢ Probability of community loss within 48 hours with ratings weighted the heaviest for greater probabilities of projected loss (e.g., greater than 75 percent probability of community loss rates higher than 25 percent probability for community loss)
  ➢ Infrastructure loss/shutdown potential based on current and projected status with existing/imminent shutdown rated the highest

- High damage potential: Potential for damage refers to the vulnerability of the structure, environment, or populations to negative impact from an event.
- Determinations can be based on the number of people or sites that are impacted and the probable time until potential harm.
- High damage potential can also refer to indirect consequential damage.
- Storm damage to a dam may be minimal but the subsequent flooding could destroy lives and property.
- After damage to human life, mitigation and protection against and recovery from damage to critical infrastructures and key resources are the highest priority status.

c. **Incident complexity**
- Complex or multiple incidents as compared to a single incident can make prioritization setting difficult.
- Complex or multiple incidents are common enough, which could warrant inclusion in the overall Incident Priority Determination process.
- Factors such as travel distances and accessibility to support emergency responders, and logistical challenges not always associated with a single incident must be considered and weighed in determining priorities.
- Ratings can be assigned a number of different ways specific to the incidents, but include factors such as the number of total incidents or size of the affected incident areas.

d. Environmental impact

- Impact is determined through observation, sampling, monitoring, and assessment of environmental potential or observed environmental or ecosystems damage including impact to land, water, waterways, wetlands, air quality, wildlife, and agricultural activities and sites that may be affected by changes to proximate environments.
- Considerations would include impact period, ability to mitigate potential harm, actions to protect or clean up contamination, and permit and authorization requirements.
- Environmental impact considerations may affect response plan advisability.
- A common example is the decision whether or not to collect runoff water when decontaminating people or sites in response to chemical and biological spills.
- Prioritizing response based on environmental impacts also identifies economic considerations, which must be weighed in response and recovery planning and implementation.

e. Economic impact

- An analysis of economic impact can describe the anticipated effect of an event or of planned response to it on the economy of impacted area, which may include a neighborhood, community, region or nation.
- Economic impact is usually measured in terms of changes in economic growth (output or value added) and associated changes in jobs (employment) and income (wages).
- The analysis is typically conducted by measuring or estimating the level of economic activity occurring prior to an event or planned response relative to projected or observed activity over the same time period after the event or response.
- The economic impact of an event can be weighed relative to the economic contribution of an impacted area to the existing local economy.

CRITICAL RESOURCE ACQUISITION AND ALLOCATION

Resources designated as critical will be acquired, if possible, from the involved agencies or jurisdictions in order to maintain continuity of operations within the jurisdiction. These agencies or jurisdictions shift resources internally to match incident needs as a result of incident priority decisions based on situation assessment and Decision Support Information. Available internal incident resources in the process of demobilization may be also be re-assigned (e.g., to higher priority incidents). During the initial phases of an incident, most resource needs are satisfied in this manner or through local mutual aid agreements and/or assistance agreements.

Incidents can expand in scope and complexity, and overwhelm local resourcing capabilities. In those cases, resources will be acquired from outside the affected area from other jurisdictions, agencies, etc. Procedures for acquiring outside unassigned resources will vary, depending on factors such as the agencies involved, legality, and written agreements.

It is the objective of all emergency response/public service agencies to maintain the capability to meet "typical" initial response needs and to maintain enough resources for the continuity of operations within the agency's own jurisdiction.

When multiple jurisdictions are in competition for limited critical resources, a MAC System may be used to prioritize and coordinate resource allocation and distribution according to resource availability, needs of other incidents, and other constraints and considerations.

Figure 3 below illustrates the Resource Management Cycle as it pertains to a MAC System.
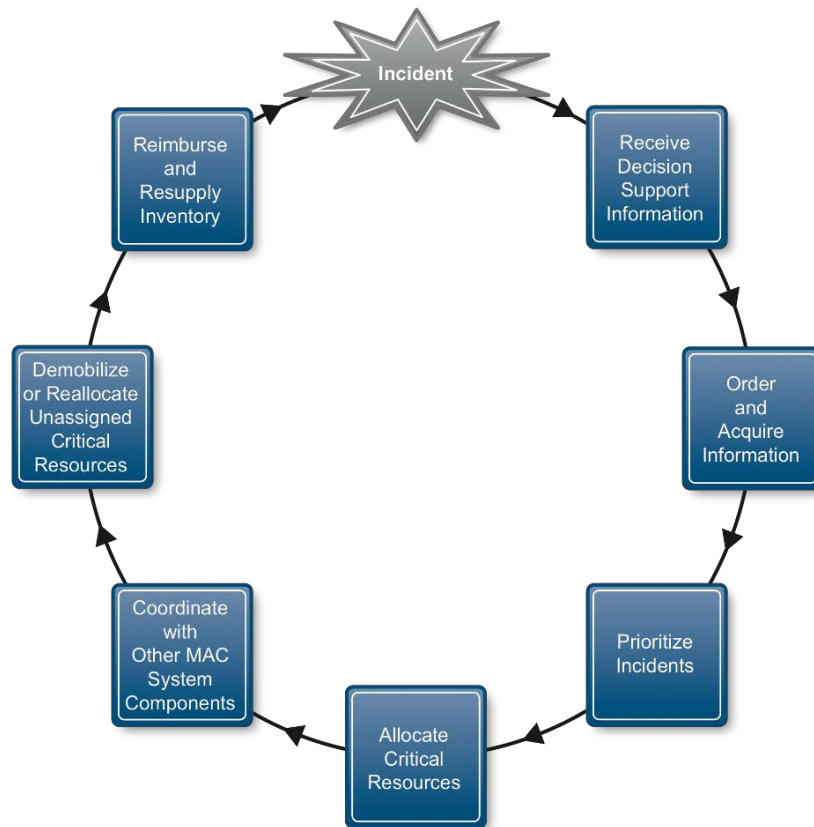
Standardized resource management protocols are followed when requesting resources, prioritizing requests, activating and mobilizing resources to incidents, and returning resources to normal status. During the initial phases of an incident, most resource needs are filled by dispatch centers through locally assigned/available e assets or through local mutual aid agreements and/or assistance agreements. As incidents expand or become more complex, resource needs may rapidly overtake dispatch center span of control and deplete local sources to the extent that external (e.g., other jurisdictions, agencies) unassigned resources support is needed.

SUPPORT FOR RELEVANT INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND INTERAGENCY ACTIVITIES

Another primary function of a MAC System is to coordinate, support, and assist with policy-level decisions and interagency activities relevant to incident management activities, policies, and strategies.

Preparedness Organizations, as referenced by NIMS, provide invaluable coordination for emergency management and incident response activities before an incident or planned event occurs. These organizations range from groups of individuals to small committees to large standing organizations that represent a wide variety of committees, planning groups, or other organizations. A Preparedness Organization can serve as a forum, and assist in development and shaping of policies, procedures, and protocols, and help formulate and implement interagency activities within their jurisdictions. In a best- case scenario, many of the members and participants involved in a Preparedness Organization will also be members of an associated MAC System component such as an EOC or MAC Group.

When preparedness activities are accomplished across multiple jurisdictions, Preparedness Organizations should also be multijurisdictional and/or multiagency-oriented, and include critical infrastructure owners and operators, NGOs, and the private-sector that have statutory responsibility, commitment of resources, or as applicable.

In some cases, situations may arise in the midst of an incident, where existing policies, procedures, and protocols hinder or complicate incident response operations. In worst-case scenarios, policies, procedures, and protocols could actually jeopardize the safety, security, and well-being of incident victims.

A MAC System has diverse membership that could include, or coordinate with, a multitude of jurisdictions, agencies, elected or appointed officials, specialists, NGOs, and the private sector. Incidents and events sometimes require short-term modification of, or relief from, specific policies, procedures, and protocols. A MAC System could serve as a forum for building consensus on these changes.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER MAC SYSTEM COMPONENTS

A critical part of a MAC System is outlining how each system component communicates and coordinates with other system components at the lateral level, the level above, and the level below. It is imperative that MAC System components, at all levels, integrate in a manner that affords effective and efficient execution. Gaps, seams, or disconnects between different MAC System components can negatively impact critical resource support to Incident Commanders in the field. Coordination processes, procedures, protocols, and agreements that bind various levels of a MAC System should be stressed through regular exercise and testing programs. If problems are identified,

-changes to established procedures should be implemented and re-evaluated to determine if problem areas were resolved.

Following occurrence of an incident, the organizations or people involved in MAC System functions are responsible for incorporating lessons learned into procedures, protocols, business practices, training/ exercising planning, and communications strategies. These improvements need to be coordinated with other MAC System components and appropriate Preparedness Organizations. Finally, special attention is warranted to ensure inclusion of MAC System partners such as critical infrastructure owners/ operators, private sector leaders, NGOs, tribal nations, U.S military, and other applicable agencies and organizations in all coordination activities that have statutory responsibility, commitment of resources, or as applicable.

<u>COORDINATION WITH ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS</u>

Another primary function outlined in a MAC System is a process or procedure to keep elected and appointed officials at all levels of government informed. Maintaining the awareness and support of these officials, particularly those from jurisdictions within the affected area, is extremely important, as scarce organic resources my need to move ti an agency or jurisdiction with higher priorities.

Elected and appointed officials may be represented in the MAC Systems and their representatives should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for successful emergency management and incident response. These officials include administrative, legal, and political personnel, as well as department or agency administrators/executives who have leadership roles in a jurisdiction, including legislators and chief executives, whether elected (e.g., governors, mayors, sheriffs, tribal leaders, and county executives) or appointed (e.g., county administrators and city managers). Although their roles require providing direction and guidance to constituents during an incident, their daily activities do not focus on emergency management and incident response.

  a. A MAC System executes some variations of the following activities in order to ensure elected/appointed officials are sufficiently informed.

  b. Encourage NIMS training and exercise participation by elected/appointed officials.

  c. Assist officials with attaining a basic understanding of emergency management, continuity of operations and continuity of government plans jurisdictional response capabilities, and initiation of disaster declarations

d. Encourage officials to lead and promote preparedness efforts within the community, agencies of the jurisdiction, NFOs, and the private sector, as appropriate.

e. Help to establish relationships (including mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements) with other jurisdictions and as appropriate, NGOs and the private sector.

f. Engage officials and support/encourage their participation in mitigation efforts within the jurisdiction and, as appropriate, with NGOs and the private sector.

g. Aid officials in communicating and providing guidance to their jurisdictions, departments, and/or agencies, with clearly stated policies for NIMS implementation.

h. Inform and ensure officials understand laws and regulations in their jurisdictions that pertain to emergency management and incident response.

i. Inform officials regarding applicable Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR) within their jurisdictions, potential incident impacts, and restoration priorities.

Elected and appointed official may also be called upon to help shape and revise laws, policies, and budgets to aid in preparedness efforts and to improve emergency management and incident response activities. During these activities, active and continued involvement by Preparedness Organizations in partnership with elected and appointed official presents opportunities to advance and significantly improve MAC System execution.

COORDINATION OF SUMMARY INFORMATION

By virtue of the Decision Support Information function, personnel implementing the MAC Systems coordination procedures provide Summary Information on incidents within their area of responsibility as well as provide agency/jurisdictional contacts for media and other interested agencies. The Summary Information function involves the consolidation and packaging of incident information in formats for the purposes of presentation, displays, and distribution.

Summary Information is coordinated and disseminated for both internal and external use. Internal dissemination include participating MAC System agencies; private industry and critical infrastructure partners; response community; other Federal, State, tribal, local, and volunteer agencies; elected and appointed officials; other community leaders; and other Public Information Officers (PIO)s. External dissemination includes sharing information with the news media. Regarding external information sharing, inaccurate information and rumors can negatively impact health and safety and should be resolved immediately with the media, and correct information provided through the media or other means.

Additional activities within the function include:

a. Maintenance of current information summaries and/or displays on the incident.

b. Coordinate emergency public information, alerts, advisories, and warnings.

c. Monitoring of media reporting for accuracy.

d. Providing graphics support that involves designing layouts, presentations, and creating other materials such as newsletters, handouts, and flyers.

e. Developing audio-visual products such as video documentation, remote live interviews, and special productions.

f. Providing photo and video support that may include photography documentation to support print and internet media needs, and video documentation to support broadcast media needs.

g. Collect and file Summary Information materials for participating agency archives.

Some of the common methods available for communicating Summary Information include:

a. News releases

b. Mass e-mails and faxes

c. Emergency Alert System (EAS)

d. Public Service Announcements

e. Closed circuit cable

    f.   Reverse 911

    g. Reader boards

    h. Loud speakers

    i.   Door-to-door runners

    j.   Fliers and factsheets

    k. Community meetings

Web sites, blogs, and text messaging have become an effective and popular method of social networking and communicating information. Web sites can be an important tool in disseminating emergency and preparedness information. Additionally, Web sites can also be a vehicle for the media and public to submit inquiries in both directions during an incident, providing useful information and feedback that may prove invaluable to Decision Support Information as well. Other ad-vantages include cost, rapid updating capabilities, minimal or no external editing, and virtual 24/7 access.

BASIC MAC SYSTEM COMPONENTS

OVERVIEW OF MAC SYSTEM COMPONENTS

A MAC System is a combination of components that include facilities, equipment, personnel, and procedures integrated into a common system with responsibility for coordination of resources and support to emergency operations. The over-arching mission or goal of combined MAC System components is to support MAC System stakeholders in performing the functions discussed earlier for the benefit of Incident Commanders.

Figure 4 below illustrates an overview of how MAC System components provide the functions that support Area and Incident Commanders.

Figure 4 MAC System Functions and Components

Facilities/Infrastructure
The need for location(s) to house system activities will depend on the anticipated functions of the system. Based on specifics aspects of an incident, facilities include public buildings, dual-use buildings, mobile platforms, general purpose tents, portable structures, or some other suitable arrangement.

In addition, this category includes virtual locations such as teleconferencing, video teleconferencing, Webinars, and other technological solutions and arrangements that facilitate MAC System activities without physical presence of respective members.

- Infrastructure includes the physical hard-wire and wireless pathways, networking integrators, commercial and emergency electrical power components, drinking water, sewage, industrial water such as chilled water for cooling server and

computer facilities, natural gas and petroleum, and other essentials necessary for a MAC System to survive and operate.

- Specific instruments (e.g., telephones, HAM Radios, satellite communications, computers do not fall in this category as they are categorized as equipment components and are not infrastructure oriented.

Equipment

To accomplish system activities, equipment items such as computers, telephones, furniture, video and display equipment, televisions, and vehicles, must be identified and procured. Service, support, and maintenance considerations must also be addressed to ensure availability of the needed equipment items. Routine maintenance plans and schedules, technical refresh and replacement of communications equipment, and strategic equipment budgeting are all important aspects pertaining to equipment components.

Detailed accountability and inventory procedures that mitigate loss, theft, and destruction problems are also needed. Finally, inspections, testing, and operations of equipment items not used for extended periods of time should occur to ensure reliability is maintained.

Personnel

MAC Group personnel include Agency Administrators/Executives, or their appointed representatives, who are authorized to commit agency resources and funds in a coordinated response effort. Personnel can also be authorized representatives from supporting agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, who assist in coordinating activities above the field level. Additional personnel may be assigned to implement, facilitate and support the functions of the MAC Group.

Procedures

Procedures include processes, protocols, agreements, and business practices that prescribe the activities, relationships, and functionality of the MAC System. Identifying the interactive communications activities and associated implementation plans are critical components of the system. Procedures include communications channels of information flow and coordination protocols.

For example, there are specified reporting requirements and processes between various levels of government that take place in MAC System activities. Another example is the formal agreements and reporting protocols that occur between a MAC System and owners/operators of Critical Infrastructure and private sector leadership. Examples of communications channels that must be maintained include Continuity of Operations (COOP), Continuity of Government (COG), federalism, government-to-government, and agency-to-agency.

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS WHERE MAC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS OCCUR

There are a number of commonly used locations where MAC functions occur, which include, but are not limited to, Communications/Dispatch Centers, Departmental Operations Centers (DOCs), Fusion Centers, EOCs, and MAC Centers. As previously stated, it is important to note MAC Groups refer to personnel involved in the decision-making process while MAC Centers refer to physical locations where operational support is coordinated.

The following provides a brief description of each:

a. **Communications/Dispatch Center**

Dispatch centers have the authority to request resources from immediate mutual aid agencies to support the concepts of dispatching the closest forces and total mobility. These centers have staff that routinely manage emergency calls from the public and communicate with emergency management/response personnel. They may serve as a primary coordination and support component of the MAC System for an incident until other components of the MAC System are formally established. Generally, the dispatch center is the only part of the MAC System that is in place all the time. As incident complexity and scale increase, dispatch centers can become overwhelmed trying to effectively manage incident resources support and normal initial response simultaneously. Many jurisdictions have expanded dispatch centers that assume additional workload during incidents. Other jurisdictions have processes, procedures, and protocols in place that facilitate incident dispatch support to another MAC System component such as an EOC.

b. **Departmental Operations Centers (DOCs)**

A DOC is specific to a single department or agency. The focus of a DOC is to provide resource coordination to support incidents and continuity of operations. DOCs are often linked to and, in some cases, are physically represented in a combined agency EOC by authorized agent(s) for the department or agency. The DOC may directly support the incident and receive information relative to its operations.

c. **Fusion Centers**

A Fusion Center is a central repository of information and analysis and works with Federal, State, regional and local law enforcement, as well as the public and private sector as the State repository for homeland security information and incident reporting. Fusion centers serve as a point of contact for local entities seeking to receive information from Federal agencies. It collects and analyzes information to produce and disseminate actionable intelligence to support decision makers and operational personnel. The primary products of a fusion center are situational awareness and warnings that are supported by law enforcement intelligence, derived from the application of the intelligence process, where requirements for actionable information are generated and information is collected, integrated, evaluated, analyzed, and disseminated.

d. **Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)**

An EOC is the physical location where support and coordination of information and resource allocation takes place. The EOC is represented by major disciplines, by Emergency Support Function (ESF), by jurisdiction, or by some combination thereof. It is important to note EOCs provide support, coordination of information and resource allocation (detailed information concerning EOC functions are listed in **Section VI** of this guide).

The role of the EOC is to provide a central location for the interagency coordination necessary to support the jurisdictions response during an escalating or large, complex incident by relieving the burden of external coordination and workload of securing additional resources. Many EOCs are also assigned the responsibility to provide for maintaining the continuity of operations and essential services in the jurisdiction's area not involved in the incident.

e. **MAC Center**

A MAC Center will often be located some distance from the incident site(s). In some cases, it may be necessary for the MAC Group to function virtually, such as via teleconference or video teleconferencing to accomplish its assigned tasks based on the size and scope of the event.

f. **Joint Field Office (JFO)**

Governors are responsible for requesting Federal assistance for incidents within their respective States. Federal support is usually coordinated through a Joint Field Office (JFO). A JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides support to Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations. The JFO serves as an integration point for Federal resources and facilitates direct engagement and exchange between Federal and State jurisdictions.

1 In accordance with the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990 (Chapter 40, Title 33 USC), In the event of spills of national significance, the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Commandant of the Coast Guard may name a National Incident Commander (NIC) who has responsibilities of communicating with affected parties and the public at the national level, and coordinating Federal, State, local, and international resources at the national level. The NIC does not direct on-scene operations.

Leadership within the JFO structure is provided by a Unified Coordination Group comprised of senior officials from the State and Federal departments and agencies and overall coordination is led by the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). The FCO is the primary Federal representative with whom State, tribal, and local response officials interface to identify needs and set objectives for an effective collaborative response. The JFO does not command or manage incident-level or on-scene operations, but instead focuses on providing coordination and support that extends beyond the incident site and across multiple State boundaries.

Depending on the scope and nature of the incident, and the resources deployed in support of the affected jurisdiction, JFO staffing includes personnel from Federal and State departments and agencies, other jurisdictional entities, the private sector, and NGOs.

g. **Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC)**

FEMA has a total 10 regional offices with each office led by a Regional Administrator. These regional offices provide a permanent FEMA presence in support of local communities and states throughout the nation. All 10 regional offices also maintain a RRCC. These coordination centers are staffed 24/7, and can quickly expand to become an interagency facility staffed by ESFs in anticipation of, or in response to serious incidents within their respective regions. The RRCCs coordinate Federal regional response efforts, and maintain connectivity with State-level EOCs, State Fusion Centers, and other Federal and State operations and coordination centers that provide situational awareness.

Ongoing RRCC operations transition to a JFO once it is established, so the RRCC can remain ready to deal with new incidents.

h. **National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)**

The NRCC provides integrated mission support for, and is an operational component of, the National Operations Center (NOC). The NRCC is FEMA's primary operations management and national resource coordination center. Staffed as an around-the-clock organization, the NRCC monitors potential or developing incidents and supports the efforts of regional and field-level components. The NRCC can immediately increase staffing in anticipation of or in response to a myriad of wide-ranging incidents by activating any one of, or all 15, ESFs. The NRCC provides overall emergency management coordination, conducts operational planning, deploys national-level entities, and collects and disseminates incident information as it builds and maintains a common operating picture. Representatives of nonprofit organizations within the private sector participate in the NRCC to enhance information exchange and cooperation between these entities and the Federal Government.

i. **National Coordination Center (NOC)**

The NOC serves as the national fusion center, collecting and synthesizing all-source information, including information from State fusion centers, across all-threats and all-hazards information covering the spectrum of homeland security partners. Federal departments and agencies should report information regarding actual or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response to the NOC.

COORDINATION AND COMMAND

There is a strong emphasis placed on understanding the differences between the functions and activities of Command and Coordination as well as how they are separated. These two functions must closely interact with another if the overall incident management response is to be successful.

Certain roles not well defined in NIMS must be clarified to better understand the relationship between Command and Coordination. Without this clarification, there is the potential for a jurisdiction to implement a type of organization that could potentially add to the confusion instead of resolving it. The following definitions or descriptions should be used to clarify and standardize the roles and responsibilities within the functions of Command and Coordination.

Table 2 provides definitions of commonly used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command components and roles. The purpose of the table is to provide a collective set of definitions that are often times confused.

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles		
AGENCY OVERSIGHT	Agency Administrator/ Executive (AAs)	The term Agency Administrator/Executive (AA) is the title temporarily assigned to a person for the duration of the incident. The person occupying this position and assigned this title usually does so as collateral duty and has a different title describing typical daily duties or position. The purpose of the AA title is to clarify who has overall responsibility to direct that jurisdiction's response to the incident. This is particularly important when a response is being managed under Unified Command with other jurisdictions, or when utilizing resources from outside the local jurisdiction or area. An Agency Administrator/Executive (or other public official with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident) usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. (See page 135 of the NIMS, definition of an Agency Administrator/Executive).
		Although the person assigned as the AA may be physically located at a coordination facility such as the EOC building, the position represents a jurisdictional oversight position that has supervision responsibilities over the entire response including both the IC from that jurisdiction as well as the EOC Manager. When a jurisdiction's AA is collocated at an EOC or other coordination, facility there is the potential for the perception the EOC has command authority over the Incident Commander(s) on scene. This is incorrect, the supervision remains with the AA regardless of their physical location or membership on any group. Because the AA is a jurisdictional oversight position, an AA is required for each jurisdiction represented in Unified Command.
	Agency Administrator's Representative	The term Agency Administrator's Representative is the title temporarily assigned to a person who has been designated to represent the Agency Administrator/Executive for the duration of the incident when the AA is unavailable. The Agency Administrator's Representatives position requires a written Delegation of Authority or Letter of Expectation to clarify authority and responsibilities for the person selected to execute the job duties.

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles	
Policy Group	A Policy Group is a group comprised of the Chief Elected Official(s) or designee(s), and other senior government officials. The Policy Group focuses on the overarching strategy the jurisdiction needs to follow during the response. This overarching strategy includes the overall response priorities, continuity of operations, policy setting, and other strategies beyond the scope of the strategy developed by the Incident Commander at the scene. Decisions made by the Policy Group are implemented by the EOC Manager and/or Incident Commanders. The Policy Group may include Agency Administrators (AAs) or the AA's may report to the Policy Group.
National Operations Center (NOC)	The NOC serves as the national fusion center, collecting and synthesizing all-source information, including information from State fusion centers, across all-threats and all-hazards information covering the spectrum of homeland security partners. Federal departments and agencies should report information regarding actual or potential incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response to the NOC.
National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)	The NRCC provides integrated mission support for, and is an operational component of, the National Operations Center (NOC). The NRCC is FEMA's primary operations management and national resource coordination center. Staffed as an around-the-clock organization, the NRCC monitors potential or developing incidents and supports the efforts of regional and field-level components. The NRCC provides overall emergency management coordination, conducts operational planning, deploys national-level entities, and collects and disseminates incident information as it builds and maintains a common operating picture. Representatives of nonprofit organizations within the private sector participate in the NRCC to enhance information exchange and cooperation between these entities and the Federal Government.
Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC)	These regional offices provide a permanent FEMA presence in support of local communities and states throughout the nation. These coordination centers are staffed 24/7, and can quickly expand to become an interagency facility staffed by ESFs in anticipation of, or in response to serious incidents within their respective regions. The RRCCs coordinate Federal regional response efforts, and maintain connectivity with State-level EOCs, State Fusion Centers, and other Federal and State operations and coordination centers that provide situational awareness. Ongoing RRCC operations transition to a JFO once it is established, so the RRCC can remain ready to deal with new incidents.
Fusion Centers	A fusion center is a central repository of information and analysis and works with Federal, State, regional and local law enforcement, as well as the public and private

The left side of the table is labeled vertically: **COORDINATION**

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles		
		sector as the State repository for homeland security information and incident reporting. Fusion centers serves as a point of contact for local entities seeking to receive information from Federal agencies. It collects and analyzes information to produce and disseminate actionable intelligence to support decision makers and operational personnel. The primary products of a fusion center are situational awareness and warnings supported by law enforcement intelligence, derived from the application of the intelligence process, where requirements for actionable information are generated and information is collected, integrated, evaluated, analyzed, and disseminated.
	Joint Field Office (JFO)	A JFO is a temporary Federal facility that provides centralized coordination of Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations. The JFO serves as an integration point for Federal resources and facilitates direct engagement and exchange between Federal and State jurisdictions. Leadership within the JFO structure is provided by a Unified Coordination Group comprised of senior officials from the State and Federal departments and agencies. The JFO does not command or manage incident-level or on-scene operations, but instead focuses on providing coordination and support that extend beyond the incident site and across multiple state boundaries.
	MAC Center	A group of administrators or executives, or appointed representatives, who are typically authorized to commit agency resources and funds. A MAC Group provides coordinated decision-making and resource allocation among participating agencies, establishes priorities among incidents, harmonizes agency policies, and provides strategic guidance to support incident management activities.
	Director	The title of Director is used in Jurisdictional Organizations, Command and Coordination activities. To clarify any confusion, especially on large multijurisdictional responses, this title should always be coupled with another term to clarify the role of the position. Uses of the title Director include, but are not limited, to: • **Jurisdictional Organization** The title of Director may be required by statute and be called the *Director of Emergency Services*, or *Emergency Management Director*. The person with this title is responsible for the Emergency Management program and in charge of the jurisdiction during an emergency as directed by local municipal code or ordinance. During the incident, the person with this title would likely be the Agency Administrator/Executive or Agency Administrator's Representative. For example, the chief elected official, mayor or the Agency Administrator,

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles		
		the Director of Emergency Services is the Mayor's Agency Administrator's Representative. • **Command** The Incident Command System title for individuals responsible for supervision of a Branch, or *Branch Director*. (See page 138 of the NIMS, definition of Director). • **Coordination (EOC)** The title EOC Director is being used in some EOC configurations. This is an official assigned to supervise the activities in an EOC. This is the lead position of the EOC staff and reports to the Policy Group or Agency Administrator. This position should not be the Agency Administrator. The recommended title for this position is EOC Manager (see EOC Manager below).
	Emergency Operations Center (EOC)	The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incidents and continuity of operations. An EOC is a temporary facility or located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. The EOC Manager is fully responsible for overall management of the EOC. • **EOC Manager** The EOC Manager is an official assigned to supervise and oversee the activities of the EOC staff. This is the lead position of the EOC staff and usually reports to the Policy Group or Agency Administrator. In an EOC that is organized using the Major Management Activities configuration, the Policy Group works under the direction of the EOC Manager. This position should not be the Agency Administrator. In an EOC that has adopted the ICS configuration, this position title is equivalent to the Incident Commander title at the incident, but is responsible for the activities of the EOC staff instead of Incident Command Activities. In the EOC ICS configuration, the EOC Management team refers to only the EOC ICS equivalent staff itself; it does not include the Policy Group, AA or MAC Group. • **EOC Coordinator** When implemented, the EOC Coordinator position reports to the EOC Manager, and is responsible for directing the daily activities of the EOC. The EOC Coordinator is the official supervisor of the other EOC staff members or act as a coordination position without formal supervisory responsibilities.

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles		
	Department Operations Center (DOC)	A Department Operations Center (DOC) specific to a single department or agency. The focus of a DOC is to provide resource coordination to support incidents and continuity of operations. DOCs are often linked to and, in most cases, are physically represented in a combined agency EOC by authorized agent(s) for the department or agency.
	Communications/ Dispatch Centers	Communications/Dispatch Centers have staff that routinely manage emergency calls from the public and communicate with emergency management/response personnel. Many jurisdictions have extended dispatch centers that assume additional workload during incidents. The center(s) can serve as a primary coordination and support element of the MAC System(s) for an incident until other components of the MAC System are formally established. Other jurisdictions have processes, procedures, and protocols in place that facilitate incident dispatch support to another MAC System Component such as an EOC.
COMMAND	**Area Command/ Unified Area Command**	• **Area Command** An organization established to oversee the management of multiple incidents, each being handled by a separate Incident Command System organization or to oversee the management of a very large or evolving incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams engaged. An Agency Administrator/Executive or other public official with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. An Area Command is activated only if necessary, depending on the complexity of the incident and incident management span-of-control considerations. • **Unified Area Command** Version of command established when incidents under an Area Command are multiagency or multi-jurisdictional.

Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Roles		
	Incident Command/Unified Command	• **Incident Command** The Incident Command System organizational element responsible for overall management of the incident and consisting of the Incident Commander (either single or unified command structure) and any assigned supporting staff. • **Unified Command** An Incident Command System application used when more than one agency has incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the UC, often the qualified persons from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the UC, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single Incident Action Plan.

Table 2 Definitions of Commonly Used Agency Oversight, Coordination, and Command Components and Role

MAC SYSTEMS CONFIGURATIONS

MAC Systems are organized in many different ways, depending on the size and scope of the incident or event, complexity of response, number of jurisdictions and agencies, limitations and constraints, and a multitude of other factors. A MAC System can be organized by geographic area or a combination of geographic area and incident management function/discipline. For example, specific medical and public health agencies (functional) at the State level (geographic) may establish a MAC System to assist in:

a. Pre-incident planning and coordination
b. Coordinating hospital availability during incident response, allocation and re-allocation of specialized, critical, and limited resources
c. Prioritization of resource allocation, incident support, and continuity of operations.
d. Development of complex and multijurisdictional mitigation strategies
e. Response to major events and incidents

GEOGRAPHIC AREA SYSTEM

There are numerous ways in which a MAC System can be organized geographically. In many cases, the incident scope and complexity will determine the appropriate geographic area protocol, organizational, and response structures. In addition to the example framework provided at Figure 5, several other methods can be used to geographically organize a MAC System, as dictated by incident scope, complexity, resource availability, and other related factors. A number of possible organizational methodologies are provided as examples below. This list is not all inclusive, but provided as a starting point.

a. **Local MAC System:** Individual jurisdictions should establish a MAC System as part of its EOC Management Team function. In this application, it is important the jurisdiction define its role broadly enough to include all jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations that might be involved at the local level. A local area MAC System provides jurisdictional coordination and support. The MAC System also identifies priorities for response and allocation of resource use based on established priorities. Incident information provided by Incident/Area Commanders on standard forms and reports, such as the ICS Form 209, are used by a local MAC System to assist in the prioritization of incidents and allocation of critical resources.

b. **Regional/Multijurisdictional MAC System**: Multiagency coordination is also achieved by organizing representatives from multiple jurisdictions, such as county governments, to coordinate on a regional level. This level of coordination is necessary for complex incidents within regions and broader legal authorities such as water districts, fire protection districts, etc. In areas where complex incidents are prevalent, it may be beneficial to formally establish a Regional MAC System. Formal operating procedures that facilitate seamless integration and interaction at levels above and below the regional level should be developed and shared with affected MAC System partners. Multijurisdictional MAC Systems are commonly used by metropolitan areas in preparing for and responding to incidents.

- Metropolitan/Urban Area MAC System: Regional MAC Systems are common around metropolitan areas because of the high population densities, critical infrastructure, and risks. Agency Administrators/Executives in metropolitan areas must coordinate the use of resources in light of these challenges, as well as differences among local laws, authorities, and practices.

c. **State-Level MAC System**: It may become necessary to activate a State-level MAC System during periods of significant emergency activity that require high levels of emergency resources Statewide. A State-level MAC System is activated when operations at a lower-level MAC System cannot unilaterally meet its resource needs. When this situation occurs for extended periods, it can adversely impact statewide response capability. A State-level MAC System typically operates from the State EOC based on activation orders provided by the State Governor or authorized representatives.

d. **Interstate MAC System**: Interstate MAC Systems extend beyond State-level boundaries and often involve interacting with other surrounding States in order to counter large and complex incidents. An example of an Interstate MAC System is found in the western United States for the purpose of combating wildland fire.

This MAC System structure ensures adequate resources are available to meet anticipated needs and to allocate those resources most efficiently during periods of shortage. Interstate MAC Systems should be established among States that share common boundaries, as well as among States in close proximity to national waterways (e.g., rivers, lakes), transportation networks, and critical infrastructure (e.g., power plants, chemical plants). Incidents involving or near these locations would likely require an interstate response.

e. **Interstate Metropolitan/Urban Area MAC System**: Many urban areas span multiple States such as Cincinnati and Kansas City. In addition to the obstacles listed above, these areas typically require formal agreements and unique preparedness activities to identify and overcome legal issues associated with the sharing of resources across State boundaries.

f. **National-Level MAC System**: A MAC System may be organized nationally. For example, during wildfire season, a National MAC Group (NMAC Group) convenes at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. This group includes representatives from the Federal Wildland Fire agencies, participating States, FEMA, and the military. An all-hazards approach to a national-level MAC System should consist of one or more representative(s) from the following agencies:

- Emergency managers from the affected States, tribal governments and localities
- Federal-level emergency management agencies and fire authorities
- Supporting Federal and State military agencies
- International emergency managers, and other NGOs
- Emergency Support Functions (ESF) specific to the event per the NRF
- Forest and park service authorities
- Federal, State, and local law enforcement
- Other Federal supporting agencies as incident dictates
- Respective tribal agencies and bureaus
- Respective incident management teams

When there is an event that requires Federal assistance from multiple Federal agencies within a MAC System, the most commonly used MAC System components are Joint Field Offices (JFOs), Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCCs), and the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND FUNCTIONAL MAC SYSTEM

A MAC System configuration organized by functional and geographic area is also beneficial for highly complex incidents. Under certain circumstances, based on the type of incident, a MAC System should be organized by incident management functions by specific discipline or function. For example, law enforcement agencies from across multiple jurisdictions should establish a MAC System as a means to support domestic anti- and counter-terrorism threats and activities.

The law enforcement MAC System could support field-level officers by executing resource management support above the field level. Examples of specific activities include coordination of Decision Support Information from various Intelligence and Investigation sources in order to establish a common operating picture needed to prioritize and allocate limited resources among competing agencies.

# GENERAL PROCEDURE

UTILIZATION/ACTIVATION OF A MAC SYSTEM

There is no single policy for utilizing/activating a MAC System. However, MAC System utilization/activation should be based on enabling effective and efficient use of resources through a prioritization of incidents, coordination of resources, and supporting dispatching needs. Training and exercising of MAC System plans, policies, and procedures should be routinely conducted in order to maintain readiness in support of MAC System operations.

The decision-making process for MAC System utilization/activation will vary depending on the jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions, the Emergency Manager has activation authority. In others, the senior elected official must make the decision. The important point is the decision-making process for activation of the MAC System should be included in policy, and all key personnel must know activation procedures such as:

    a. Who makes the decision (based on established policy)
    b. The circumstances for utilization/activation
    c. The time frames for utilization/activation

Parts, or all, of the MAC System can be utilized/activated at the same time or sequentially, depending on the nature of the emergency. Many jurisdictions have varying levels of MAC System activation. Generally, communications/dispatch centers are the only component of the MAC System that is in place and operational 24/7 prior to, during, and at the conclusion of an incident when the MAC System is deactivated.

Figure 5 illustrates an overview of how a MAC System transitions over the course of an incident(s). The graphic highlights the inherent aspects of flexibility and scalability needed for incidents that expand from single on-scene command/off-scene coordination into a more complex multiple-event response requiring additional MAC Systems coordination and off-site resource allocation and support.
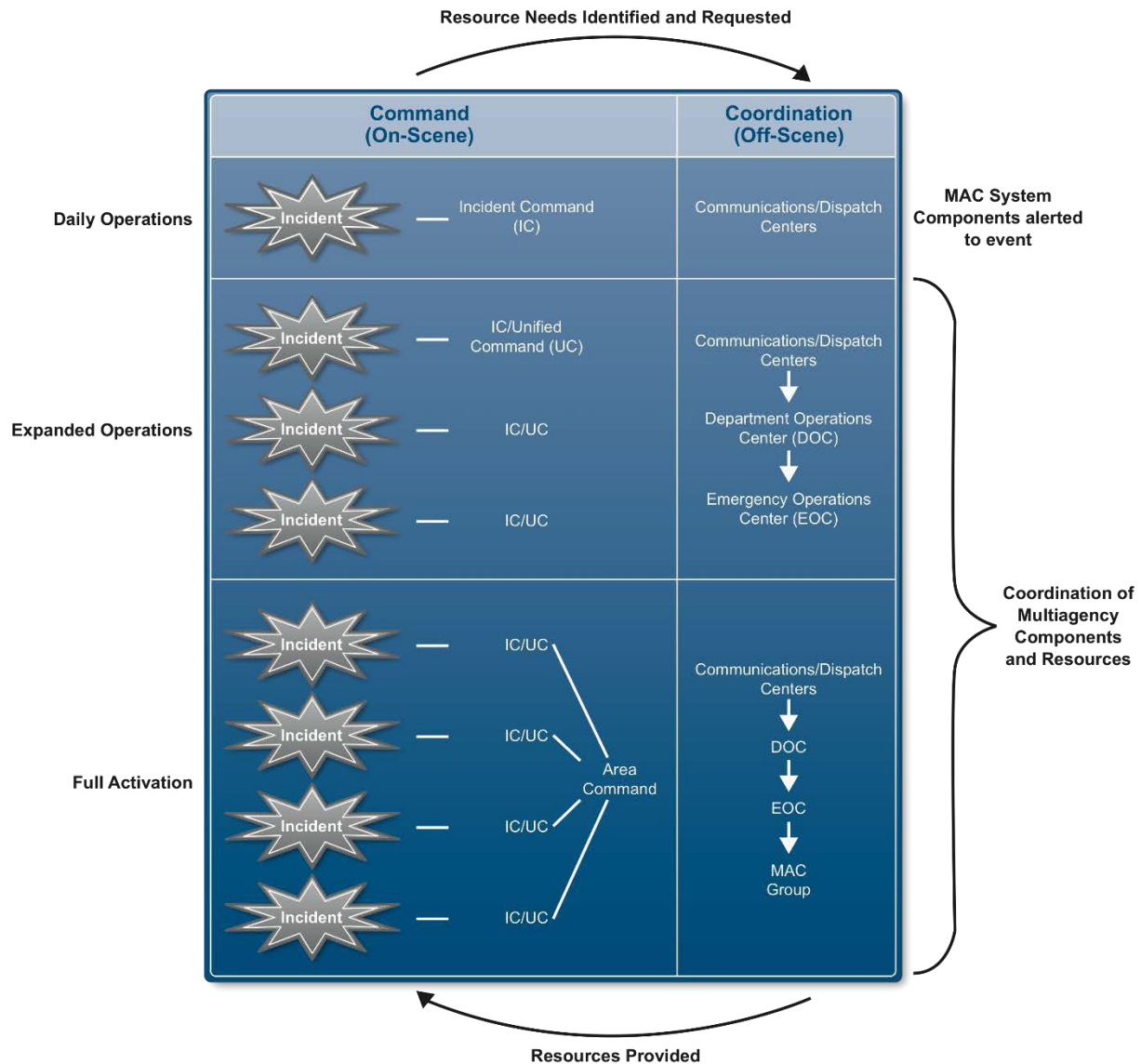
Figure 5 MAC System Transition

Levels of utilization/activation should be linked to the jurisdiction's level of activity. Linking utilization/activation to the activity level will provide utilization/activation "triggers" based on actual or anticipated levels of damage, resource availability and utilization/activation thresh-holds, pre-determined points in time or overall status where an escalation or alternative approach is warranted. For example, some circumstances may warrant a time-phased utilization/activation, such as when:

    a. An incident occurs that is expected to build over time
    b. There is a warning period before the emergency

FIVE-LEVEL MAC SYSTEM ACTIVATION MODEL

Use of a Five-Level MAC System activation process, called MAC System Levels, offers jurisdictions significant flexibility and scalability in dealing with a multitude of incidents and major events. MAC System Levels are based on a combination of incident activity, data collection, resource management, and priority setting. MAC System Levels are determined by situational criteria that determine specific actions to be taken by the responsible party. MAC System Levels are designed to ensure adequate resources are available for emergency response. There are five distinct MAC System Levels to support emergency response. Each Level is described below beginning with Level 1, which is the lowest level of utilization. MAC System Levels 1 to 5 were established as only a guide to determine levels of operational readiness.

Figure 6 below represents a very basic example of procedures and staffing requirements for different MAC System Levels.

Figure 6 Five-Level MAC System Activation Model
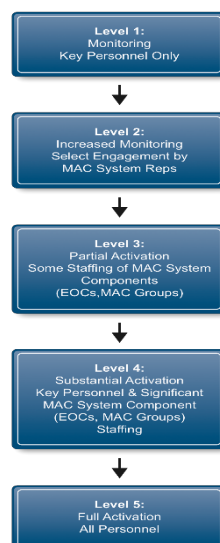
Table 3 below is a representative sample of how the various MAC System Levels function based upon incident descriptions, staffing requirements, and key decision making activities. The size and scope of the event dictates the MAC System Level required to support operational needs.

MAC System Level	Description	Possible Staffing Requirements	Key Decisions/Activities
1 (Monitor)	• Non-critical event • Minor incident(s) or event with no resource impact requiring MAC System activities	• Minimal staffing: key personnel only for routine monitoring	• Identify key personnel necessary to support the response • Develop and execute communications and notification protocols
2 (Increased Monitoring)	• Normal situation with multiple minor incident(s) or an isolated major incident • No or very low resource impact requiring MAC System activities	• May require some monitoring and engagement by MAC System representatives via conference call or in person	• Prepare to implement MAC System component activation plans, procedures, and protocols
3 (Partial Activation)	• Multiple incidents or isolated major incident • Existing or potentially serious situation that requires use of resources from multiple agencies • Resource and dispatch requirements are increasingly challenging and are beginning to stress availability levels • Some need for resource prioritization • Requires providing incident resource information/conference calls • Committed percentage of critical resources increasingly problematic	• Requires some level staffing of MAC System components (EOC's, MAC Groups) • Key personnel report to EOC/MAC Groups • MAC System components personnel engaged as required via conference call or in person	• Execute limited MAC System implementation as directed based on response requirements • Place additional MAC System personnel on standby for possible expanded activation • Coordinate all communications flow to involved agencies and/or jurisdictions; execute communications checks and notify of activation

MAC System Level	Description	Possible Staffing Requirements	Key Decisions/Activities
4 (Substantial Activation)	• Multiple incidents and/or major incidents requiring extensive resources • Existing or potentially very serious situation requires extensive use of resources from multiple agencies • Completion exists for resources and prioritization is essential • Prioritization and coordination of external support and availability of critical resources increasingly complex	• EOCs and MAC Groups staffed as required • MAC System representatives engaged as required via conference call or in person	• Execute MAC System plans, procedures, and protocols as needed to support response effort • Make preparations for long-term staffing and operational needs; consider work/rest schedule, shift rotation, and shift change transition briefings • Determine additional internal personnel and equipment needs
5 (Full Activation)	• Areas of responsibility are experiencing major incidents that have potential to exhaust all agency resources • Resource and dispatch requirements and use priorities require a concerted MAC System coordination effort • High percentage of critical resources are committed • Multiple agencies and jurisdictions involved • Extensive evacuations, search and rescue operations on-going	• EOCs and MAC Groups fully manned • MAC System representatives and functions fully engaged as required	• Maintain operational readiness and support to the event • Monitor overall situation in order to decrease MAC System Level at earliest opportunity • Determine demobilization strategies and requirements

Table 3 Five-Level MAC Activation Model

<u>MAC SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS AND COORDINATION</u>

In some instances, a MAC System is informal and based on oral agreements between jurisdictions. Ad hoc arrangements between jurisdictions should result in effective MAC Systems coordination on relatively minor incidents. However, a MAC System is usually formalized and supported by written agreements, operational procedures, and protocols. Obviously, the formal process, where issues are addressed before an incident occurs, is the preferred and recommended approach, as it streamlines the coordination function. It also allows for development of sound implementation strategies, plans, and procedures, and opportunities for training, exercises, and education prior to support of an incident. Specifically, pre-incident planning and coordination as a preparedness activity allows for development of emergency operations plans to include hazard analysis with trigger events or actions based on pre-determined points in time or overall status where an escalation or alternative approach is warranted. Examples of trigger events specific to a MAC System include specified resource availability and utilization thresh-holds, complexity and scope of incidents, and ability of dispatch centers to effectively carryout activities. Pre-incident planning, coordination, training, and exercise are clearly defined principles within the NIMS Preparedness Component.

Preparedness Organizations provide invaluable coordination for emergency management and incident response activities before an incident or planned event occurs. Preparedness Organizations develop protocols for use within their jurisdictions. Examples include tracking systems that identify the location and status of mobilized or dispatched resources, and procedures to demobilize resources and return them to their original locations and status.

Preparedness Organizations vary from groups of a few individuals, to small committees, to large standing organizations representing several committees, planning groups, or other organizations. Common examples of Preparedness Organizations include local emergency planning committees, critical infrastructure sector coordinating councils, and State-level advisory committees.

Preparedness Organizations should coordinate MAC System preparedness activities among all appropriate agencies and organizations within the jurisdiction, as well as across jurisdictions. Preparedness Organization members may serve as key participants during incident support. Pre-incident coordination should include all Federal and State partners, NGOs, and the private sector, as appropriate. It is essential to include NGOs and the private sector in coordination efforts as they provide critical incident-related services, and are the owners and operators of critical infrastructure and key resources requested during incident operations.

Preparedness Organizations execute the following MAC System-related activities as examples:

a. Conduct meetings to coordinate MAC System Preparedness activities.

b. Establish and coordinate emergency operations plans, protocols, and procedures.

c. Integrate and coordinate the activities and functions within its purview.

d. Establish the standards, guidelines, and protocols necessary to promote interoperability and consideration for responder safety.

e. Adopt standards, guidelines, and procedures for requesting and providing resources.

f. Identify resources and other requirements and set priorities for use.

g. Encourage training, exercises, evaluation, and corrective action programs for implementation of a MAC System.

h. Ensure the establishment and maintenance of necessary mutual aid agreements and assistance agreements and outreach to NGOs and the private sector.

i. Use a MAC System, as needed and where appropriate, for multijurisdictional planned events or for specific types of incidents that require extensive response and recovery.

j. Conduct after-action reviews to strengthen future preparedness.

Another key area to consider during preparedness activities is public information. Effective public information capability begins well in advance of an incident. Similar to other MAC System-related preparedness activities, public information preparedness should include planning, organizing, resource acquisition, training, and exercises. Public information activities should be included in all training and exercise sessions to ensure they are fully integrated and engaged in overall MAC System implementation and sustainment.

Contact lists (e.g., media, PIO, and other agencies) should be reviewed and updated at least every six months. Basic information should include telephone numbers (e.g., office, home, cell), fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web sites.

In addition, public information planning facilitates potential lifesaving or mitigation measures. Critical elements such as evacuation routes, available alerting systems, and other public safety information can be communicated to the general public prior to an incident. By making the public aware of potential risks and how they can prepare for all hazards in advance, the MAC System PIO can make a big difference in terms of mitigation of an incident or disaster.

Factors or audiences to consider during public information preparedness activities should include:

a. Family preparedness and readiness activities to include procedures for dealing with children and pets
b. Development of family or business emergency plans
c. Processes and procedures regarding the handling of special needs populations such as the physically handicapped, hearing impaired, blind, and non-English speaking communities

DEACTIVATION PROCEDURES

Deactivation procedures should be embedded within the MAC System Level model and detailed in applicable execution processes and procedures. When developed as part of the MAC System Level structure, deactivation activities become an integral component of the overall system with specific deactivation decisions tied to and driven by resource needs and current incident status. Following are a few general considerations regarding deactivation procedures. Consideration for MAC System deactivation should occur when:

a. Resources are being demobilized, and resource coordination among agencies or jurisdictions is no longer necessary

b. The situation at the incident scene is clearly under control

c. Incident support can be provided without affecting the dispatch system

d. Need to coordinate resources has diminished

When multiple layers of a MAC System are involved, they usually deactivate in reverse order from activation (e.g., Federal deactivates first, then State, and finally, local).

Some MAC System activities may continue even after an EOC or other type of MAC System component is deactivated. During the deactivation process, financial activities are typically the last to be resolved. Prior to de-activation, an after action review should be conducted, lessons learned documented, and changes in procedures and practices identified.

Appendix A

Coordination between California Geographic Area MAC Groups, Agency Administrators, and California Assigned Area Command Teams

The North and South Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) MAC Groups have coordinated with CALFIRE and USFS Area Command Team staff to develop a business practice for future deployments of Area Command in California.   The GACC/MAC Group members and Area Commanders developed the following guidelines to improve communication and understanding of Area Command benefits in California.

Agency Administrator / GACC Benefits:

- Assist with Incident Management Team (IMT) in-briefs or team transitions
- Single point of contact for the GACC to multiple incidents
- Assist with unification of Agency Administrators
- Additional intel source for the MAC Group or GACC
- Reduced workload for Agency Administrator, GACC, MAC Group
- All Hazard Incident Coordination
- Assist CAL-MAC when/if a massive incident affects both GACC's

Area Command Operating Principles in California:

- An Area Command Liaison should be assigned to the MAC Group to ensure effective communication.   (If staffing is limited, a conference call may be held)
- Each incident under Area Command will develop an individual ICS 209 as per normal operating procedures. (No consolidated ICS 209's)
- If an incident spans Region boundaries, the Regions will negotiate which MAC Group will prioritize the entire Area Command Theater of Operation.
- The MAC Group will prioritize all incidents separately including those outside of Area Command control.
- Area Command will have the authority to reallocate critical resources within their theater of operation.
- The MAC Group / Agency Administrators may put agency specific restrictions on resource allocation or resource re-allocations. If this occurs, communication will occur early and/or at the time of resource assignment.
- The MAC Group / GACC will communicate resource needs directly to Area Command not specific IMT's. Good communication will be critical between GACC and Area Command when critical resource allocations will be needed on incidents outside of the Area Command theater of operation.
- During the IC Call, Area Command will have the option to report situational updates on behalf of IMT's assigned under their command.
- Interagency representation within Area Command should be considered during Area Command deployments in California due to the high probability of interagency sharing of resources.

- Unified Area Command should be considered any time incidents span jurisdictions or when incidents under Area Command control are more than a single jurisdiction. (SRA/FRA, SRA/FRA/LRA)
- Consider prepositioning Area Command Teams at GACCs when a predicted event is imminent in order to develop effective relationships between Area Command/MAC Group.

Ongoing Training:

- Develop a working knowledge of Area Command at the GACC and Forest/Unit Levels.
- Develop a working knowledge of the GACC by Area Command personnel.
- Hold an annual pre-season meeting with GACC / MAC Groups / Area Command personnel.
- Hold regular Statewide MAC exercises that incorporate Area Command.