

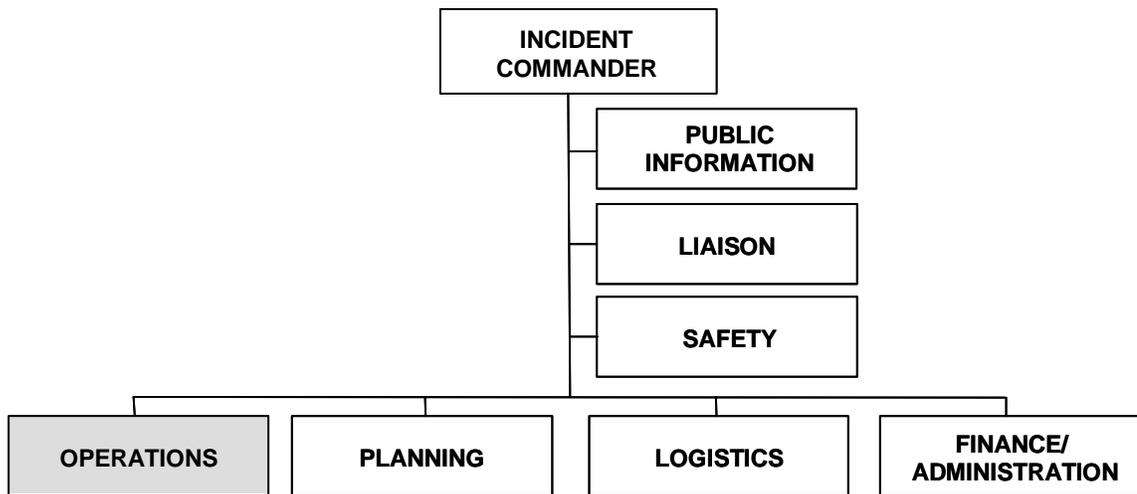
***UNIT 2:***  
***OPERATIONS***



## OVERVIEW

This unit provides you with an overview of the Operations Section Chief's (OSC) responsibilities and the organizational elements within the Operations Section that can be used at large/complex emergency incidents.

The Operations Section Chief has the responsibility for managing all operations directly applicable to the primary mission, and for the activation and supervision of organizational elements in accordance with the Incident Action Plan (IAP). These are key factors in the control of large/complex emergency incidents.





## UNIT 2 OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize cues in order to determine the need to assign an Operations Section Chief.
2. Identify what knowledge and experience is required of the Operations Section Chief.
3. Recognize the duties and responsibilities of the:
  - A. Operations Section Chief;
  - B. Branch Director;
  - C. Division/Group Supervisor;
  - D. Strike Team/Task Force Leader;
  - E. Single Resource; and
  - F. Staging Area Manager.
4. Describe the ICS Forms that are completed in the Operations Section.





The Operations Section Chief, a member of the General Staff, is responsible for the management of all operations directly applicable to the primary mission. The Operations Section Chief activates and supervises organization elements in accordance with the Incident Action Plan and directs its execution.

<b>ICS Forms Completed by the Operations Section</b>	
<b>ICS 211</b>	CHECK-IN LIST (Staging Area Manager)
<b>ICS 214</b>	UNIT LOG
<b>ICS 215</b>	OPERATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET



## Activity 2.1

Turn to Appendix C to view examples of completed ICS Forms. View the following forms that are completed in the Operations Section.

1. ICS Form 211--Check-In List.
2. ICS Form 214--Unit Log.
3. ICS Form 215--Operational Planning Worksheet.

## THE CUES TO IMPLEMENT THE OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

The fundamental question that the Incident Commander must ask when deciding whether or not to implement Operations or any other position is, "Can I handle everything effectively?" If the answer is no, then the Incident Command System (ICS) organization must be expanded to ensure that all jobs are addressed effectively.

Considering that the primary responsibility of the Operations Section Chief is to manage resources directly in the accomplishment of tactical assignments, the size and complexity of the incident certainly will influence the decision to establish the position. Cues to indicate that this position should be staffed include the following.

- A complex incident or one that is expected to increase in complexity.
- Any incident involving more than 20 single resources.
- Any time the Incident Commander cannot devote adequate time to developing strategies and becomes unable to focus on the "big picture."
- A sense or feeling of being overwhelmed is a good indicator that the Incident Commander needs help and should expand the organization and establish additional positions.

## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED FOR THE OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF POSITION

The person assigned, as the Operations Section Chief must be:

- experienced in dealing with complex emergency situations that require large numbers of control resources;
- knowledgeable of all the functional elements within the ICS, especially those within the Operations Section;
- capable of organizing and directing others in working toward common goals; and
- safety oriented and aware of special precautions required for unusual emergency situations.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

### 1. Develop Operations Portion of Incident Action Plan

The Operations Section Chief coordinates with Planning Section, and determines tactics that will be used in conformance with incident strategy.

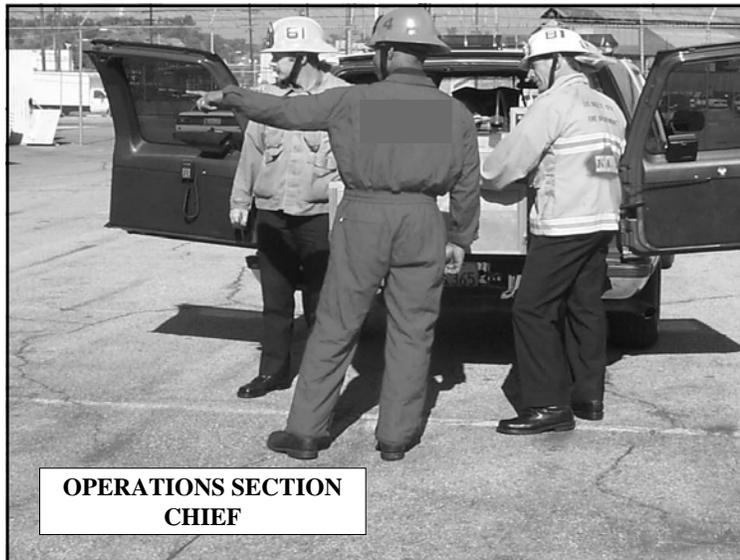
Large/Complex incidents may require a variety of different tactics, based on incident type and conditions.

### 2. Brief and Assign Operations Section Personnel in Accordance with Incident Action Plan

Initial and continuing assessments and briefings at change of command are important at any incident, and critical at large/complex emergencies.

It may be necessary for information to be passed on through chain of command when the Operations Section organization has been expanded.

Incident scene safety must be stressed.



### 3. Supervise Operations Section

The Operations Section Chief must have "the big picture."

Effective interface with other key elements of the incident organization is required:

- Planning;
- Logistics;
- Finance/Administration; and
- Command Staff.

Span of control is critical at all levels of the Operations Section organization.

REPEAT! Safety must be stressed.

Proper supervision requires good communication at all levels of the Operations Section organization.

The Operations Section Chief will provide information on the status of incident conditions and control operations as necessary to the Incident Commander and Planning Section (Situation Unit Leader).

#### **4. Determine Need and Request Additional Resources**

How many and what type of tactical resources will be required?

- immediate needs; and
- long-term needs.

The Operations Section Chief must consider the effect of time delays between requesting resources and their availability for on-scene deployment. This may be critical for specialized resources. They must also consider rehab and relief requirements for personnel engaged in tactical activities.

The Operations Section Chief must establish and maintain effective communication regarding resource needs and resource status with the Planning Section (Resource Unit Leader).

The Operations Section Chief must determine the most effective location for Staging Area(s).

In some cases the area of incident involvement, or the location or access to the incident, may indicate that more than a single Staging Area is required.

**5. Review Suggested List of Resources to be Released and Initiate Recommendation for Release of Resources**

The master roster of all resources checked in at the incident maintained by Planning Section (Resources Unit).

Demobilization of the incident is ordered by Incident Commander when appropriate.

Coordinates with Planning Section.

Determines tactics that will be used in conformance with incident strategy.

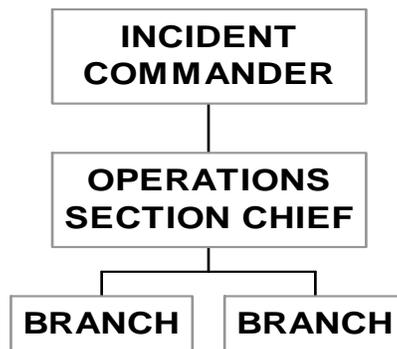
Large/Complex incidents may require a variety of different tactics based on incident type and conditions.

**6. Assemble and Disassemble Strike Teams Assigned to Operations Section**

**7. Report Information About Special Activities, Events, and Occurrences to Incident Commander**

**8. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214)**

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BRANCH DIRECTOR**



The branch is an organizational level having functional or geographic responsibility for major parts of incident operations. The Branch level is organizationally between Section and Division/Group in the Operations Section, and between Section and Unit in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman numerals (e.g., Branch II) or by functional name (e.g., suppression, medical, etc.).

**1. Develop with Subordinates Alternatives for Branch Control Operations**

Based on incident objectives and strategy, changes in incident conditions may affect control operations.

This requires effective communication within branch organizational structure. Structure may vary with incident type and specific needs (e.g., Divisions/Groups/Task Forces/Strike Teams).

Safety of personnel must be a high priority.

**2. Attend Planning Meetings at the Request of the Operations Section Chief**

The Branch Director participates in discussions related to tactical activities, safety issues, resource requirements, etc., and transmits pertinent information through the Branch organization.

**3. Review Division/Group Assignment Lists (ICS Form 204) for Divisions/Groups Within Branch**

The Branch Director will modify assignment lists based on the effectiveness of current operations.

Analysis of operational effectiveness may indicate necessary changes to resource types and/or changes in resource levels.

**4. Assign Specific Work Tasks to Division/Group Supervisors**

The Branch Director must ensure that tactical operations are directed toward incident objectives and clearly defined strategies. It is important to avoid duplicate or conflicting task assignments. Division boundaries and Group tasks must be understood clearly.

Focus on safety!

## **5. Supervise Branch Operations**

It is the Branch Director's responsibility to:

- coordinate efforts of Division and Groups;
- establish effective communications; and
- emphasize safety concerns/issues.

## **6. Resolve Logistics Problems Reported by Subordinates**

The Branch Director should anticipate logistical needs to minimize time delays for necessary supplies/support. The lack of timely logistical support can jeopardize tactical operations.

The Branch Director must interface with the Logistics Section to resolve any logistics issues reported by subordinates.

## **7. Reports to Operations Section Chief**

The Branch Director must report to the Operations Section Chief when:

- The Incident Action Plan is to be modified.
- Additional resources are needed.
- Surplus resources are available.
- Hazardous situations or significant events occur.

## **8. Approve Accident and Medical Reports (Home Agency Forms) Originating Within the Branch**

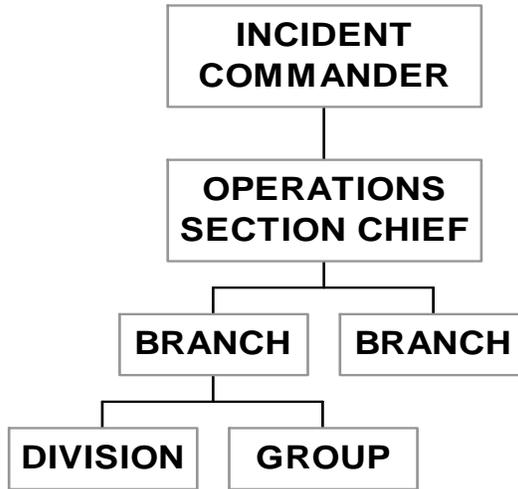
The Branch Director should, if possible, verify information, approve forms, and transmit to proper person/location before leaving incident scene.

If facilities are available, they should make copies of reports for future reference and/or additional transmission requirements.

**9. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214)**

The Branch Director should ensure that subordinates within the Branch maintain Unit/Activity Log as required.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIVISION/GROUP SUPERVISOR**



**1. Implement Incident Action Plan for Division/Group**

The Supervisor must make the necessary adjustments when changes are made to Incident Action Plan, ensuring that assigned resources are informed when changes occur.

Safety of personnel must be a high priority.

**2. Provide Incident Action Plan to Strike Team Leaders, When Available**

If hard copy is not available, verbal notification is necessary.

Pertinent Incident Action Plan information must be relayed to individual Strike Team resources.

**3. Identify Increments Assigned to the Division/Group**

The Supervisor must be aware of changes in assigned resources. Awareness of the status and location of assigned resources is critical.

**4. Review Division/Group Assignments and Incident Activities with Subordinates and Assign Tasks**

Assignments and activities must be consistent with incident objectives and strategy, and the assignment of tasks must be clearly understood and confirmed.

The Supervisor should maintain an awareness of possible unsafe situations that could be created by assigned tasks or designated operational locations.

REPEAT! Safety of personnel must be a high priority.

**5. Ensure that Incident Communications and/or Resources Unit are Advised of all Changes in Status of Resources Assigned to the Division/Group**

The Supervisor should clarify method and route of transmitting this information.

Is the information transmitted through established incident channels or directly to specified locations? Will communication be face-to-face, radio, or written?

Failure to maintain accurate status of resources can lead to confusion and may affect operational effectiveness.

**6. Coordinate Activities with Adjacent Divisions or Groups**

Effectiveness and safety depend on the awareness of, and cooperation with, other tactical resources.

In some cases, multiple tactical operations must be conducted simultaneously (e.g., fire attack/exposure protection, fire attack/ventilation).

**7. Determine Need for Assistance on Assigned Tasks**

Anticipate needs ahead of time. Waiting until the need is obvious is often too late. In some cases resources can be diverted from other less critical activities.

**8. Submit Situation and Resources Status Information to Branch Director or Operations Section Chief**

If a Branch Director is not assigned, forward information directly to the Operations Section Chief.

**9. Report Hazardous Situations, Special Occurrences, or Significant Events (e.g., Accidents, Sickness) to Immediate Supervisor**

It is important to relay information quickly if it will affect or endanger other personnel or resources. Information that is of a confidential or sensitive nature should not be transmitted by radio.

**10. Ensure that Assigned Personnel and Equipment Get to and from Assignments in a Timely and Orderly Manner**

Be sure resources understand where and why they are going and when they are expected to arrive. Follow Incident Traffic Plan if one is in place.

**11. Resolve Logistics Problems Within the Division/Group**

The Supervisor should be able to anticipate the potential logistical needs of resources operating with Division/Group.

Determine how and where required supplies and equipment will be procured. Logistics Section units may not be able to deliver needed equipment or supplies.

**12. Participate in the Development of Tactical Plans for Next Operational Period**

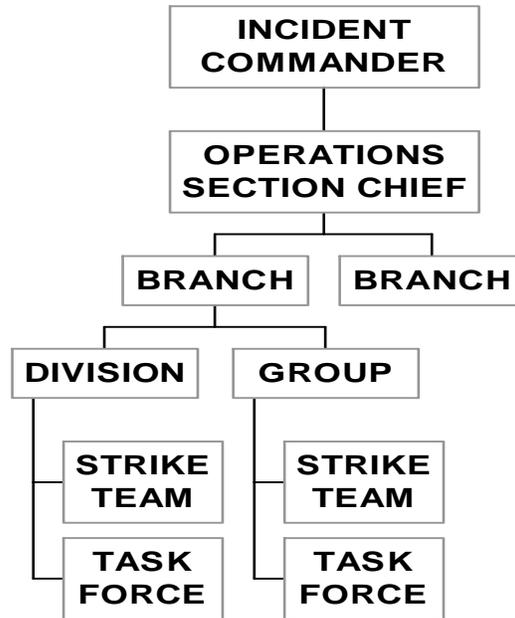
Be aware of what conditions are or will be in your area of assignment.

Determine the amount and types of resources required for next operational period. Make appropriate changes if the Incident Action Plan, incident objectives, or strategy are modified.

**13. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214)**

Ensure that the Strike Team/Task Force Leaders complete Unit/Activity Log.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STRIKE TEAM/TASK FORCE LEADERS**



**1. Review Assignments with Subordinates and Assign Tasks**

Strike Team/Task Force Leaders must ensure that assignments and tasks are completely understood, emphasize safety considerations, and confirm primary and secondary means of communication.

**2. Monitor Work Progress and Make Changes When Necessary**

If required changes are not in compliance with approved incident objectives or strategy, it is the Strike Team/Task Force Leader's responsibility to promptly inform the next level of command.

If changes will affect other adjacent resources, notifications must be made before changes are implemented. The Strike Team/Task Force Leader should periodically inform next level of command of progress.

Safety of personnel must be a high priority.

**3. Coordinate Activities with Adjacent Strike Teams, Task Forces and Single Resources**

Awareness of all other resources working in general area is critical to avoiding activities that conflict with other Strike Teams, Task Forces, or single resources.

The Strike Team/Task Force Leader should maintain communication with immediate supervisory level.

**4. Travel to and from Active Assignment Area with Assigned Resources**

Strike Teams and Task Forces travel together and work together. The Strike Team/Task Force Leader must be aware of the Incident Traffic Plan if one has been established.

**5. Retain Control of Assigned Resources While in Available or Out-of-Service Status**

Supervisory personnel of individual resources must understand that the Strike Team/Task Force maintains unity until it is formally disbanded.

**6. Submit Situation and Resource Status Information to Division/Group Supervisor**

The Strike Team/Task Force Leader should discuss with their immediate supervisor preferences for periodic status reports while on active assignment. It is important to determine how information is to be transmitted:

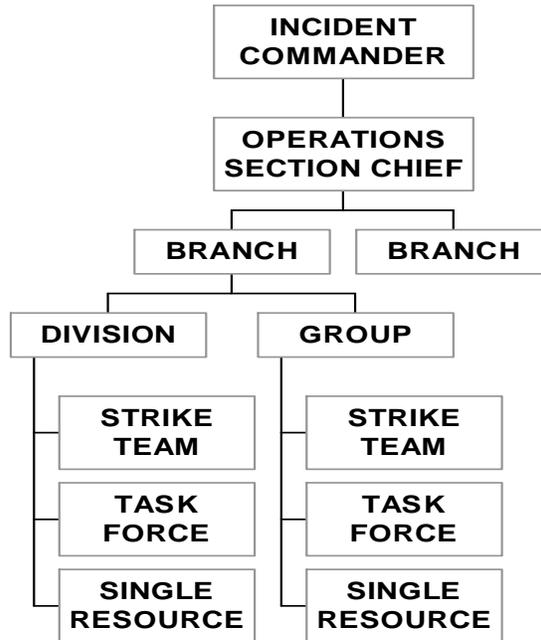
- face-to-face; or
- radio.

**7. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214)**

The Strike Team/Task Force Leader must determine requirements for submitting the form:

- before leaving incident location; or
- after return to regular assignment.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SINGLE RESOURCES



### 1. Review Assignments

Single resources should know for whom they are working and exactly what they are supposed to do. Single resources do not engage in any incident scene activity without a definite assignment. Freelancing can create confusion and needless safety hazards.

### 2. Obtain Necessary Equipment/Supplies

Single resources should identify equipment or supplies needed for assigned task(s) before starting to work. If additional equipment or supplies are needed, determine where they can be procured.

### 3. Review Weather/Environmental Conditions for Assigned Area

Weather and environmental conditions are not factors at all incidents, but can be critical factors in certain circumstances.

If weather or environmental conditions could be factors based on assigned tasks, determine what effect they could have and what special precautions must be taken.

**4. Brief Subordinates on Safety Measures**

It is important to discuss routine safety precautions and any special safety considerations related to the particular incident.

**5. Monitor Work Progress**

It is important to monitor work progress, ensuring that actions being taken are consistent with assignment instructions.

**6. Ensure Adequate Communications with Supervisor and Subordinates**

The single resource should confirm the primary communication method:

- radio; or
- face-to-face.

They should confirm the designated radio frequency and test the radio equipment.

It is important to ensure that all personnel are aware of danger or alert signals, e.g., air horn blasts, "may day" radio calls, etc.

**7. Keep Supervisor Informed of Progress and Any Changes**

Confirm when progress reports are to be given and the method of communicating them.

If changes have, or will, create unsafe conditions to any personnel, notification should be treated as "emergency traffic."

**8. Inform Supervisor of Problems with Assigned Resources**

"Resources" include personnel and equipment. Be specific about what the problem is and what action is required to solve the problem. If possible relay information on problems before they become acute.

**9. Brief Relief Personnel, and Advise Them of any Change in Conditions**

Be sure to review:

- task assignment(s) and current progress;
- safety considerations;
- identity and locations of other resources working in the area;
- communication methods and radio frequency assignment(s); and
- equipment and supplies being left at location and their return points.

**10. Return Equipment and Supplies to Appropriate Unit**

If equipment and/or supplies are not part of the assigned inventory and are not left for relieving resources, determine the location to which they should be returned. Upper levels of command may coordinate equipment return and issue appropriate instructions.

**11. Complete and Turn in all Time and Use Records on Personnel and Equipment**

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STAGING AREA MANAGER

### 1. Proceed to Staging Area



The Staging Area is a critical part of the Operations Section organization for a large/complex emergency incident.

Normally the Operations Section Chief will determine the location of the Staging Area and will provide direct supervision.

In the early stages of an incident, prior to the assignment of an Operations Section Chief, the Incident Commander may designate the location for and provide supervision of the Staging Area.

In some situations it may be expedient to establish more than one Staging Area. For example, if the size of the affected incident area is such that it is not practical to dispatch resources from just a single marshalling location, or if travel routes are so restricted that movement of resources from different directions is necessary.

Staging is defined as *"that location where incident personnel and equipment are assigned on a three (3) minute available status."* However under certain conditions, such as the early stages of a rapidly developing large/complex incident, resources arriving at the Staging Area should be prepared for immediate assignment consistent with necessary preparation for the tasks to which they may be assigned.

**2. Establish Staging Area Layout**

The Staging Area Manager must establish and define the Staging Area by:

- identifying the Staging Area location;
- providing clear and well-marked entry and exit routes;
- identifying equipment storage locations; and
- procuring necessary support personnel through immediate superior.

**3. Determine Any Support Needs for Equipment, Feeding, Sanitation, and Security**

The Staging Area Manager makes requests for necessary equipment and personnel through his or her immediate superior.

**4. Establish Check-in Function as Appropriate**

The Staging Area Manager must assign personnel as check-in/check-out recorder(s), and inform all initially arriving resources of check-in/check-out procedures.

**5. Post Areas for Identification and Traffic Control**

Failure to identify functional areas can quickly result in chaos and confusion as resource levels grows. The Staging Area Manager should post specific areas to reduce the number of support personnel required to run the Staging Area.

**6. Request Maintenance Service for Equipment at Staging Area as Appropriate**

The Staging Area Manager should anticipate needs for maintenance service and initiate requests early. Lack of service for critical equipment required for Staging Area operations can have a negative impact on overall incident.

**7. Respond to Request for Resource Assignments**

**8. Obtain and Issue Receipts for Radio Equipment and Other Supplies Distributed and Received at Staging Area**

This is normally required for nonexpendable items. The Staging Area Manager should ensure that equipment issued is operational when issued and when returned.

**9. Determine Required Resource Levels from the Operations Section Chief**

The Staging Area Manager must clarify and maintain accurate records of resource quantities and types required, and those available in the Staging Area. It is also the Staging Area Manager's responsibility to know the deployment locations for the resources. The Staging Area Manager must determine if minimum levels are to be established and to establish a notification process when levels are reached.

The Staging Area Manager is responsible for responding to requests for resource assignments, which may come directly from the Operations Section or the Incident Operations Center. This includes advising the person requesting a resource(s) when the request has been filled, and providing resource identification number(s).

**10. Advise Operations Section Chief When Reserve Levels Reach Minimums**

This can only be accomplished by keeping accurate records of resources entering and exiting Staging Area. This includes recording the resource type and identification number, and tracking the resource status (available, out of service, etc.).

Consider response time if additional resources are coming from offsite locations.

**11. Maintain and Provide Status to Resource Unit of all Resources in Staging Area**

The Staging Area Manager must ensure that accurate records are kept, determine time intervals at which information will be forwarded, and determine the method for forwarding information (e.g., radio, written, verbal).

## **12. Maintain Staging Area in Orderly Condition**

Lack of organization can cause confusion and seriously affect incident control. The Staging Area Manager must obtain sufficient personnel to operate the Staging Area efficiently, ensuring that all personnel assigned to resources in "available" status remain with their apparatus and are ready for deployment.

## **13. Demobilize Staging Area in Accordance with Incident Demobilization Plan**

Demobilization must be accomplished in an orderly manner. The Staging Area Manager must ensure that all resources being released have accounted for all their personnel and equipment. They must ensure that records of resources that have been released from the Staging Area are maintained and that all support equipment and supplies used in the Staging Area and any unclaimed equipment are returned to the proper location or designated area.

## **14. Maintain Unit/Activity Log (ICS Form 214)**

The Staging Area Manager must determine requirements for submitting ICS Form 214:

- before leaving incident location; or
- after return to regular assignment.

## **AIR OPERATIONS**

Because the use and management of air resources is so specialized, an indepth discussion of this topic is not included in this course.

The use of air resources at emergency incidents most often is associated with wildland fires. However, they also are valuable tools for other types of situations, such as natural disasters and multicasualty incidents.

The management of air resources within the ICS is covered in the Field Operations Guide (ICS 420-1) (<http://www.FIRESCOPE.org>) and other ICS documents related to specific positions.



## Unit 2: Operations Quiz

### Directions

Read each question carefully, and choose the best answers(s) from the four choices. **NOTE: There may be more than one correct answer. You may use the ICS 420-1 as a reference tool.**

1. As the incident escalates, the position of the Operations Section Chief becomes more critical. Responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief at a large/complex incident include:
  - a. Provide information on the status of incident conditions and control operations.
  - b. Determine the most effective location for the Staging Area(s).
  - c. Determine the type and quantity of tactical resources required.
  - d. All of the above.
  
2. The person assigned, as the Operations Section Chief must be:
  - a. Trained as a Safety Officer and understand the policies and procedures relative to handling hazardous and unsafe conditions.
  - b. The highest-ranking officer on the scene.
  - c. Capable of organizing and directing others in working toward common goals.
  - d. Trained in the policies and procedures of the financial aspects of an incident.
  
3. What cues indicate the need for an Operations Section Chief?
  - a. Incident with 5 Divisions/Groups and a Planning Section Chief.
  - b. Incident with 4 Divisions/Groups with a Planning Section Chief and a Logistics Section Chief.
  - c. An incident that is so complex that the Incident Commander will not be able to concentrate on his/her responsibilities if he/she gets involved in the tactical operations.
  - d. All of the above.



## Correct Answers to Unit 2: Operations Quiz

### Question 1:

*Answer D is the most correct response.* The Operations Section Chief has many responsibilities that are related to and directly affect incident mitigation, including all of those listed in this question.

### Question 2:

*Answer C is the most correct response.* Skill and experience, not rank, are most critical considerations when appointing an Operations Chief.

### Question 3:

*Answer C is the most correct response.* The complexity, not necessarily the size, of an incident will determine the need for an Operations Chief. Command and General Staff positions must be established whenever “doing the job” interferes with the Incident Commander concentrating on Incident Commander responsibilities.