Activity: Defining ICS (Continued)

ICS Review Materials: ICS History and Features

ICS Features

The 14 essential ICS features are listed below:

- **Common Terminology:** Using common terminology helps to define organizational functions, incident facilities, resource descriptions, and position titles.
- **Modular Organization:** The Incident Command organizational structure develops in a modular fashion that is based on the size and complexity of the incident, as well as the specifics of the hazard environment created by the incident.
- **Management by Objectives:** Includes establishing overarching objectives; developing strategies based on incident objectives; developing and issuing assignments, plans, procedures, and protocols; establishing specific, measurable objectives for various incident management functional activities and directing efforts to attain them, in support of defined strategies; and documenting results to measure performance and facilitate corrective action.
- **Incident Action Planning:** Incident Action Plans (IAPs) provide a coherent means of communicating the overall incident objectives in the context of both operational and support activities.
- **Manageable Span of Control:** Span of control is key to effective and efficient incident management. Within ICS, the span of control of any individual with incident management supervisory responsibility should range from three to seven subordinates.
- **Incident Locations and Facilities:** Various types of operational support facilities are established in the vicinity of an incident to accomplish a variety of purposes. Typical designated facilities include Incident Command Posts, Bases, Camps, Staging Areas, Mass Casualty Triage Areas, and others as required.
- **Comprehensive Resource Management:** Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date picture of resource utilization is a critical component of incident management. Resources are defined as personnel, teams, equipment, supplies, and facilities available or potentially available for assignment or allocation in support of incident management and emergency response activities.
- **Integrated Communications:** Incident communications are facilitated through the development and use of a common communications plan and interoperable communications processes and architectures.
- **Establishment and Transfer of Command:** The command function must be clearly established from the beginning of an incident. When command is transferred, the process must include a briefing that captures all essential information for continuing safe and effective operations.

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Activity: Defining ICS (Continued)

ICS Review Materials: ICS History and Features

ICS Features (Continued)

- **Chain of Command and Unity of Command:** Chain of command refers to the orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Unity of command means that every individual has a designated supervisor to whom he or she reports at the scene of the incident. These principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate the confusion caused by multiple, conflicting directives. Incident managers at all levels must be able to control the actions of all personnel under their supervision.

- **Unified Command:** In incidents involving multiple jurisdictions, a single jurisdiction with multiagency involvement, or multiple jurisdictions with multiagency involvement, Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities and responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

- **Accountability:** Effective accountability at all jurisdictional levels and within individual functional areas during incident operations is essential. To that end, the following principles must be adhered to:

  - **Check-In:** All responders, regardless of agency affiliation, must report in to receive an assignment in accordance with the procedures established by the Incident Commander.
  - **Incident Action Plan:** Response operations must be directed and coordinated as outlined in the IAP.
  - **Unity of Command:** Each individual involved in incident operations will be assigned to only one supervisor.
  - **Personal Responsibility:** All responders are expected to use good judgment and be accountable for their actions.
  - **Span of Control:** Supervisors must be able to adequately supervise and control their subordinates, as well as communicate with and manage all resources under their supervision.
  - **Resource Tracking:** Supervisors must record and report resource status changes as they occur.

- **Dispatch/Deployment:** Personnel and equipment should respond only when requested or when dispatched by an appropriate authority.

- **Information and Intelligence Management:** The incident management organization must establish a process for gathering, analyzing, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.