



**Department of Homeland
Security
U.S. Coast Guard**



**U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency**

**National Incident Management
System (NIMS)**

**Area Command
Job Aid**

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United States Coast Guard Area Command Job Aid

Overview

User

The user of this job aid will be anyone who is assigned in Area Command within the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS). The Area Command is extremely complex and requires personnel with extensive experience and the ability to think holistically (non-linearly).

The Area Commander must have the ability to effectively communicate with the public during crisis/non-crisis situations and bring a cohesive and effective local response organization to bear on an incident in a high-risk environment.

Formal training in Risk Communication techniques and everyday public affairs should be considered a must for the Area Command positions. A critical skill is the IC's ability to bring together the membership of a local response community, some of whom he/she has no authority over, and form a consensus building organization.

When to Use

This job aid should be used to assist the Area Command positions, along with the Incident Management Handbook, whenever an incident has occurred that requires the Incident Command System Area Command organization to respond.

Major Accomplishments

Below is a list of the major accomplishments needed to obtain best response:

- Accurate assessment of situation
- Determination of goals, objectives and strategies
- Effective and efficient ICS organization
- Well informed and satisfied stakeholders and staff
- Incident Command System demobilized

What is Best Response?

Best response is achieved when:

- Response objectives established/communicated
- Accurate/timely info on impact to people, property,

environment, economy

- Positive media coverage of response
- Positive meetings with stakeholders
- Economic impact to stakeholders minimized
- Prompt, correct handling of damage claims
- Stakeholders well informed of rights/issues
- Response Management System employed
- Sufficient/efficient resources brought to bear
- Leadership and responsibility is clear (minimal duplication)
- No response worker deaths, injuries, or mishaps
- No incident-related public injuries, illness, or deaths
- Impacts on the economy minimized

Continued on Next Page

Overview (Cont'd)

References

Below is a list of references that may be required while using this job aid; they should be provided by other ICS staff.

Incident Management Handbook (IMH) COMDTPUB P3120.17 (series)	NIIMS ICS Position Manual, Incident Commander (NFES 1985)
Communications Plan	NIIMS Task Book for Incident Commander (NFES 2300)
Incident Command System (COMTINST 3120.14)	Area/Regional Contingency Plans Charts and maps

Materials

Ensure these materials are available to the Incident Commander during an incident.

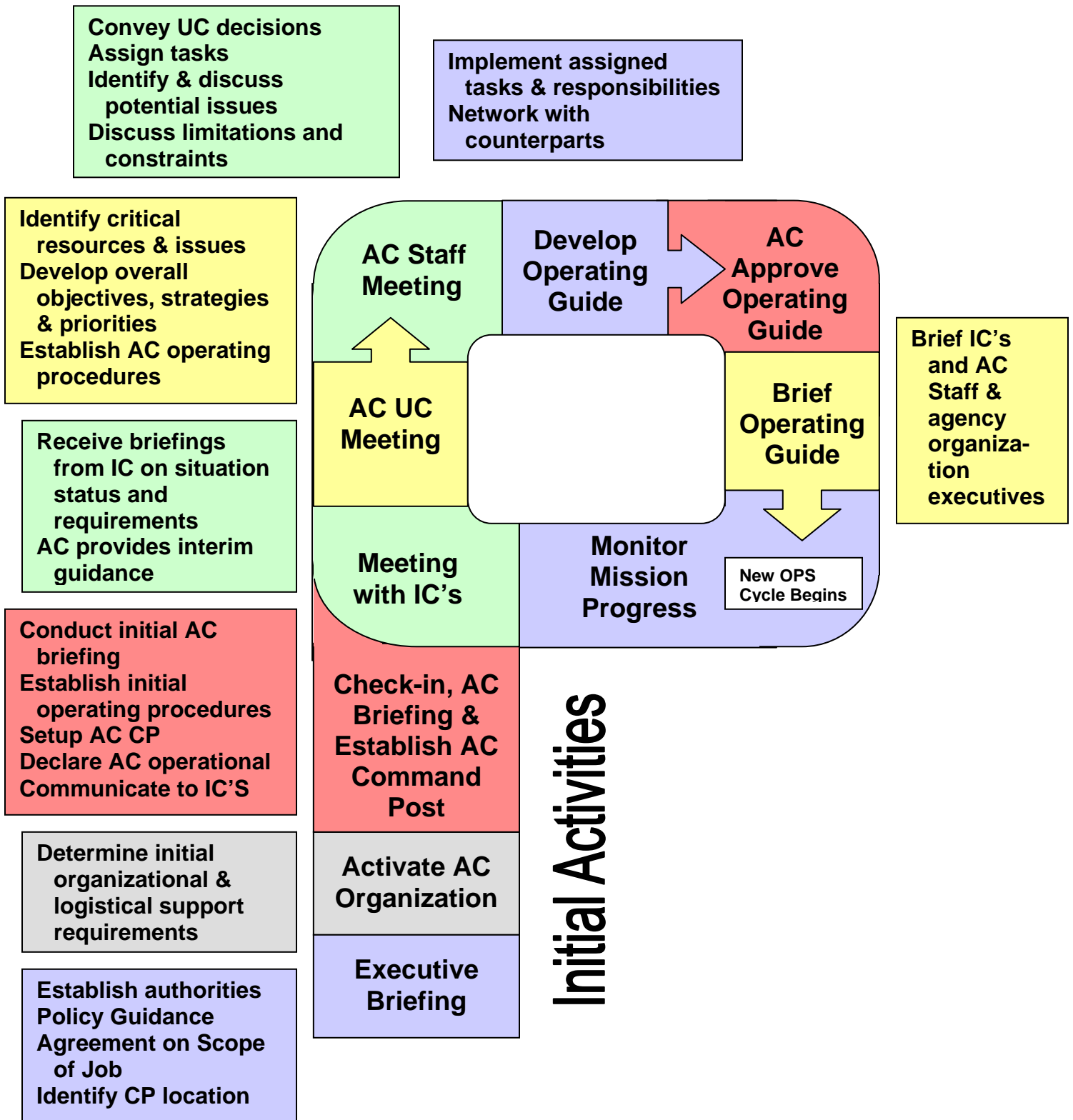
- Complete set of ICS job aids
 - ICS Forms Catalog including Area Command Forms
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General Information

All radio communications to Incident Communications Center will be addressed: “(Incident Name) Communications”.

Use clear text and ICS terminology (no codes) in all radio transmissions.

Area Command Operating Cycle



**Annex A
AREA COMMAND EXECUTIVE BRIEFING**

This job aid is intended for use by an Area Commander to serve as a checklist of topics in which the involved agency/organization Executives should brief them upon arrival at their assignment. When answers to these questions are received, it helps to define the role of Area Command to perform while on assignment and Executives' expectation of an Area Command performance. See the IMH, p. 13-25 for an example meeting agenda.

Area Command Name: _____

Agencies/Units Involved in Response: _____

General overall Situation:

<u>Incident Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>IC's Assigned</u>
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Critical Resources:

Currently known: _____

Projected: _____

Investigations:

On-going: _____

Needed: _____

External Relations

Political issues: _____

Environmental issues: _____

Safety issues: _____

Social issues: _____

Special Interest Groups: _____

Potential Problem Areas: _____

Any preferences on handling of media requests? _____

How will new incident occurrences be handled?

Annex B
AREA COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

This job aid is intended for use by an Area Command as a reminder of their functional responsibilities while managing a Area Command organization during a response. It can be used to supplement the description of duties of the Area Commander found in the U.S. Coast Guard Incident Management Handbook IMH p. 13-8 and the LANTAREA and PACAREA Area Command guidelines. See IMH, Chapter 13 for more information on other positions.

- Obtain briefing from Executive on expectations, concerns and constraints
- Obtain necessary Area Command support resources
- Establish Area Command operating procedures to include reporting requirements, shared authorities, reporting time frames, and how information will be obtained and processed
- Identify critical resources and prioritize allocation of these critical resources amongst the incidents
- Set overall objectives and priorities
- Establish common understanding of Area Command responsibilities regarding Emergency Operations Centers, political contacts, and media relations
- Develop and keep current a Area Command Operating Guide
- Coordinate acquisition of off-incident critical resources and specialized equipment
- Ensure the incidents are properly managed
- Establish and maintain contacts among IC's, agencies executives, and interested groups
- Anticipate and analyze long term, big picture potential consequences and develop mitigation alternatives
- Monitor and evaluate IC's performance
- Periodically conduct an operational effectiveness evaluation of how the Area Command is performing
- Periodically conduct self-evaluation of how well the team and Area Command individual staff is performing
- Identify potential sources of conflict and implement mitigation measures
- Approve the request for the release of critical resources
- Maintain Area Command Log of Strategic Decisions
- Establish and maintain a Area Command documentation process
- Complete lessons learned from the assignment and provide to agency executive prior to departure from assignment

Annex C
AREA COMMAND AND INCIDENT COMMANDERS MEETING

The following job aid is intended to assist Area Commander(s) in development of an agenda that will be used when meeting with on-scene Incident Commanders for the first time. Meeting should be crisp, to the point and limited to 1 hour or less.

Preparation

The Area Command provides the IC's with information and requirements relating to the meeting and includes:

- Location and time of meeting
- Who the attendees will be
- What IC's are expected to provide, for example:
 - Incident map/chart to leave with Area Command
 - Most current ICS 201 or IAP
 - Current Situation Report
 - List of critical resource needs
 - Long-term projections
 - Oral briefing on overall incident status
- What the Area Command will provide
- Meeting expectations

Meeting Agenda – See IMH p. 13-28 to 13-30

Meeting Expectations

- Area Command is informed well enough of the current situation involving each Incident to modify existing objectives and priorities or add new ones.
- IC's are fully aware of the role and responsibilities of the Area Command.
- Working relationships are established and fully understood.
- Specific reporting requirements are identified including types of reports & timeframes for submittal.
- Meetings or conference call participants and timeframes are established.
- Clear understanding of communication flow between Area Command participants and functional positions within the IMT organization structure.
- Understanding of IC's responsibility to inform Area Command immediately when situations arise on their incident that may impact current Area Command objectives, direction or prioritization.

Annex D INCIDENT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

Area Command Commander(s) will be required to address competing interests and develop a method for prioritizing the allocation of critical resources. Every incident will have its own unique characteristics along with a lot of internal and external influences to cope with. Area Command Commander(s) will have to work through the Unified Command structure along with input from the on-scene Incident Commanders to determine the allocation of critical resources when needed. Incident prioritization is not a one-time process. As the situation changes, priorities may change as well. Area Command Commander(s) can use the following criteria as a guide during the prioritization process.

Life Saving Considerations

- Public and responder safety (threat to community)
- Life saving activities
- Short and Long-term health affects to the public

Environmental Considerations

- Immediate verses long-term environmental impacts
- Type and amount of product spilled
- Values at risk
 - Currently impacted
 - Threatened
 - Short term verses long term consequences
 - Type and value of resource threatened
 - Cost & time to restore/rehab affected area

Property Considerations

- Property values at risk
- Property ownership (private vs. public)

Political/Social/Economic Considerations

- Adverse effect on shipping industry and recreation vessels
- Economic consequences to affected geographic area
- Affects on quality of life to the public

Other Considerations

- Resource availability (critical resources)
- High public or media interest
- Potential for escalation
- High political interest
- Threat to National Security

Probability of success against the planned action needs to be considered when determining the allocation of critical resources. Probability of success factors includes but is not limited to: current and forecasted weather, availability of required resources, time lapse needed for implementation, etc.

Annex E CRITICAL INFORMATION REPORTING

Area Command Commander(s) must address the need for rapid information reporting that falls outside of the normal scheduled situation reports. Area Command Commander(s) along with their superiors (executives) must not be caught off guard and embarrassed because they were not promptly informed of a critical issue or activity that could have adverse effects on them and their respective organizations. There must be a clear understanding between the Area Command Commander(s) and on-scene Incident Commanders on the critical information reporting process that will be followed. The following are some of the issues and activities that might trigger immediate reporting between the on-scene Incident Commanders and the Area Command Commander(s). Each incident needs to be evaluated and a determination made on the criteria to be followed.

- Political/Social/Environmental/Economic adverse impacts
- Accidents/Injuries/fatalities
- RP performance issues
- Media request of the sensitive nature
- Negative mass media coverage
- Conflicts with special interest groups
- Incident escalation issues, i.e. county, State, or Federal emergency or disaster declaration
- Criticism of ongoing operations by local community
- Potential legal claims
- Sensitive information determined as a result of an investigation
- RP not aggressively fulfilling their responsibility
- Conflict with other local, State or Federal agencies
- RP liability limitation ceiling is met
- Threats to safety and/or security of community and responders
- Threats to National Security
- Conflicts as a result of incident prioritization

Annex F
EVALUATING AREA COMMAND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This job aid is intended to provide guidance for the Area Command Commander(s) organization to evaluate their organizational effectiveness. These questions would routinely be addressed during daily Area Command staff meetings as a measure of how well the organization as a whole is performing and identifying changes that need to be made to enhance effectiveness.

- Has the Area Command organization increased or decreased since becoming functional? If increased, why?
- Has the Area Command caused any unnecessary workload for the on-scene Incident Commanders? Why?
- How much duplication of effort is occurring amongst and between Area Command and the on-scene Incident Management Teams?
- Are we becoming directly and/or indirectly involved in on-scene operations strategy and /or tactics?
- Are we operating as an effective Area Command Team?
- Are we a collective team, including the on-scene Management Teams?
- Are we operating within the framework provided by the agency/organization executive(s)?

Annex G
ESTABLISHING AN AREA COMMAND POST (ACP)

This Job Aid is intended to assist individuals who have been assigned the task of establishing and operating a Area Command Post. There is nothing more frustrating to a response organization than have an inadequate facility to operate out off during response operations. To be effective, a Area Command must have the proper facilities, tools and equipment that is essential to performing their task in a professional manner. This list of criteria is by no means the answer to all of the difficulties and differenced that the Area Command will face when selecting and operating a ACP. Every incident is unique and will offer different challenges and requirements.

Site Selection Criteria

- Determine organization size and the space requirements of each function
- Is the facility in a secure area?
- Locate in proximity to assigned On-Scene Management Teams
- Convenient for agency/organization executives to access
- Adequate secure parking
- Appropriate work space separation
- Adequate meeting/briefing room space
- Will accommodate additional telephone lines
- Able to control public access
- Proximity to a Heli-Pad/LZ
- Quiet area away from major distractions such as airports and railroads
- Close proximity to billeting and feeding facilities
- Away from competing interest facilities such as an ICP or EOC(s)
- Cost of facility rental or lease
- Adequate wall space for required displays
- Locate out of harms way
- Need for a Area Command Joint Information Center (JIC)

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Setup and Operating Requirements

- Develop sketch map of facility
- Designate name of CP (Geographic)
- Develop clear directions (map) along with reference points for location facility
- Establish a check-in desk
- Assign work space and identify each functional area
- Provide security for the facility and parking area
- Establish facility and services contract/agreement including daily maintenance
- Procure required furniture, equipment and supplies
- Install communications system
- Conduct facility and grounds Safety/Security Evaluation and mitigate problems as needed
- Evaluate facility layout for effectiveness and make changes as needed
- Develop and post an emergency evacuation plan and brief staff

Equipment Requirements

- Fax machines (2) incoming and outgoing
- Professional quality copy machine
- Video projector and projection screen
- Easels six (6) each
- Wall clocks
- TV and VCR
- Cell phones
- Computers and printers
- Radios (hand held)
- Display processor (chart pro) for displays
- Digital/video camera
- Position vests
- Maps and charts as needed
- Dry eraser boards
- T-card racks (resource status)
- Functional Support Kits for plans, logistics and finance
- Video conferencing, if applicable

**Annex H
Exit Strategy Example Criteria**

Example Exit Strategy Criteria but not limit to the following:

- Met critical resource needs
- No risk of future release
- Ships stabilized and boomed off
- Salvage plan in place
- No oil in water, beach clean up only
- Media interest declining
- All stakeholders engaged
- Foreign Relations Issues Resolved/Declining
- Wildlife impacts declining
- Public interest satisfied district able to handle incident
- Political interest declining
- Infrastructure restored
- Commerce not interrupted
- Surplus resources
- No new tasks from the IC's
- Night shift ended
- Emergency phase ended
- Concurrence from on-scene IC's

Annex I
WHAT IS DIFFERENT IN TODAY'S RESPONSE ENVIRONMENT

Example issues but not limit to the following:

- Political intervention
- Real-time information reporting requirements
- Security for responders and facilities
- Inter-agency requirements and management
- Maritime Transportation System focus has increased
- Impacts on National Security
- Impacts on the economy
- Meeting public perceptions and expectations
- Potential for litigation
- Integration of law enforcement into the unified response effort
- New technology
- More robust Command Post requirements (more and different staffing)
- Very aggressive media during initial response
- WMD and Terrorism
- Increased emphasis on having good documentation (classified material)
- More organizations forming in the response Hierarchy (Area Command, JFO, PFO, DHS)
- New National Response Plan
- NIMS adoption by the Federal Government (lack of ICS Qualifications)
- Unified Command is the norm instead of the exception
- Training and qualification standards
- More complex disasters (populations in high risk zones)
- Inter-operability of communication systems (secure communications)
- Increased consequences
- Increased response oversight
- Too many retired "talking heads" on TV
- More sophisticated BAD guys
- All-hazard all-risk response environment
- Post mission accountability for funds spent
- Managing concurrent crisis verses consequence response
- Badging requirement for responders