
Unit 2: Overview of the Operations Section

STUDENT GUIDE

Objectives

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

- Describe the function and components of the Operations Section
- Describe the purpose of the Operations Section
- Describe the responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief (OSC)
- Describe responsibilities of the Branch Director
- Describe the key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position
- Define Division Supervisor and Group Supervisor positions and describe the difference and similarities between the two positions
- Describe the management skill and supervision concepts relevant to the position of Division/Group Supervisor
- Describe the differences and similarities between the Division/Group Supervisor and Operations Section Chief/Branch Director, Incident Commander (IC), Strike Team Leader (STL), and Task Force Leader (TFL)

Methodology

This unit uses lecture and discussion.

Knowledge of unit content will be evaluated through the administration of the Final Exam (to be administered upon completion of the course.)

Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required based on the experience level of the group.

Topic	Time
Lesson	2 hours
Total Time	2 hours

TopicUnit Title Slide

**Key Points**

Scope Statement

Through this unit, students will gain a general understanding of the organization and functions of the Operations Section. Through discussion of the units, functions, and processes of the Operations Section, students will gain insight into the broader context of the Division/Group Supervisor's work.

Topic Unit Objectives

Unit Terminal Objective

**Describe function and components
of the Operations Section.**



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Key Points

Unit Terminal Objective

Describe the function and components of the Operations Section.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Describe the purpose of the Operations Section
- Describe the responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief (OSC)
- Describe the responsibilities of the Branch Director
- Describe the key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position
- Define Division Supervisor and Group Supervisor positions and describe the difference and similarities between the two positions
- Describe the management skill and supervision concepts relevant to the position of Division/Group Supervisor
- Describe the differences and similarities between the Division/Group Supervisor and Operations Section Chief, Branch Director, Incident Commander (IC), and Strike Team (STL) and Task Force Leader (TFL)

Topic The Operations Section

The Operations Section

Responsible for:

- All tactical incident operations
- IAP Implementation



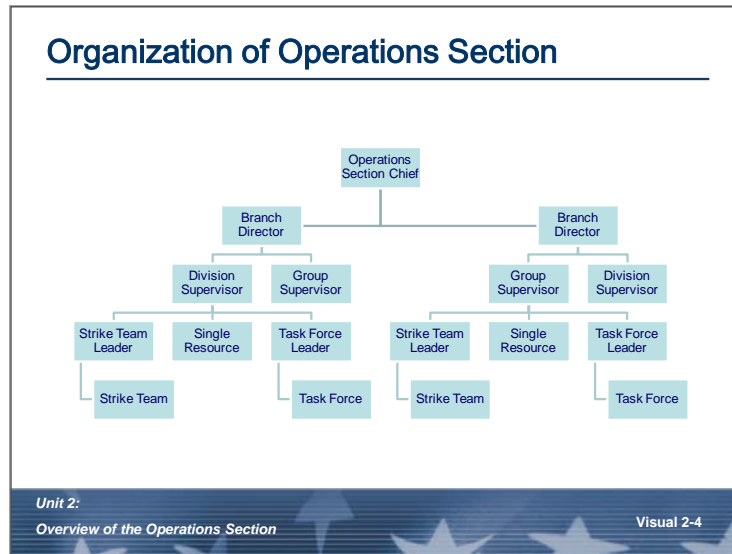
Unit 2:
Overview of the Operations Section

Visual 2-3

Key Points

The Operations Section is responsible for all tactical incident operations and implementation of the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Topic Organization of Operations Section



Key Points

This organizational chart is presented for representational purposes only; in reality, an organization structured as such may be over supervised. For example, Branch Directors may not be needed, and it should not be assumed that a Branch Director needs to be inserted into the organization.

The organization and hierarchy of a team assembled under ICS may have a completely different command structure than your departments or agencies. Under ICS, each position should be filled by the person most experienced and qualified to carry out the duties and responsibilities of that position, regardless of the person's rank outside of the ICS team. Therefore, there may be the case where a subordinate is placed in a higher rank than a superior (for example, a fire Captain is placed higher in structure than a Chief, or a police Lieutenant is working under a Sergeant). As will be explained in the units concerning personnel management, the Division/Group Supervisor, as a middle manager, should be aware of how rank structure operates in ICS and the challenges it may present when managing positions.

In ICS, the Operations Section includes (as appropriate) subordinate Branches, Divisions, and/or Groups below the direction of the Operations Section Chief (Operations Section Chief).

The position of Division/Group Supervisor is located between the levels of upper strategic management (the Operations Section Chief and Branch Directors) and the tactical levels (Strike Team Leaders and Task Force Leaders).


This is merely an example of how Operations may be structured. Depending on the incident and span-of-control issues (to be discussed), the Operations Section may be organized very differently. For example, the Branch Director level is not automatically activated; a Division/Group Supervisor may report directly to the Operations Section Chief, or even the Incident Commander, should incident complexity (or lack thereof) call for such an organization.

Topic Operations Section Chief Role and Responsibilities

Operations Section Chief Role and Responsibilities

Responsible for:

- Translating objectives into strategy and tactics
- Supervising the Operations organization



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Visual 2-5

Key Points

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for:

- Translating objectives into strategy and tactics to be employed on the incident
- Gathering information and formulating the tactical plan for the IAP for each Operational Period
- Supervising the Operations organization, which includes:
 - Branch Directors
 - Division/Group Supervisors
 - Air Operations
 - Staging area(s), if used

Topic Operations Section Chief Role and Responsibilities (cont.)

Operations Section Chief Role and Responsibilities (cont.)

Responsible for coordination with:

■ Command staff	■ Local Officials
■ General staff	■ Media
■ Subordinates	■ Public
■ Agency Representatives	■ Technical Specialists
■ Resources Advisors	■ Training Specialists

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Key Points

The role of the Operations Section Chief includes making sure that all the people listed on the slide are supporting the incident operations; all these people need to act as one team as much as possible.

The Operations Section Chief is responsible for coordination with:

- Command staff
- General staff
- Subordinates
- Agency Representatives
- Resources advisors
- Local officials
- Media
- Public
- Technical Specialists
- Training Specialists

Topic Branch Director Role and Responsibilities

Branch Director Role and Responsibilities

Responsible for:

- Implementation of IAP as appropriate for their Branch
- Development of alternatives for Branch operations
- Attendance at Planning Meetings with the Operations Section Chief at their request

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Key Points

This position may be multidisciplinary and, as pointed out in the organization chart on slide 2-4, the position is activated according to span-of-control requirements.

When activated, Branch Directors are under the direction of the Operations Section Chief.

The Branch Director is responsible for:

- Implementing the portion of the IAP appropriate to the Branches
- Developing (with subordinates) alternatives for Branch operations
- At the request of the Operations Section Chief, attending the Planning Meeting

Topic Branch Director Role and Responsibilities (cont.)**Branch Director Role and Responsibilities (cont.)****Responsible for:**

- **Supervising Branch operations**
- **Reviewing the ICS Form 204—Assignment List for Divisions/Groups within the Branch**
- **Assigning specific work tasks to DIVSs**
- **Resolving logistical problems reported by subordinates**
- **Reporting to Operations Section Chief as needed**
- **Approving accident and medical reports**
- **Maintaining the ICS Form 214—Activity Log**

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Visual 2-8

Key Points

The Branch Director is responsible for:

- Reviewing ICS Form 204—Assignment List for Divisions/Groups within the Branch and modifying lists based on effectiveness of current operations
- Assigning specific work tasks to Division/Group Supervisors
- Supervising Branch operations
- Resolving logistical problems reported by subordinates
- Reporting to the Operations Section Chief when
 - The IAP needs to be modified
 - Additional resources are needed
 - Surplus resources are available
 - Hazardous situations or significant events occur
- Approving accident and medical reports (home agency forms) originating within the Branch
- Maintaining ICS Form 214—Activity Log

Topic Division/Group Supervisor Key Elements

Division/Group Supervisor Key Elements

- Translates direction from the Operations Section Chief into on-the-ground tactical operations
- Implements the IAP
- Reviews assignments and assigns tasks

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Key Points

Key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position include:

- Translating directions from the Operations Section Chief and Branch Director into on-the-ground tactical operations
- Implementing the IAP for the Division or Group
- Providing the IAP to Strike Team Leaders when available
- Reviewing assignments and incident activities with subordinates and assigning tasks

Topic Division/Group Supervisor Key Elements (cont.)

Division/Group Supervisor Key Elements (cont.)

- Coordinates activities with adjacent Groups and Divisions
- Determines need for assistance
- Submits situation and resource status information to the Branch Director or Operations Section Chief
- Resolves logistical problems within Division or Group
- Develops Tactical Plans for next operational period

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Key Points

Key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position include:

- Coordinating activities with adjacent divisions or groups
- Determining the need for assistance on assigned tasks
- Submitting situation and resource status information to the Branch Director or Operations Section Chief
- Resolving logistical problems within the division or group
- Participating in development of Tactical Plans for next operational period

Topic Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor

Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor

The Division Supervisor:

- Supervises, coordinates, and manages a geographic portion of an incident
- Works under the Operations Section Chief or Branch Director
- Implements assigned portion of IAP

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Overview of the Operations Section Visual 2-11

Key Points

The Division Supervisor is responsible for all incident tactical activities in an assigned geographic area or location, except for any functions assigned to a group.

The Division Supervisor:


- Supervises, coordinates, and manages a geographic portion of the incident
- Is subordinate to the Operations Section Chief or Branch Director
- Responsible for the implementation of assigned portion of the IAP

Topic Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

The Division Supervisor is responsible for activities within that Division:

- Fire control operations
- Flood control operations
- HAZMAT control
- Site access
- Rescue



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Visual 2-12

Key Points

The Division Supervisor is responsible for activities within the Division, such as:

- Containment operations
- Fire suppression
- Shoreline cleanup
- Site access
- Evacuation
- Rescue
- Public works (debris removal, snow removal)
- Infrastructure restoration, electrical service distribution, and waste water
- Damage assessment teams
- Volunteer management

The Division Supervisor may be responsible for a combination of several different types of operations within Division boundaries. This implies a lot of coordination responsibilities.


Essentially, unless it has been tasked to another group, you as a Division Supervisor would be responsible for it if it is in your geographic area.

Topic Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

The Group Supervisor supervises, coordinates, manages the following functions:

- Sampling
- Decontamination
- Shoreline assessment
- Disposal
- Entry
- Health monitoring
- Damage assessment



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Visual 2-13

Key Points

The Group Supervisor supervises, coordinates, and manages functions, such as:

- Sampling
- Decontamination
- Shoreline assessment
- Disposal
- Entry
- Health monitoring
- Damage assessment

The Group Supervisor's role may transcend divisional boundaries. Groups may move from Division to Division.

Topic Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

Division Supervisor vs. Group Supervisor (cont.)

Like the Division Supervisor, the Group Supervisor:

- Works for the Operations Section Chief or the Branch Director
- Implements assigned portion of the IAP
- Is responsible for the frontline supervision and management of assigned resources

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Visual 2-14

Key Points

The Group Supervisor:

- Works for the Operations Section Chief or Branch Director
- Is responsible for the implementation of the assigned portion of the IAP
- Is responsible for the frontline supervision and management of assigned resources

Topic Division/Group Supervisor Resources

Division/Group Supervisor Resources

Kinds of resources that may be assigned to a Division or Group:

- Crews
- Heavy equipment (like excavators)
- Engines or Strike Teams
- Patrol vehicles
- Confined Space Entry Teams
- Boats



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Visual 2-15

Key Points

The Division/Group Supervisor is a manager of multiple resources of varying kinds and types. The position is less hands-on than Strike Team Leader or Task Force Leader.


Kinds of resources assigned to a division or group include:

- Crews
- Heavy equipment (like excavators)
- Engines or Strike Teams
- Patrol vehicles
- Confined Space Entry Teams
- Boats
- Utility company vehicles
- Epidemiologists

Topic Collocation of Groups within Divisions

Collocation of Groups within Divisions

- May both be used on an incident
- Groups work where needed and may work within a Division's area
- Neither supervises the other
- Coordination is key



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Visual 2-16

Key Points

Groups and Divisions can be used together on an incident. Groups operate wherever their assigned tasks are needed, and therefore, are not limited geographically. For this reason, a Group or Groups may be working within the geographic area assigned to a Division. Groups and Divisions are at an equal level within the Operations Organization and, in situations where groups are collocated within Divisions, neither supervises the other. However, close coordination of activities is required, a responsibility that will fall on the shoulders on the Division and Group Supervisors operating in the area.

Topic Incidents with Only Divisions or Only Groups

Incidents with Only Divisions or Only Groups

- **Just groups:** If incident is small geographically
- **Just divisions:** Larger geographical area, but less complex activities and tasks



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Visual 2-17

Key Points

Follow instructions from the instructor for discussion.

If the incident is small geographically, only Groups are required. If the incident consumes a larger geographic area, but complexity of activities and tasks are not great, only Divisions are required.

Topic Information Communication

Information Communication

The most critical element of the Division/Group Supervisor's job is to clearly communicate assignments and incident activities to subordinates while maintaining safety as the highest priority for assigned personnel.



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Visual 2-18

Key Points

This (communication) is where things tend to go wrong. Command and General Staff don't typically get hurt, but the people on the front lines may, and these are your people. Make sure you are communicating alternatives, contingencies, emergencies, and other information so they can operate safely and effectively.

Topic Management and Supervision

Management and Supervision

- Understand tactics but have broader strategic perspective
- Monitor entire Division/Group



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Visual 2-19

Key Points

The Division/Group Supervisor must understand tactics but possess a broader strategic perspective at the same time. In other words, he or she needs to know how to fill a sandbag, but also be able to see how many are needed and where they should be placed, among other things. At the same time, if you are only looking down at a sandbag, you are not looking outward to survey the incident.

Also, the Division/Group Supervisor can't just remain where the action is. He or she must visit the rest of the Division and monitor the entire Division/Group.

Topic Management and Supervision (cont.)

Management and Supervision (cont.)

Management Skills:

- Division/Group Supervisor is frontline manager
- Manage by walking around
- Be proactive
 - Take control
 - Demonstrate leadership
 - Know your duties
 - Maintain personnel accountability

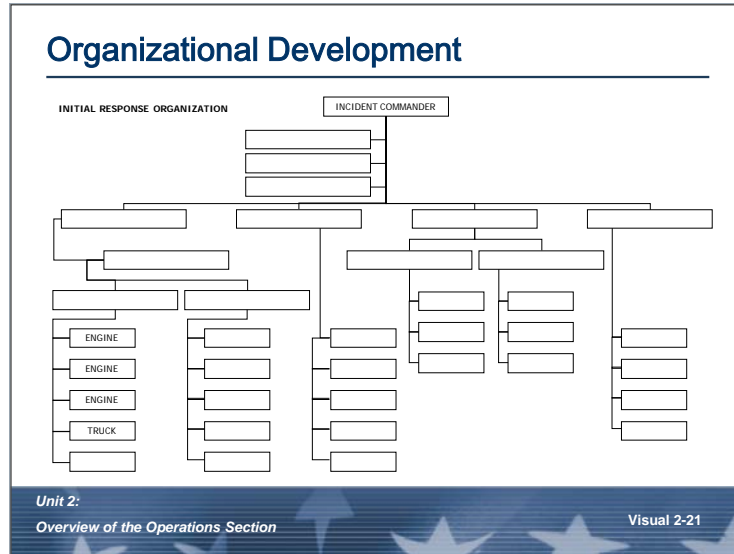
Unit 2:
Overview of the Operations Section Visual 2-20

Key Points

The Division/Group Supervisor is the frontline manager. You need to be there at the incident and be visible. You can be a hands-on manager by walking around to survey the incident. The difference between the good, the bad, and the UGLY may come down to management practices.

The Division/Group Supervisor should be proactive:

- Take control
- Demonstrate leadership
- Know your duties
- Maintain personnel accountability

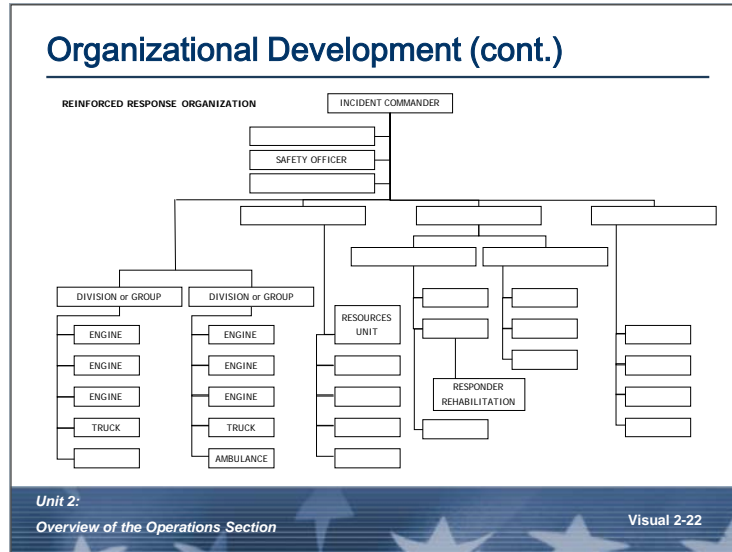
Topic Organizational Development**Key Points**

The organizational charts show examples of ICS organizations that expand as incidents grow so that they require very large organizational structures to manage the personnel and equipment assigned to these incidents.

This example depicts an agency's initial response level (three engines, one truck company, and an Incident Commander) to a reported incident and how those resources might be organized to handle the situation. At the same time, the organization is designed to rapidly expand if necessitated by the incident.

The ICS organization on these slides could pertain to a variety of incidents (such as a vehicle accident, MCI, flooding, explosion, HAZMAT, structural fire, and so on). Pick one to use as an example as you go through the slides.

Topic Organizational Development (cont.)

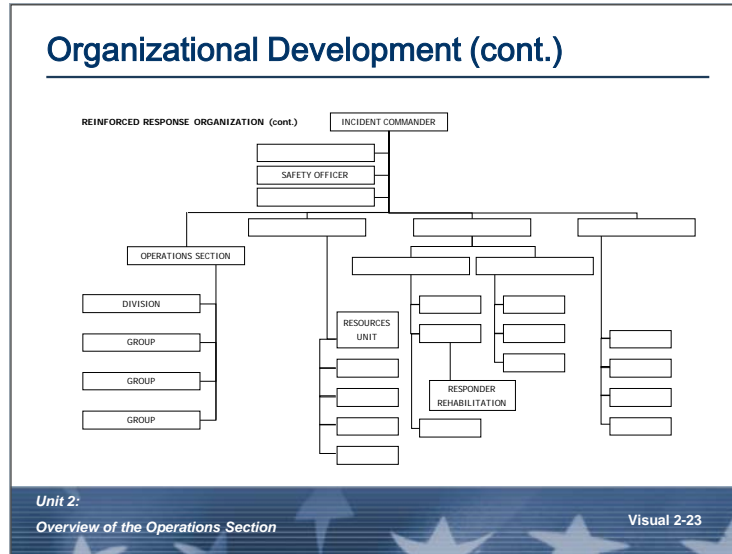


Key Points

This example depicts an expansion of the organizational structure to accommodate additional resources. In this case, additional resources have been ordered to assist the Incident Commander and support personnel on scene. Note that Divisions and Groups have been established for span-of-control reasons to manage the additional resources (necessitating the Division/Group Supervisor role), but the Incident Commander has not yet felt it is necessary to establish the Operations Section Chief position to manage the Operations Section. In this case, the two Division/Group Supervisors instead report directly to the Incident Commander.

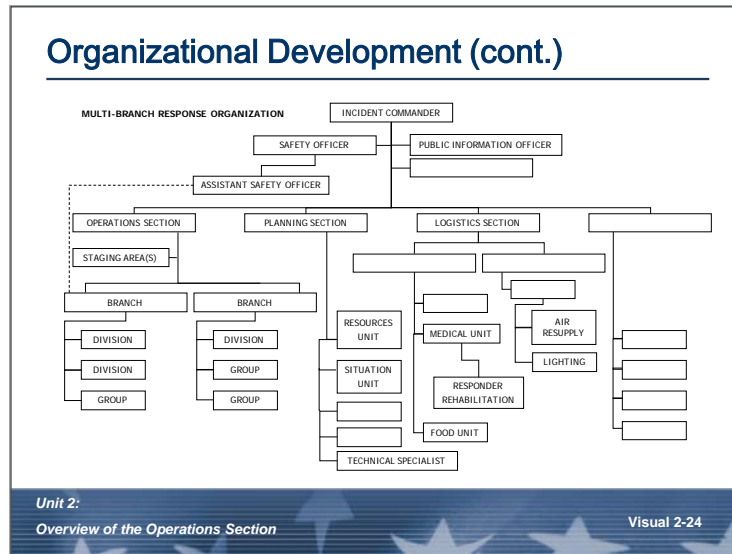
The span-of-control for the Incident Commander shown in this slide is 5 to 1: two Division/Group Supervisors, a Safety Officer (SOFR), a Resources Unit Leader (RESL), and the Responder Rehab.

Topic Organizational Development (cont.)

**Key Points**

Like the example on the previous slide, this example depicts an expansion of the organizational structure to accommodate additional resources. In particular, notice that an Operations Section Chief position has now been activated and more Divisions and Groups have been established (necessitating additional DIVSs) through ICS to manage these additional resources as incidents escalate.

Topic Organizational Development (cont.)



Key Points

This example depicts an organization that may be used for incidents that have grown and require multiple levels of management to accommodate span-of-control concerns and increased support for the number of personnel assigned to the incident. In this case, Branches (and Branch Directors) have been activated to help manage the Divisions and Groups.

Topic Objectives Review

Objectives Review

- 1. What is the purpose of the Operations Section?*
- 2. What are the responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief?*
- 3. What are the responsibilities of the Branch Director?*
- 4. What are the key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position?*

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Visual 2-25

Key Points

Unit Terminal Objective

Describe the function and components of the Operations Section.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Describe the purpose of the Operations Section
- Describe the responsibilities of the Operations Section Chief
- Describe responsibilities of the Branch Director
- Describe the key elements of the Division/Group Supervisor position

Topic Objectives Review (cont.)

Objectives Review (cont.)

5. *What are the differences between the Division Supervisor and Group Supervisor positions?*

6. *What are some management skills and supervision concepts relevant to the position of Division/Group Supervisor?*

Unit 2:
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Visual 2-26

Key Points

Unit Terminal Objective

Describe the function and components of the Operations Section.

Unit Enabling Objectives (cont.)

- Define Division Supervisor and Group Supervisor positions, and describe the difference and similarities between the two positions
- Describe the management skill and supervision concepts relevant to the position of Division/Group Supervisor
- Describe the differences and similarities between the Division/Group Supervisor and Operations Section Chief and Branch Director, Incident Commander, and Strike Team and Task Force Leader