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# Unit 2: Overview of the Incident Command System

STUDENT GUIDE

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## Objectives

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

- Describe the function and components of the Logistics Section and the Communications Unit within the context of the Incident Command System (ICS)
- Describe the actions and considerations necessary to mobilize for an incident and gain situational awareness
- Define the purpose of the Logistics Section
- Describe the Logistics Section positions and their functions
- Describe the responsibilities of the Communications Unit
- Identify and explain common responsibilities of ICS personnel and unit leaders
- Identify responsibilities of the Communications Unit Leader
- Identify Communications Unit Leader incident information sources
- Identify and describe necessary actions to ensure readiness for assignment
- Describe the information gathered from the initial meetings, briefings, and documents

## Methodology

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The purpose of this unit is to provide students with a high-level orientation to the Logistics Section, the Communications Unit, and the Communications Unit Leader functions. The purpose of this unit is to provide students with an understanding of the requirements of preparing for an incident, an idea of the atmosphere they will have to operate in, and how to adapt to unique circumstances yet still acquire all the necessary information to do their job. The focus should not be on a hard-and-fast process upon arrival, but rather using one's judgment to act as efficiently as possible. Except as provided, note that the Communications Unit Leader's specific functions are described at length elsewhere in the course and should not be expounded upon at any great length at this time. Rather, this unit should set the context for the rest of the course and provide a framework for students related to ICS.

This unit uses lecture, discussion based activities, and exercises.

The purpose of Exercise 2 is to provide the participants with an opportunity to accurately complete an ICS Form 201 requesting all of the appropriate information during the initial Logistics Section Chief briefing. This exercise is scheduled to last approximately 30 minutes, including review with the instructor.

Knowledge of unit content will be evaluated through administration of the final exam (to be administered upon completion of the course). Instructors will evaluate students' initial understanding through facilitation of Exercise 2.

**Time Plan**

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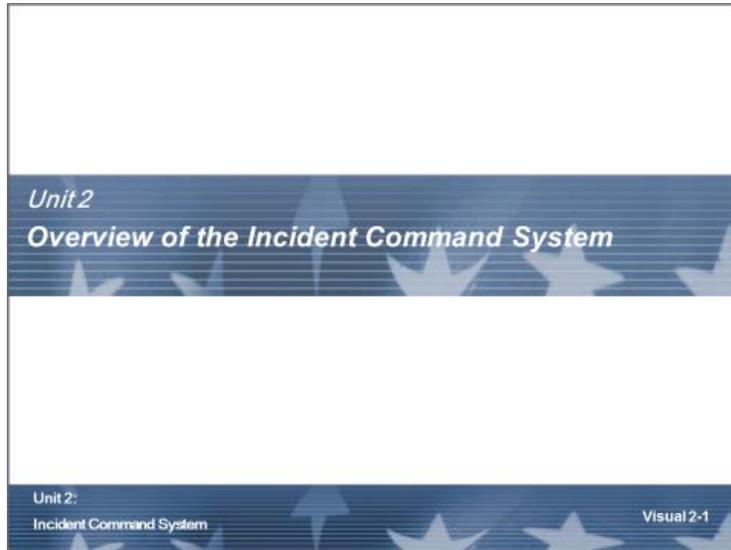
A suggested time plan for this unit is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time</b>
Lesson	1 hour
Exercise 2	30 minutes
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>1 hour, 30 minutes</b>

**Topic**

Unit Title Slide

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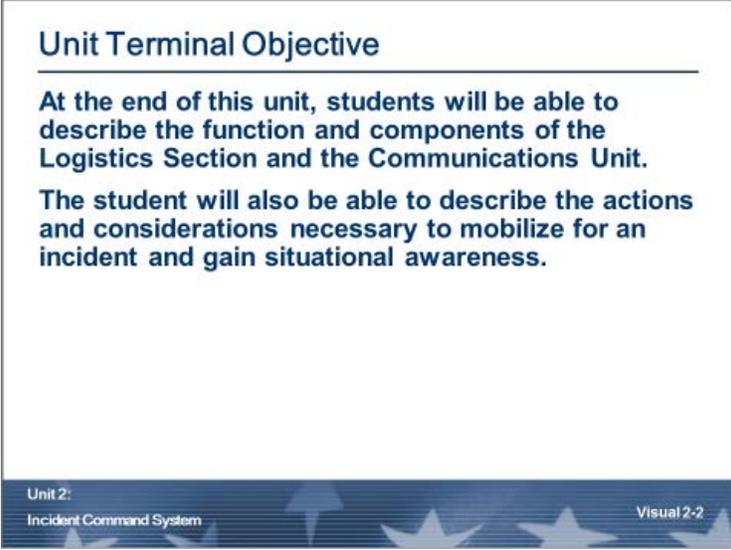


**Key Points**

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Topic Unit Terminal Objective

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**Unit Terminal Objective**

At the end of this unit, students will be able to describe the function and components of the Logistics Section and the Communications Unit.

The student will also be able to describe the actions and considerations necessary to mobilize for an incident and gain situational awareness.

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-2

## Key Points

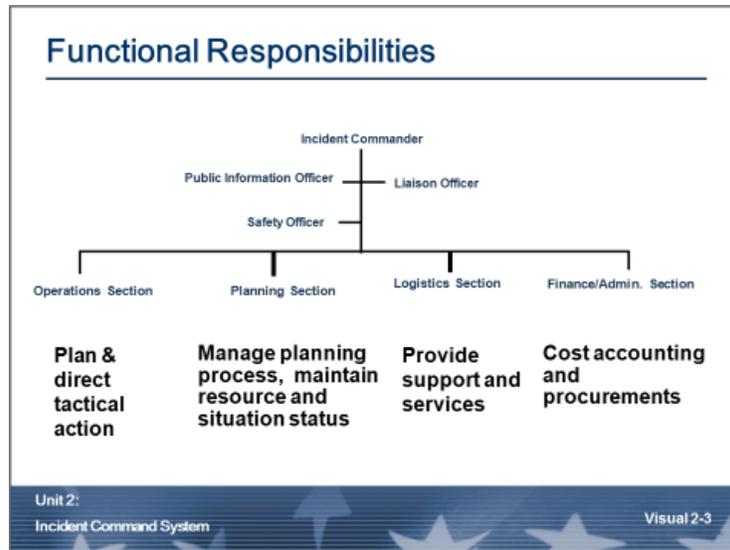
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### Unit Terminal Objectives

- At the end of this unit, students will be able to describe the function and components of the Logistics Section and the Communications Unit
- The student will also be able to describe the actions and considerations necessary to mobilize for an incident and gain situational awareness

### Unit Enabling Objectives

- Define the purpose of the Logistics Section
- Describe the Logistics Section positions and their functions
- Describe the responsibilities of the Communications Unit
- Identify and explain common responsibilities of ICS personnel and unit leaders
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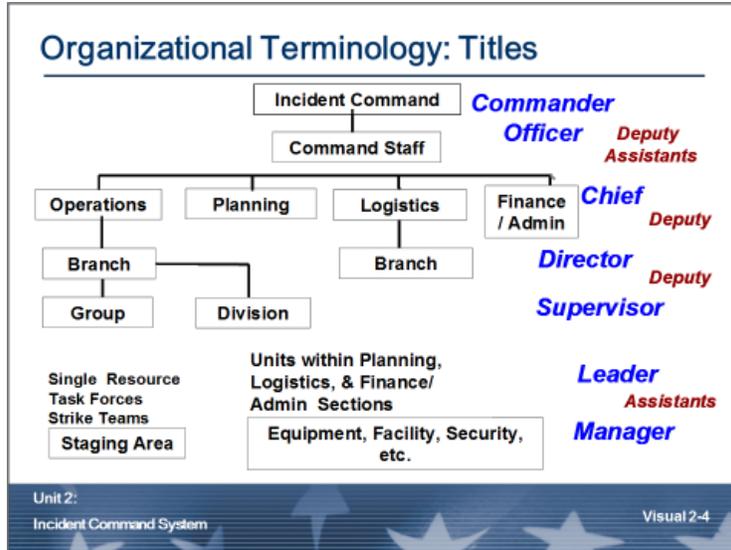
**Topic** Functional Responsibilities**Key Points**

ICS is a system for organizing and managing the response to an incident that has 30+ years of proven success.

Federal doctrine and requirements:

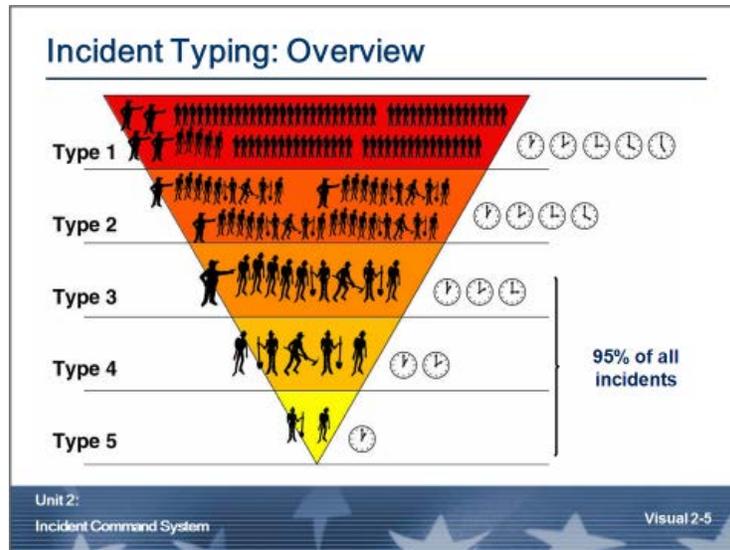
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five (HSPD-5) and Eight (HSPD-8)
- National Response Framework (NRF)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Topic Organizational Terminology: Titles

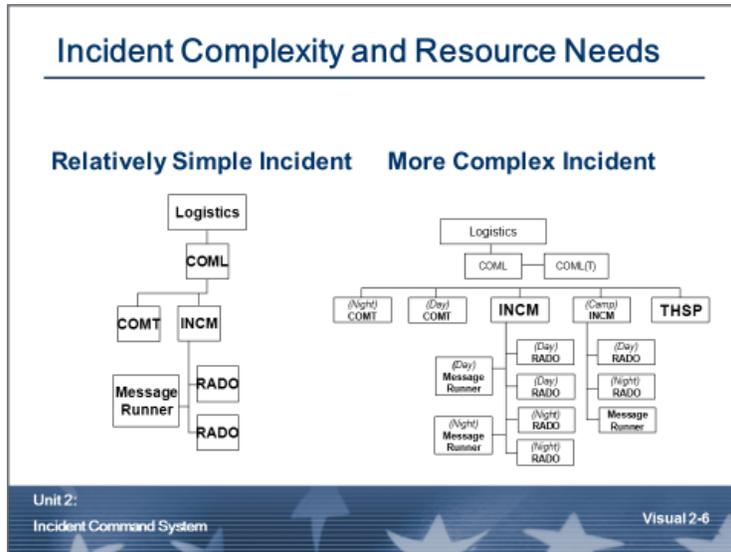


Key Points

## Topic Incident Typing: Overview

**Key Points**

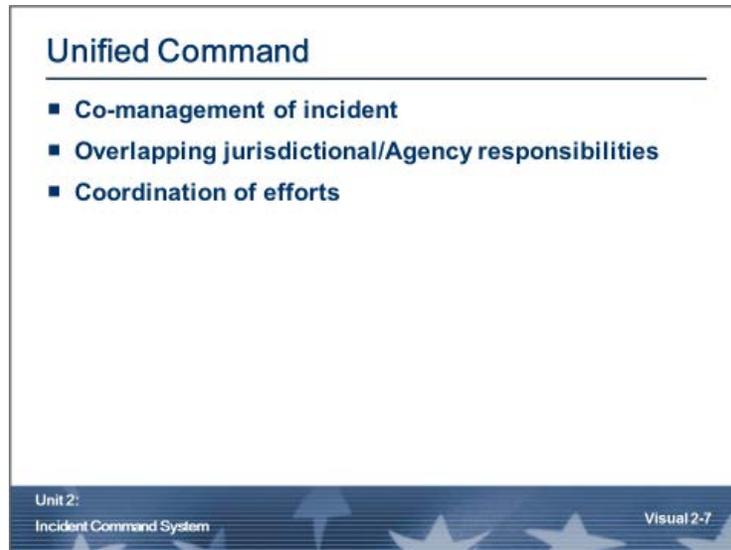
In this illustration the clocks are indicative of operational periods associated with the various types of incidents. The number and types of figures are indicative of the incident complexity and size of response.



**Key Points**

**Topic** Unified Command

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**Key Points**

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Unified Command: Some people will have trouble with this concept (calling it management by committee). Someone in the group always has 51% of the vote, but it is much better if they don't need to use that hammer. Besides, what would be better? All IC's talking together and merging their organizations, or "cylinders of excellence" with duplications in different organizations set up next to each other? All ICs talking and merging their organizations, or "cylinders of excellence" with duplications in different organizations set up next to each other?

Features of a Unified Command Organization: "Co-located facilities" means SAME facilities; it does NOT mean police and fire trailers parked next to each other.

Unified Command Inclusion: An individual's inclusion in a Unified Command depends on BOTH the responsibility of that agency, AND whether that particular member has the authority to speak for and commit the agency to a course of action. It may be right agency, wrong individual.

**Topic** Clear Separation of Positions

**Clear Separation of Positions**

**Reasons not to combine organization units**

- Can cause staffing confusion later if positions separate
- Creates a non-standard organization



**Combining Operations & Logistics Section Chief**



**Operations Section Chief**



**Logistics Section Chief**

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-8

**Key Points**

**Topic** Common Responsibilities

**Common Responsibilities**

- **ALL ICS personnel share certain common responsibilities**
- **Unit Leaders have additional common responsibilities**

**Handout 2-1: Unit Leader Common Responsibilities**  
**Handout 2-2: IMTs**



Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-9

**Key Points**

While the Communications Unit Leader has responsibilities specific to his/her unit, all ICS personnel also share a common set of responsibilities. Handouts 2-1 and 2-2 provide an introduction to serving on an incident management team, which includes a description of basic responsibilities such as:

- Receiving an assignment from your agency
- Checking-in upon arrival at the incident
- Receiving briefings from an immediate supervisor
- Acquiring work materials
- Conducting all tasks in a manner that ensures the safety and welfare of you and your co-workers
- Organizing and briefing supervisors
- Knowing the assigned frequencies and ensuring communications equipment is operating properly
- Using clear text and ICS terminology (no codes) in all radio communications
- Completing forms and reports required of the assigned positions and send through supervisor to the Documentation Unit
- Responding to demobilization orders and brief subordinates regarding demobilization

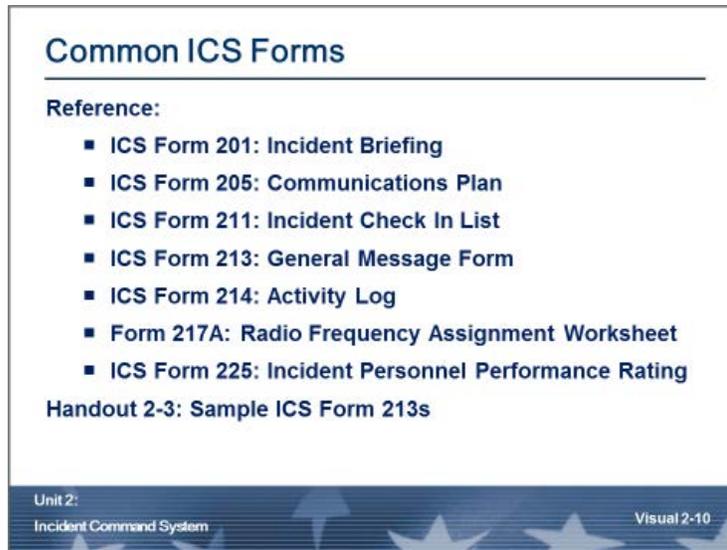
In addition, unit leaders have an additional, specific set of common responsibilities, which are detailed in Handout 2-1. These include:

- Participating in incident planning meetings as required
- Determining current status of unit activities
- Confirming dispatch and estimated time of arrival of staff and supplies
- Assigning specific duties to fill and supervise staff
- Developing and implementing accountability, safety, and security measures for personnel and resources
- Supervising demobilization of unit, including storage of supplies;
- Providing the Supply Unit Leader with a list of supplies to be replenished
- Maintain unit records, including an ICS Form 214 – Activity Log

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**Topic** Common ICS Forms

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**Key Points**

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Turn to the Forms Section of the Student Guide to review each form

While there are ICS forms that are common to all ICS personnel and unit leaders there are forms that are specific to the responsibilities of the Communications Unit Leader. As the course progresses these forms will be the focus of other activities and exercises.

**Common ICS Forms**

ICS Form 201: Provides basic information regarding the incident situation and the resources allocated to the incident. It also serves as a permanent record of the initial response to the incident.

ICS Form 211: Personnel and equipment arriving at the incident can check in at various incident locations. Check-in consists of reporting specific information which is recorded on the Check-In List.

ICS Form 213: The General Message Form is used to record incoming messages which cannot be orally transmitted; to transmit messages to the ICC for transmission via radio or telephone and for sending any message or notification to incident personnel which requires hard-copy delivery.

ICS Form 214: The Activity Log is used to record details of unit activity including strike team activity. The file of these logs provides a basic reference from which to extract information for inclusion in any after-action report.

ICS Form 225: The Incident Personnel Performance Rating Form provides agency management with a record of the performance of personnel assigned to ICS positions as evaluated by immediate supervision.

**Communications Unit Leader ICS Forms**

ICS Form 205: The Incident Radio Communications Plan provides in one location information on all radio frequency assignments for each operational period. The plan is a summary of information obtained from the ICS Form 217A.

Information from the ICS Form 205 on frequency assignments is normally placed on the appropriate Assignment List (ICS Form 204).

Form 217A: The Radio Frequency Assignment Worksheet is used by the Communications Unit Leader to assist in determining frequency allocations.

In the Supplemental Materials Section of Unit 2 you will find sample ICS 213 Forms.

**Topic** Purpose of the Logistics Section

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**Purpose of the Logistics Section**

**The Logistics Section ensures that incident personnel have the equipment, supplies, transportation, rest, and nutrition they need to meet incident objectives.**



Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-11

**Key Points**

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The mission of the Logistics Section is to ensure incident personnel have the equipment, supplies, transportation, rest, and nutrition they need to meet incident objectives.

The vision of the Logistics Section is to function as a well-honed team that supports personnel to meet incident objectives in a safe, efficient manner.

The goal of the Logistics Section is to be transparent to the rest of the IMT.

Logistics support should be provided in a timely, courteous way. Challenges should be handled in a professional, businesslike manner.

In the Logistics Section, anticipation is your mindset. In order to provide facilities, services, and supplies in support of the incident, the Logistics Section is composed of six units that support and perform specific functions.

**Topic** Major Responsibilities: Logistics Section Chief

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## Key Points

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### Facilities Unit

- Provides incident personnel with incident facilities
- Determines requirements for facilities
- Secures facilities and provides layouts
- Supervises security manager and base/camp manager

### Ground Support

- Provide and maintain transportation for personnel, supplies, equipment, and food
- Develops and implements the Traffic Plan
- Arranges and supports fueling, repair, and maintenance of ground resources
- Maintains records and inventory of support and transportation vehicles
- Maintains incident roads

### Medical Unit

- Responsible for preparing the Medical Plan, obtaining medical aid and transportation, and preparing medical documentation
- Participates in the Planning Meeting
- Responds to requests for medical aid
- Ensures rehabilitation of incident personnel

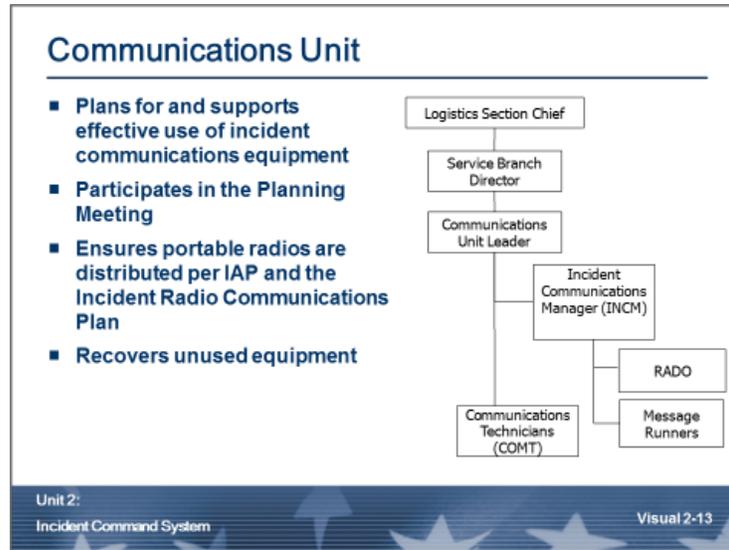
**Food Unit**

- Responsible for ensuring all incident personnel are adequately fed and hydrated
- Supervises assigned personnel/contracts
- Determines food and water requirements
- Determines best method of feeding
- Orders food and water
- Ensures health and safety measures

**Supply Unit**

- Support responders with supplies, equipment, and personnel necessary to accomplish the incident objectives
- Participates in logistics planning meetings
- Orders, receives, distributes, and stores supplies and equipment
- Maintains inventory
- Orders or returns supplies
- Services reusable equipment

## Topic Communications Unit



### Key Points

The purpose of the Communications Unit is to plan for and support the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities. All forms of communication (e.g. faxes, phones, cells, radio) are the responsibility of the Communications Unit.

Functions of the Communication Unit include:

- Installing, distributing, testing, and repairing all communications equipment used during the incident
- Obtaining and disseminating:
  - Equipment assignments
  - Frequency assignments
  - Status of orders
  - Adjacent incident information
  - Equipment availability
- Prepares and implements the ICS Form 205 - Incident Radio Communications Plan
- Establishes appropriate communications with distribution/maintenance locations
- Ensures communications systems are installed and tested
- Ensures an equipment accountability system is established
- Ensures that personal portable radio equipment from the cache is distributed per the ICS Form 205
- Provides technical information as required on:

- Adequacy of communications systems currently in operation
- Geographic limitations on communications systems
- Equipment capabilities/limitations
- Amount and types of equipment available
- Anticipated problems in the use of communications equipment
- Recovers equipment from units being demobilized
- Maintains ICS Form 214 – Activity Log

Often it is helpful for the Communications Unit Leader to attend the pre-planning meeting to learn about upcoming needs and resource limitations.

**Topic** Operational Period

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### Operational Period

- Time to complete a set of actions from Incident Action Plan
- Determined by Incident Commander
- Usually 12 - 24 hour period
  - 12 hr: 0600 – 1800
  - 24 hr: 0600 – 0600
- Note: Operational Period and shift length may be different

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

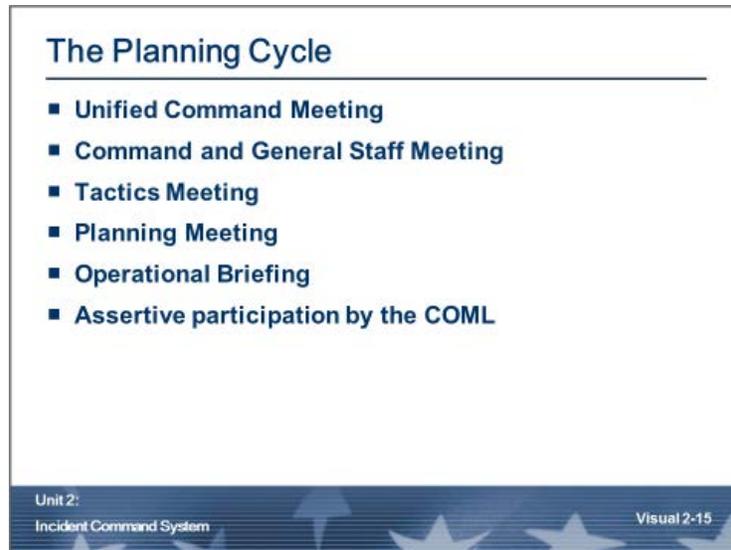
Visual 2-14

**Key Points**

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**Topic**            The Planning Cycle

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**Key Points**

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The Planning Meeting is when the Incident Action Plan is developed for the next operational period.

The Operations Meeting is when the Incident Action Plan is briefed.

The Tactics Meeting is when the tactics developed by the Operations Section Chief are reviewed.

These meetings require assertive participation by the Communications Unit Leader. The Communications Unit Leader is not considered a member of the Command or General Staff; however, they do participate in the planning and operational meetings. The Communications Unit may not be able to support the Incident Action Plan due to equipment, radio coverage, or other constraints that may be technical in nature. Still, the Communications Unit Leader needs to be vocal and advise the Command and General Staff of the ability or inability of the Communications Unit to support the plan.

Occasionally attempts are made to make changes in assignments or locations during the Operations meeting. The Communications Unit Leader has to be on top of this and determine in a timely manner if the changes can be supported.



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**Topic** Obtain Incident Information
 

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### Obtain Incident Information

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Face-to-face with command and general staff</li> <li>■ Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201)</li> <li>■ From the Incident Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Briefing Checklist Includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Situation</li> <li>■ Communications</li> <li>■ Risk management</li> <li>■ Mission/execution</li> <li>■ Service/support</li> <li>■ Additional information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Unit 2:  
Incident Command System
Visual 2-17

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**Key Points**


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From what sources is information obtained?

- Face to Face
- Incident Briefing Form
- The Incident Action Plan (IAP)

As a Communications Unit Leader, you may be on the scene to an IAP being set up. Planning may have not occurred yet or an IAP may not be available.

### **Logistics Section Chief Briefing Information**

- Situation-current and expected:
  - Operational plan (branches, groups, divisions, air operations)
  - Expected duration of assignment/incident
  - Other agencies involved
  - Operational/logistical resources ordered and/or en route
  - ICS Form 201, ICS Form 209, or IAP if available
- Mission/Execution:
  - Transition (incident transfer of command)
  - Length of Operational period
  - Policies and operating procedures
  - Meeting schedules

- Incident Scene Access
- Communications:
  - Special needs (e.g. security)
  - Current frequencies and radio systems in use
  - Issues with local communications systems

**Topic** Preliminary Documentation

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**Preliminary Documentation**

- ICS Form 201 or IAP
- May be obtained from supervisor
- If not supervisor, whoever is managing the planning function may have copies



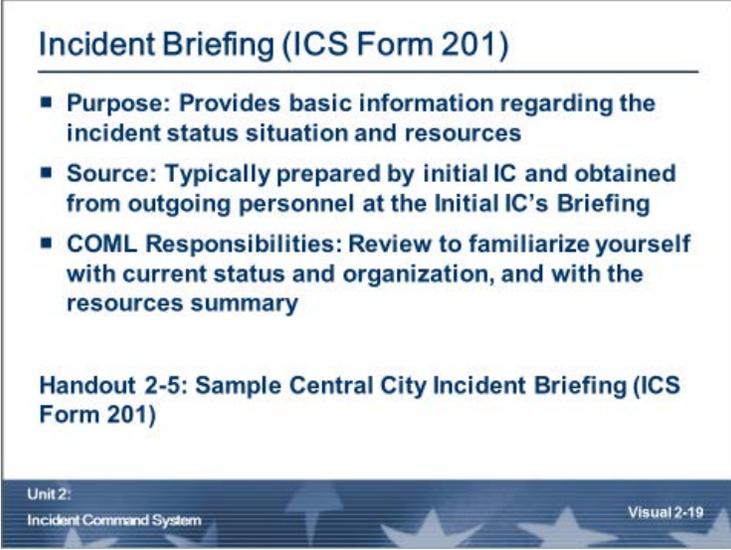
Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-18

**Key Points**

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Upon arrival at the incident location, procuring information should be a top priority. The ICS Form 201 and the IAP can be used by the COML to glean information in addition to or in place of the LSC Briefing.

**Topic** Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201)

The slide is titled "Incident Briefing (ICS Form 201)" and contains three bullet points. Below the bullet points is the text "Handout 2-5: Sample Central City Incident Briefing (ICS Form 201)". At the bottom of the slide, there is a blue footer with the text "Unit 2: Incident Command System" on the left and "Visual 2-19" on the right.

**Incident Briefing (ICS Form 201)**

- **Purpose:** Provides basic information regarding the incident status situation and resources
- **Source:** Typically prepared by initial IC and obtained from outgoing personnel at the Initial IC's Briefing
- **COML Responsibilities:** Review to familiarize yourself with current status and organization, and with the resources summary

Handout 2-5: Sample Central City Incident Briefing (ICS Form 201)

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-19

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** ICS Form 201- Incident Briefing Form provides basic information regarding the incident status situation and resources allocated to the incident. It is also used when the incident transitions from Initial Action to an IMT. Four part form that consists of:

**Map** - The first page of the ICS Form 201 includes a rendering of the incident map as well as the location of assigned personnel and equipment. The sketch can help a Communications Unit Leader determine the geographic size and topography of the incident. It can also provide information on the scale or complexity of the incident.

**Summary of Current Actions** - The second page of the ICS Form 201 usually includes a list of incident objectives, a chronological list of current actions taking place on the incident, and significant events.

**Current Organization** – The third page of the ICS Form 201 provides a chart of the current organizational structure.

**Resources Summary** - The fourth page of the ICS Form 201 will include a list of personnel and equipment organized by status.

**Source:** Typically prepared by initial Incident Commander

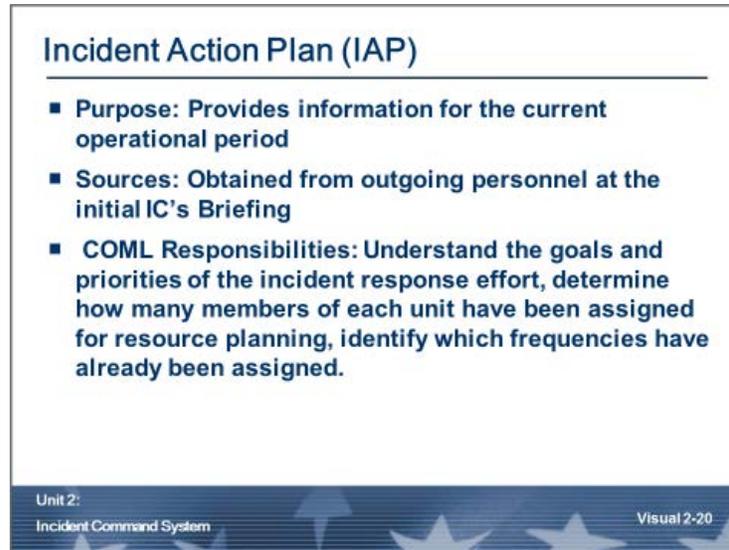
**Communications Unit Leader Responsibilities:** This document explains the current status and organization, and contains a resources summary.

- Obtain incident information from the IAP, ICS Form 201- Incident Briefing Form , or command and general staff interviews
- Obtain current frequencies or talkgroups in use
- Obtain the current and anticipated resource

- Discuss current and anticipated issues
- Obtain expected duration of the incident

Topic Incident Action Plan (IAP)

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**Incident Action Plan (IAP)**

- **Purpose:** Provides information for the current operational period
- **Sources:** Obtained from outgoing personnel at the initial IC's Briefing
- **COML Responsibilities:** Understand the goals and priorities of the incident response effort, determine how many members of each unit have been assigned for resource planning, identify which frequencies have already been assigned.

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-20

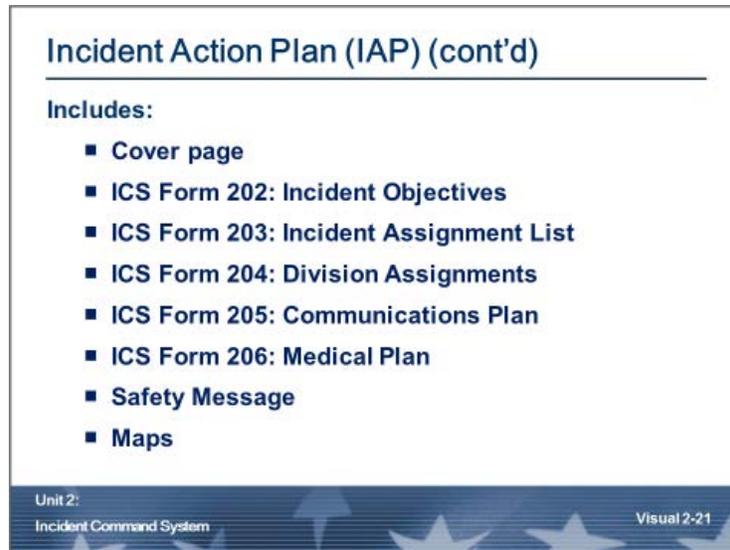
### Key Points

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**Purpose:** Provides information for the current operational period. It should be available if transitioning from another team.

**Sources:** Obtain from outgoing personnel at the initial IC's Briefing.

**Preparation:** Is typically delegated to the Planning Section Chief; however, plan components are the responsibility of individual units.

**Topic** Incident Action Plan (cont'd)**Key Points**

Communications Unit Leader responsibilities:

- Be familiar with the specific goals of the incident response and their respective priorities - Incident Objectives sheet (ICS Form 202)
- Determine how many members of what units have thus far been assigned to anticipate equipment needs - ICS Form 203 - Organization Assignment List
- Identify the frequencies already assigned to specific units so that the Incident Communications Plan can be constructed around them – ICS Form 204 - Assignment List
- Review and maintain the ICS Form 205 - Incident Radio Communications Plan which provides the major operational and command frequencies for the incident
- Review the ICS Form 206 - Medical Plan, which contains information such as telephone numbers and frequencies that, if not already assigned, the Communications Unit Leader must have input on
- Review the Air Operations Summary (ICS Form 220), which contains the local air frequencies, some of which the Communications Unit Leader must assign, and some of which are assigned by the FAA and cannot be altered
- Review other documents, such as the IMT and Ops Section organizational charts, the safety message and information on the ICP such as traffic patterns and general layout

**Topic** Intra-IMT Coordination

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**Key Points**

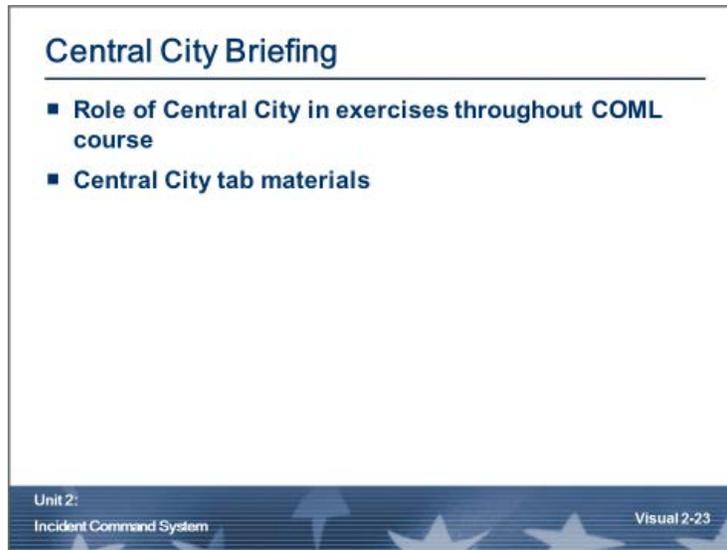
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The Communications Unit Leader must coordinate with:

- Incident Commander (IC): If the incident does not have an Operations Section Chief, the Communications Unit Leader will work primarily with the Incident Commander to coordinate placement of equipment and facilities
  - The IC's incident objectives drive the tactics, which drives the Communications Plan
- Operations Section Chief (OSC): The Operations Section Chief provides numbers and types of work assignments involved with operations
  - He or she provides an estimated amount of radio traffic for each assignment and identifies any existing radio issues
- Planning Section Chief (PSC): The Planning Section Chief provides an IAP development and meeting schedule to the Communications Unit Leader
- Safety Officer (SOFR): The primary coordination with the Safety Officer involves ensuring that communications are safely and fully provided, given the limitations of hardware and software
- Finance/Administration Section Chief (FSC): The Finance Section Chief identifies any spending limitations that may affect the acquisition of communication resources
- Facilities Unit Leader (FACL): The Facilities Unit Leader provides workspace for the Communication Unit
- Supply Unit Leader (SPUL): The Supply Unit Leader orders and receives the communications equipment and personnel for the incident

**Topic** Central City Briefing

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**Key Points**

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Central City tab is located between Units 2 and 3. It includes:

- Central City Overview
- ICS Form 217A - Communications Resource Availability Form
- Urban Train Derailment Narrative
- Central City Train Derailment IAP

Students will refer to this tab in future exercises.

## Topic

Exercise 2

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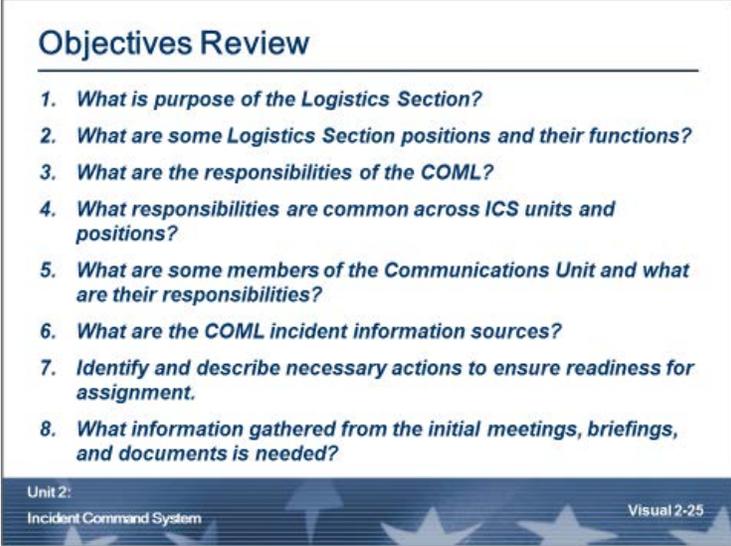
**Key Points**

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This exercise is scheduled to last approximately 30 minutes, involving the instructor reading from a script involving the train derailment scenario that provides incomplete information and students asking questions at the end. Based on this information the students will then discuss the significance of the information received and what conclusions to draw (students will fill out an ICS Form 201).

**Topic** Objectives Review

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A slide titled "Objectives Review" with a list of eight questions. The slide has a blue header and footer. The footer contains the text "Unit 2: Incident Command System" on the left and "Visual 2-25" on the right.

**Objectives Review**

1. *What is purpose of the Logistics Section?*
2. *What are some Logistics Section positions and their functions?*
3. *What are the responsibilities of the COML?*
4. *What responsibilities are common across ICS units and positions?*
5. *What are some members of the Communications Unit and what are their responsibilities?*
6. *What are the COML incident information sources?*
7. *Identify and describe necessary actions to ensure readiness for assignment.*
8. *What information gathered from the initial meetings, briefings, and documents is needed?*

Unit 2:  
Incident Command System

Visual 2-25

**Key Points**

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**Unit Terminal Objectives**

- At the end of this unit, students will be able to describe the function and components of the Logistics Section and the Communications Unit
- The student will also be able to describe the actions and considerations necessary to mobilize for an incident and gain situational awareness

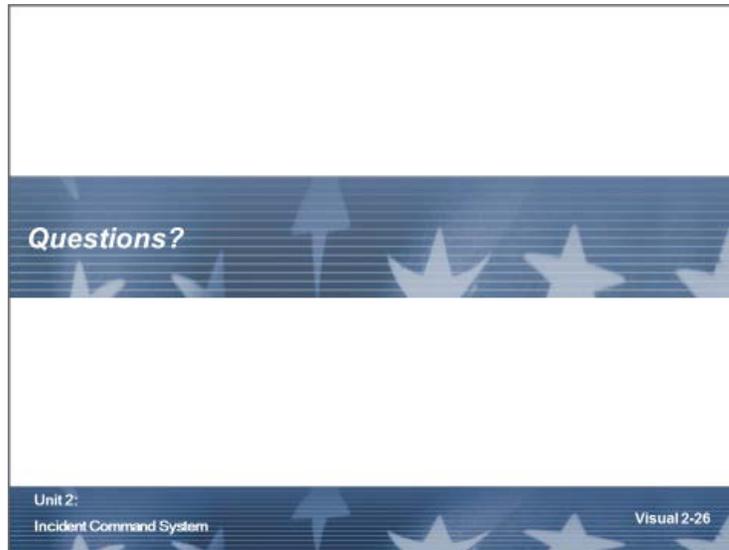
**Unit Enabling Objectives**

- Define the purpose of the Logistics Section
- Describe the Logistics Section positions and their functions
- Describe the responsibilities of the Communications Unit
- Identify and explain common responsibilities of ICS personnel and unit leaders
- Identify responsibilities of the Communications Unit Leader
- Identify Communications Unit Leader incident information sources
- Identify and describe necessary actions to ensure readiness for assignment
- Describe the information gathered from the initial meetings, briefings, and documents

Topic

Questions?

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Key Points

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