UNIT 3: MAJOR AND/OR COMPLEX INCIDENT/EVENT MANAGEMENT

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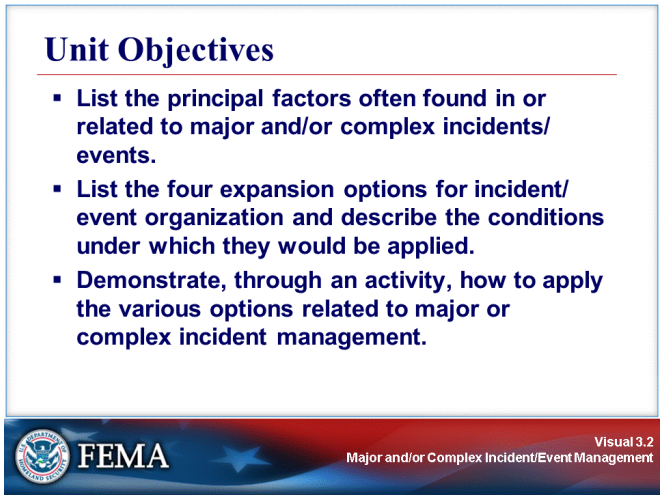
Visuals



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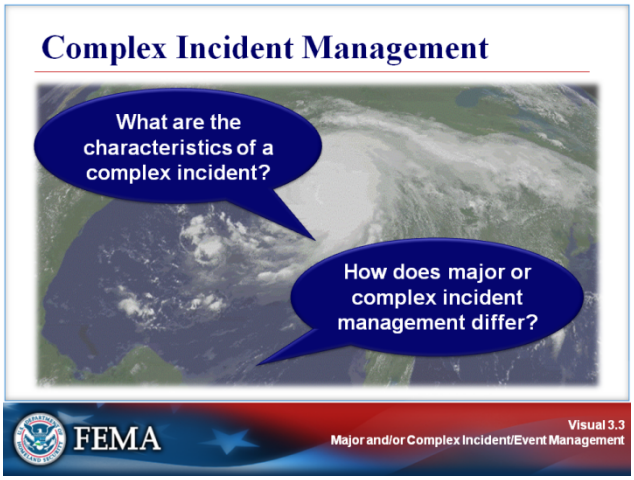

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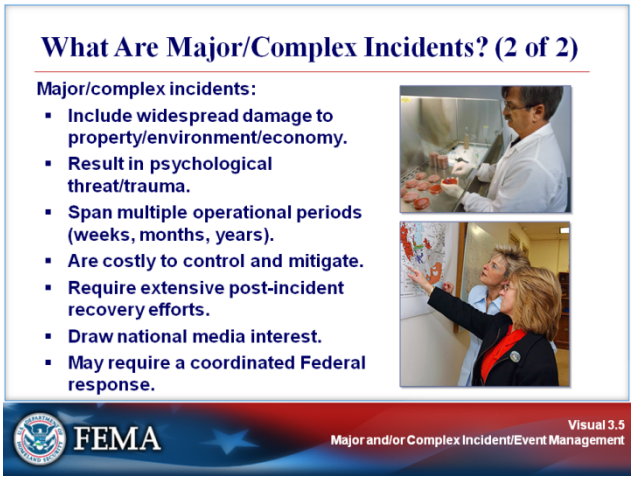


View the job aid on the next page.

Your Notes

Job Aid: Major/Complex Incidents: Overview

Incidents Requiring Coordinated Federal Response

The types of incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response are described below.

- The resources of State, tribal, and local authorities are overwhelmed or are expected to be and Federal assistance has been requested by the appropriate State authorities.

  Examples include:

  - Major disasters or emergencies as defined under the Stafford Act.

  - Catastrophic incidents. A catastrophic incident is any natural or manmade incident, including terrorism, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions.

- More than one Federal department or agency has become substantially involved in responding to an incident.

  Examples include:

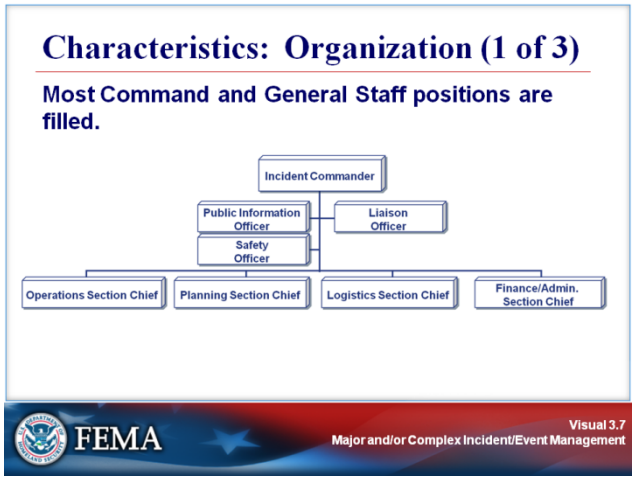
  - Credible threats, indications, or warnings of imminent terrorist attack, or acts of terrorism directed domestically against the people, property, environment, or political or legal institutions of the United States or its territories or possessions.

  - Threats or incidents related to high-profile, large-scale events that present high-probability targets such as National Special Security Events (NSSEs) and other special events as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with other Federal departments and agencies.

- A Federal department or agency acting under its own authority has requested the assistance of the Secretary of Homeland Security.

- The President has directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate the Federal response.

Visuals



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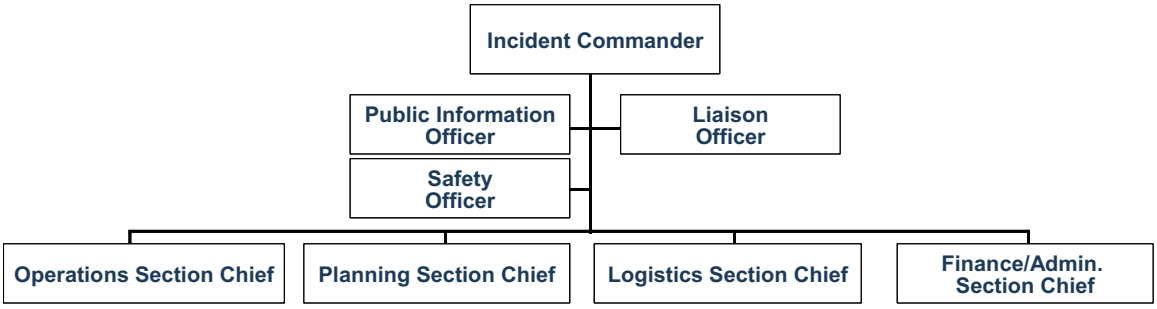

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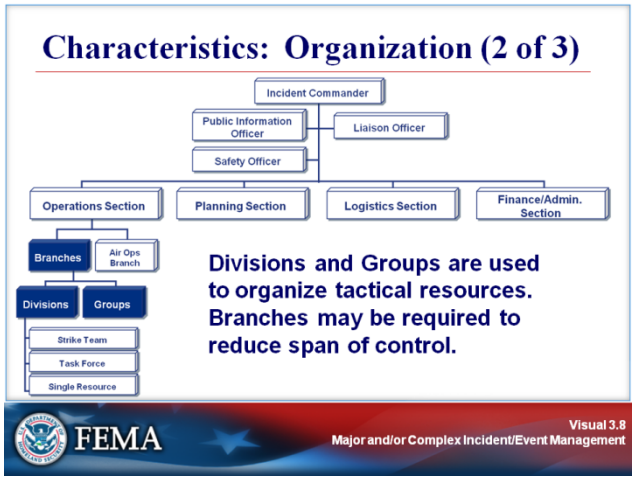

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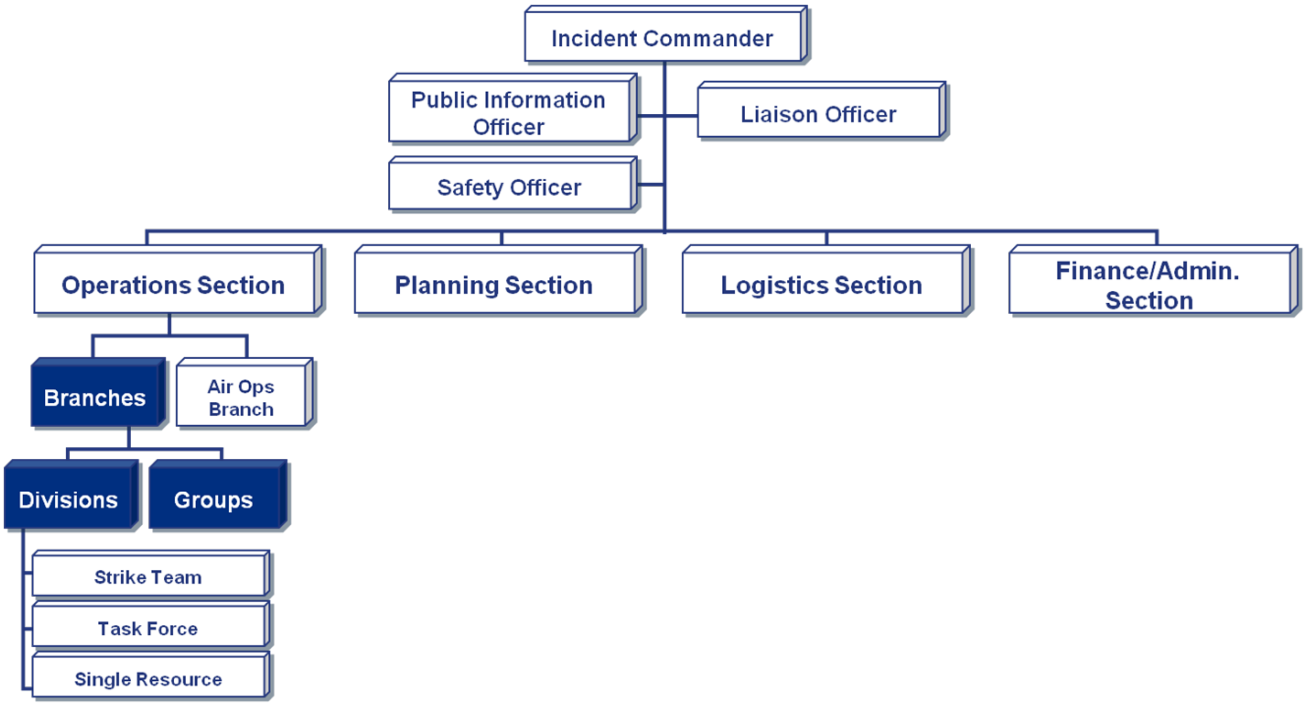

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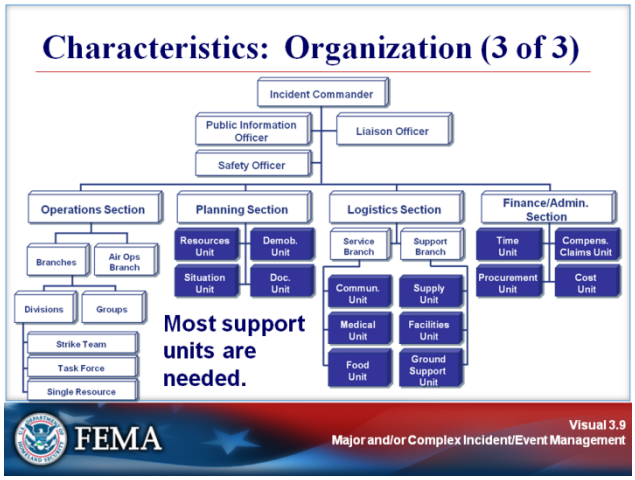

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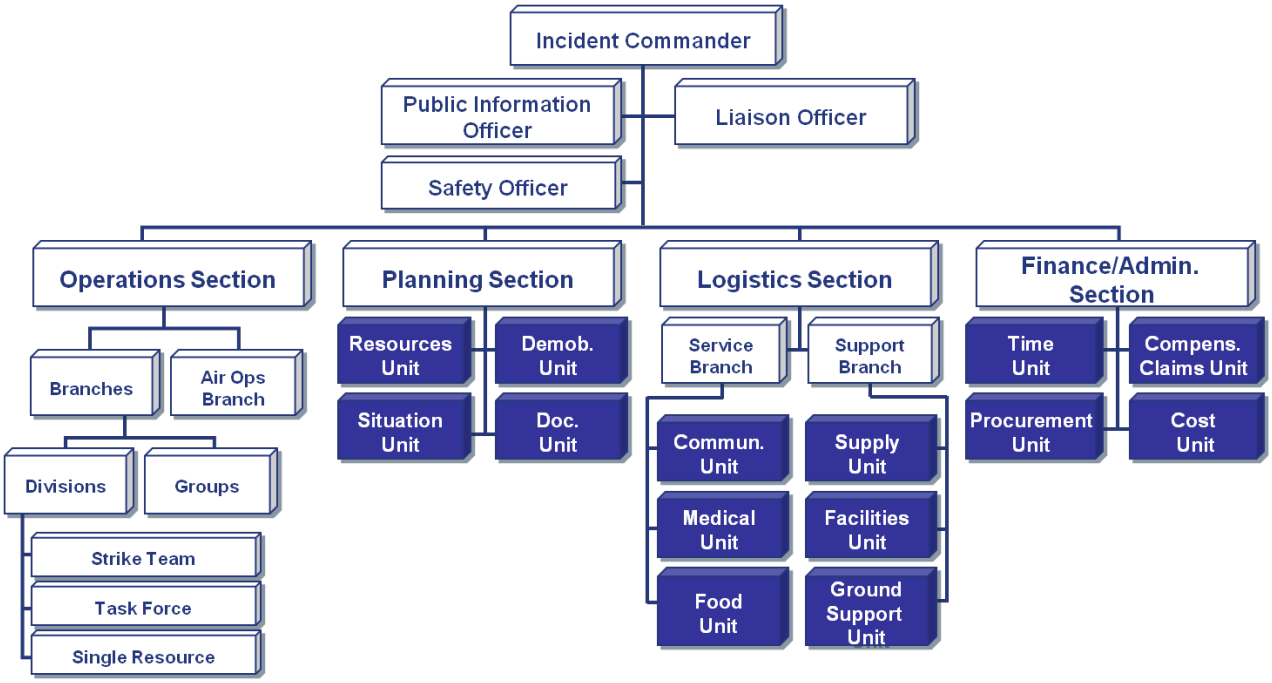

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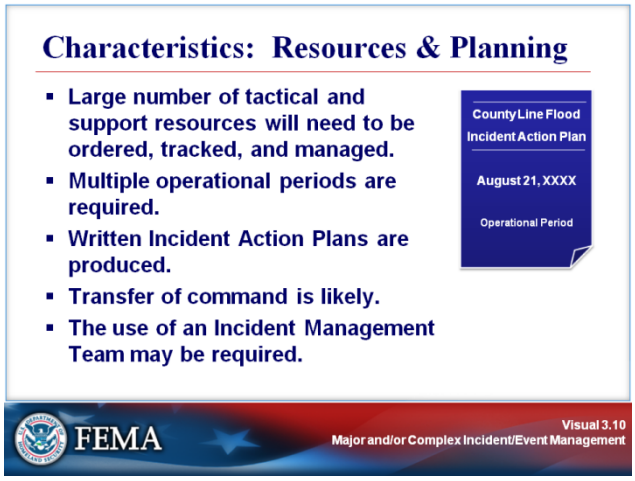

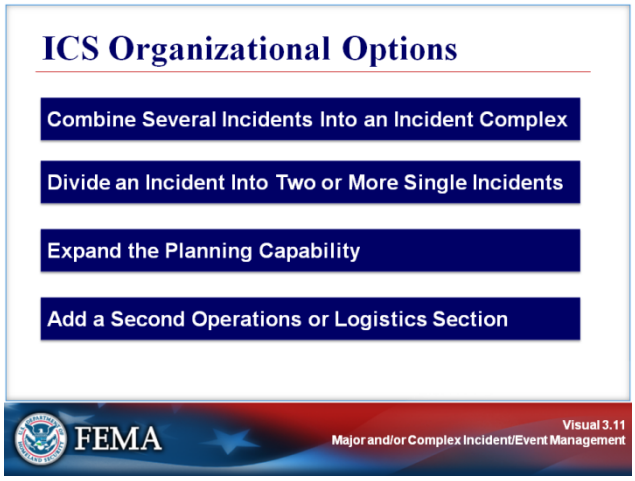

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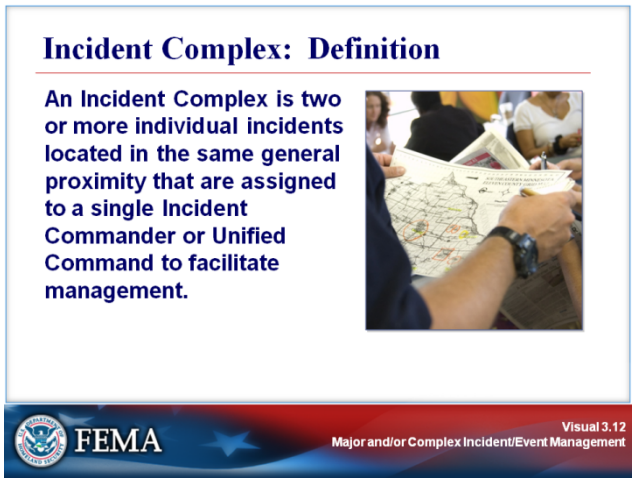

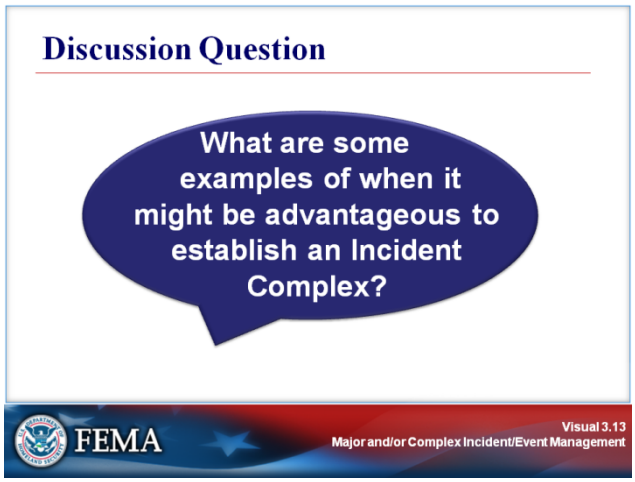

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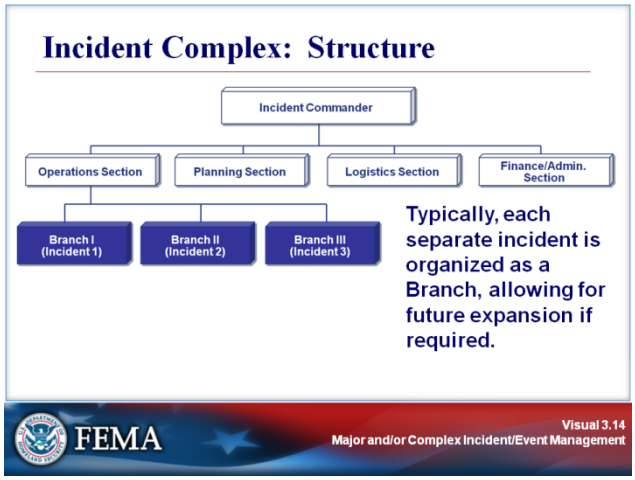


View the job aid on the next page.

Your Notes

Job Aid: Option 1: Establishing an Incident Complex

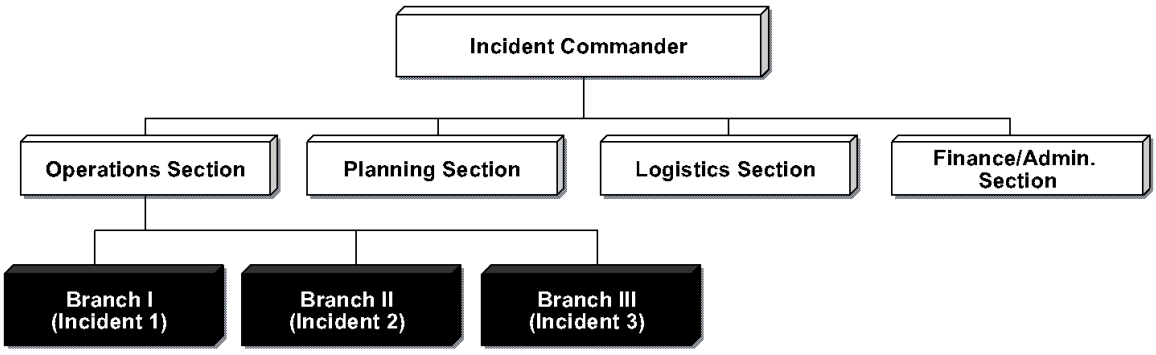
An Incident Complex is two or more individual incidents in the same general proximity that are assigned to a single Incident Commander or Unified Command to manage.

ICS Organizational Strategy

There are several options for managing major or complex incidents. When several incidents occur within the same general proximity and planning, logistics, and finance/administration activities can be adequately and more efficiently provided by a single management team, the incidents might be organized into an Incident Complex.

When several incidents are organized into an Incident Complex, the general guideline is that the individual incidents become Branches within the Operations Section of the Incident Complex structure.

Typically, each separate incident is organized as a Branch, allowing for future expansion if required. Using Branches allows for more flexibility to establish Divisions or Groups if required later. Also, because Divisions and Groups already may have been established at each of the incidents, the same basic structure can be maintained below the Branch level within the Incident Complex.



When To Use It

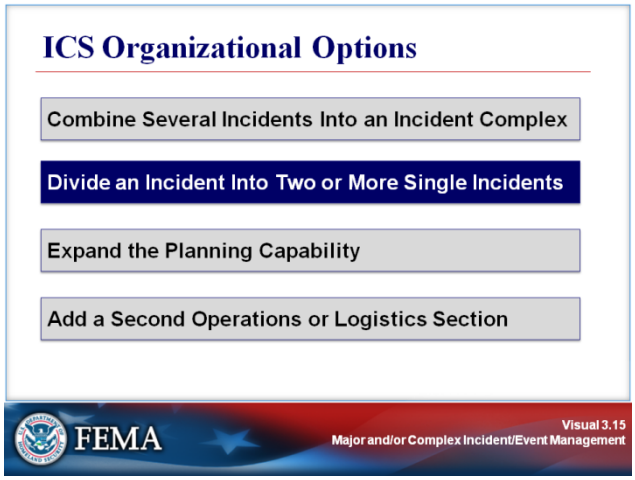
An Incident Complex may be formed when:

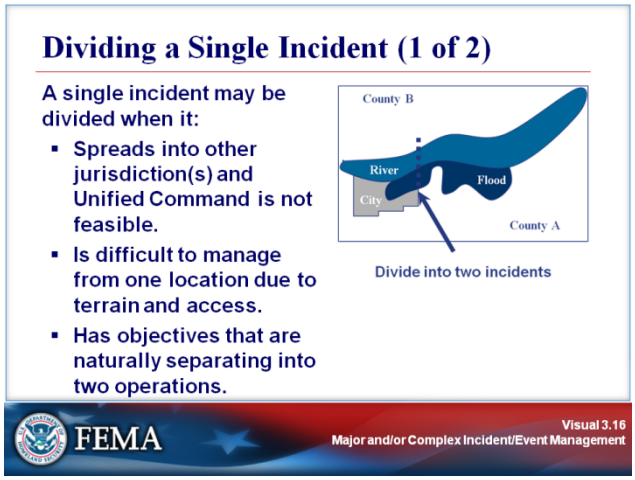
- There are many separate incidents occurring close together.
- One incident is underway and other, smaller incidents occur in the same proximity.
- Management efficiencies can be attained by developing an Incident Complex.

Guidelines for Use

- The incidents must be close enough to each other to be managed by the same Incident Management Team.
- Some staff and/or logistics support economies could be achieved through a combined management approach.
- The number of overall incidents within the agency or jurisdiction requires consolidations wherever possible to conserve staff and reduce costs.
- Planning, logistics, and finance/administration activities can be adequately provided by a single management team.

Visuals





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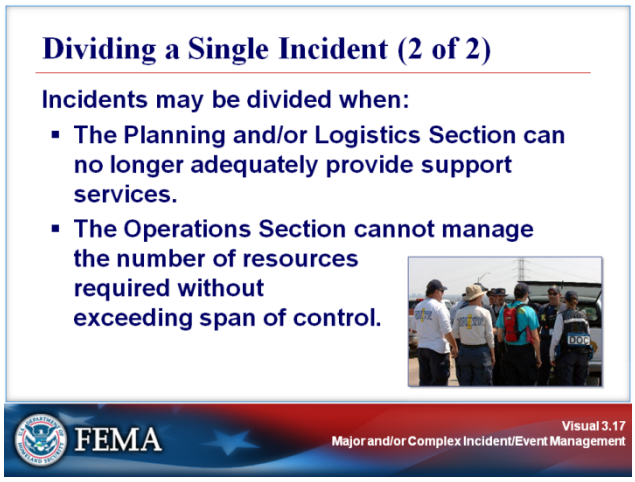
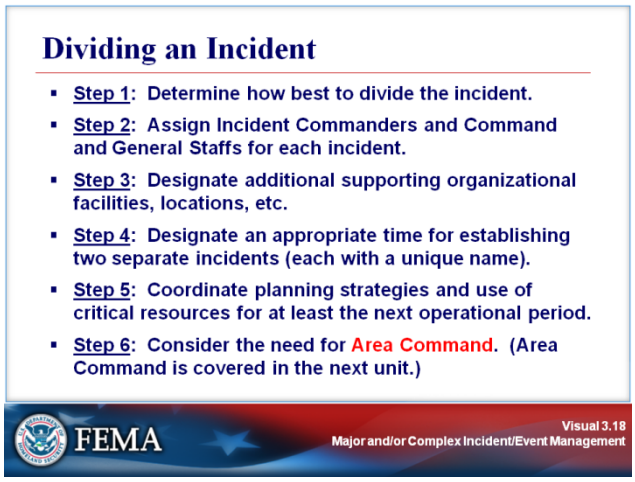




Your Notes

View the job aid on the next page.

Job Aid: Option 2: Dividing a Single Incident

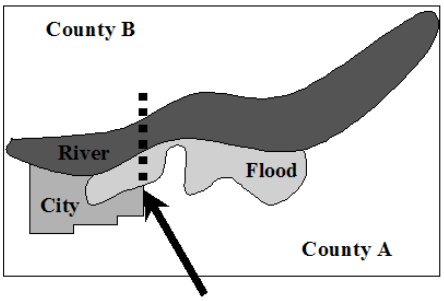
An incident that has become so large that it cannot be managed effectively by a single Unified Command structure or that spreads across multiple jurisdictions may be divided.

ICS Organizational Strategy

A single incident may be divided when it:

- **Spreads into other jurisdiction(s) and Unified Command is not feasible.**

  For example, a flooding situation that continues to expand into low-lying areas downstream may be divided by jurisdiction. Although Unified Command would still be the first choice, it is not always feasible.



Divide into two incidents

- **Is difficult to manage from one location due to terrain and access.**

  For example, an incident such as an earthquake or wildland fire, where terrain and access affect operational or logistical mobility and the ability to manage from one location, may be divided geographically.

- **Has objectives that are naturally separating into two operations.**

  For example, a bioterrorism incident that includes immediate public health objectives and longer-term investigation objectives may be divided into two operations. Again, Unified Command would still be the first choice.

In addition to the characteristics of the incident itself, management issues also may make it advisable to divide an incident. Dividing an incident should be considered if two or more Sections are overtaxed due to the size of the incident. Examples include when:

- The Planning Section, even with additional resources, can no longer adequately provide planning services because of:
  - The size of the incident.
  - The varying objectives and strategies needed.

- The Logistics Section can no longer, or will soon not be able to, serve the widespread facilities and operations from a single Incident Base.

- The Operations Section cannot manage the number of resources required without exceeding span of control.

Job Aid: Option 2: Dividing a Single Incident (Continued)

Dividing an Incident

- **Step 1:** Determine how best to divide the incident.

  This division could be done in several ways, depending upon:
  - Terrain and access considerations.
  - Locations of future resource and logistical support.
  - Jurisdictional/administrative boundaries.
  - Current Operations Section structure (Branches, Divisions, etc.).

- **Step 2:** Assign Incident Commanders and Command and General Staffs for each incident.

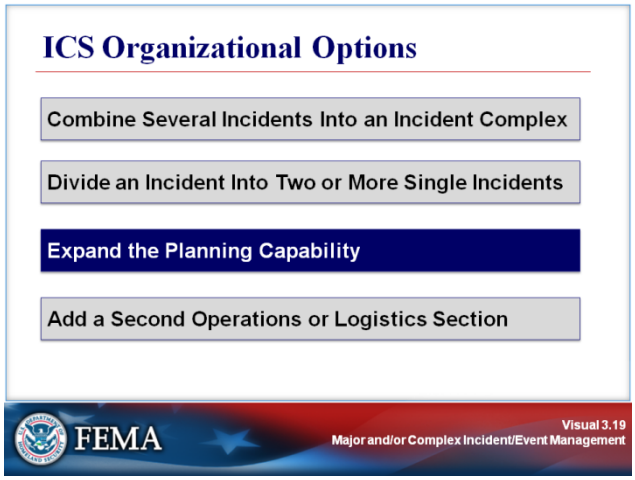
- **Step 3:** Designate additional supporting organizational facilities, locations, etc.

- **Step 4:** Designate an appropriate time for establishing two separate incidents (each with a unique name).

- **Step 5:** Coordinate planning strategies and use of critical resources for at least the next operational period.

- **Step 6:** Consider the need for Area Command.

Visuals



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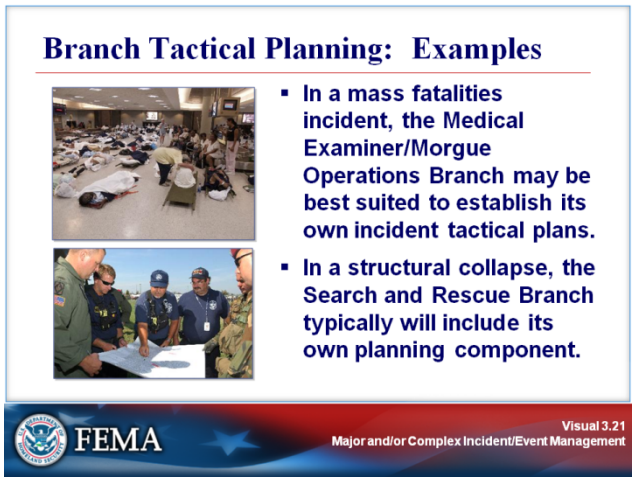

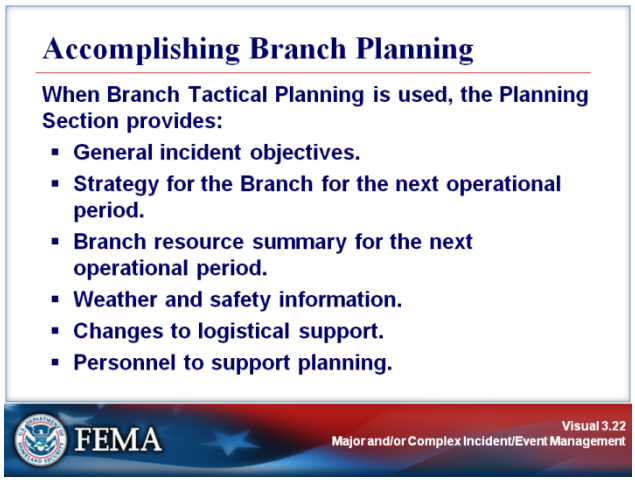

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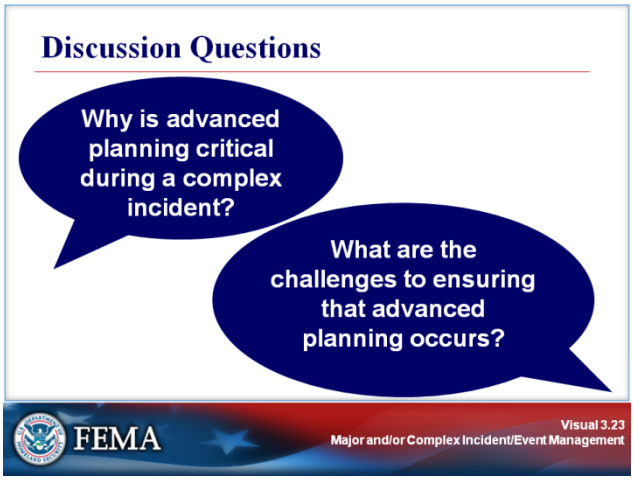

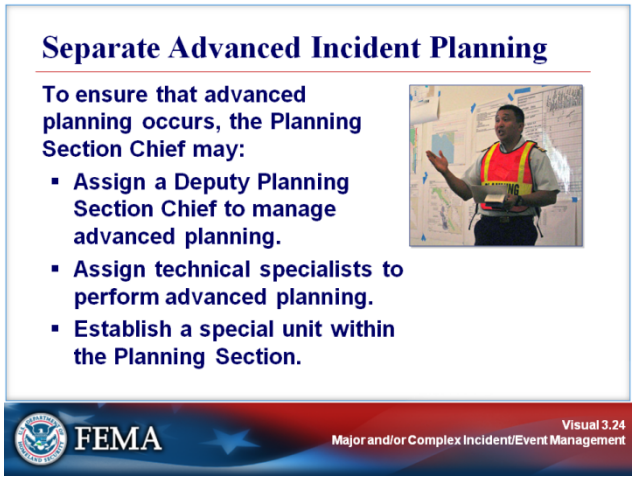

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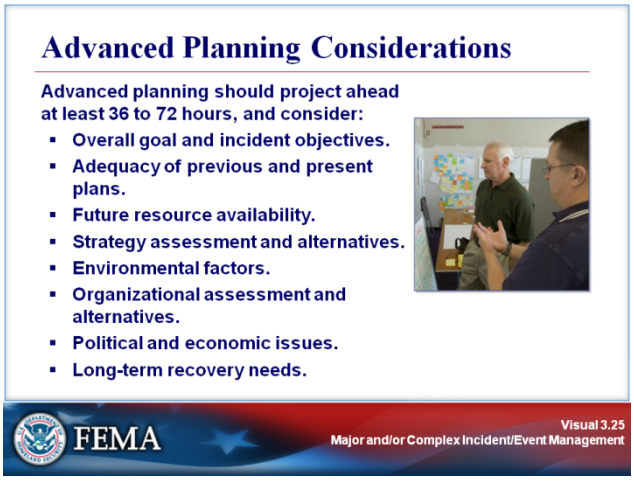


View the job aid on the next page.

Your Notes

Job Aid: Option 3: Expanding the Planning Capability at an Incident

Some incidents are so complex that the planning function must be enhanced or expanded. For example, cascading events may make managing the response more difficult. Planning is required to project the risk of cascading events. It may also be difficult to make cost-effective resource management decisions without advanced planning. The consequences of poor resource management decisions could be unnecessary loss of life and property.

Expanding the planning capability at an incident may take several forms, including:
- Branch Tactical Planning.
- Separating advanced incident planning from the day-to-day planning process.

The addition of an Information and Intelligence Function is another option for expanding planning capability for a complex event or incident.

Branch Tactical Planning

Branch Tactical Planning is not a new concept. It means that the Operations Section at the Branch level develops the detailed action plans, and the Planning Section provides support and coordination.

For example, Branch Tactical Planning is often used in search and rescue operations, when detailed tactical assignments are developed at the Branch Director level. In situations like this, the Planning Section provides support to the Branch Director.

Branch Tactical Planning: When To Use It

Tactical planning at the Branch level may be used when:
- The incident becomes so large that there is no single set of objectives that would logically pertain to the entire incident.
- Special technical expertise is needed for planning.
- It is not otherwise feasible to prepare and distribute the incident plan within the required timeframe.

The following are examples of when Branch Tactical Planning may be implemented:
- In a mass fatalities incident, when the Medical Examiner/Morgue Operations Branch may be best suited to establish its own incident tactical plans.
- In a structural collapse, when the Search and Rescue Branch typically will include its own planning component.

Job Aid: Option 3: Expanding the Planning Capability at an Incident (Continued)

Branch Tactical Planning: ICS Organizational Strategy

When Branch Tactical Planning is used, the Planning Section provides:
- General incident objectives.
- Strategy for the Branch for the next operational period.
- Branch resource summary for the next operational period.
- Weather and safety information.
- Changes to logistical support.
- Personnel to support planning.

With this information, individual Branches can perform detailed action planning. The Planning Section would have to ensure that necessary inter-Branch coordination took place wherever necessary.

Additional resource requirements over those authorized would have to be made known to the Operations Section Chief.

A modification to this model could be accomplished by limiting Branch Tactical Planning to certain Branches (e.g., those with less complex situations). Other Branches would continue under a central planning structure. In either case, the Planning Section would provide each Branch doing individual Branch planning with the required support in terms of personnel and other support resources to get the planning accomplished.

Separate Advanced Incident Planning

One of the functions of the Planning Section is to assess all available information and to provide periodic predictions on incident potential. The Planning Section is also responsible for developing any contingency plans that may be required.

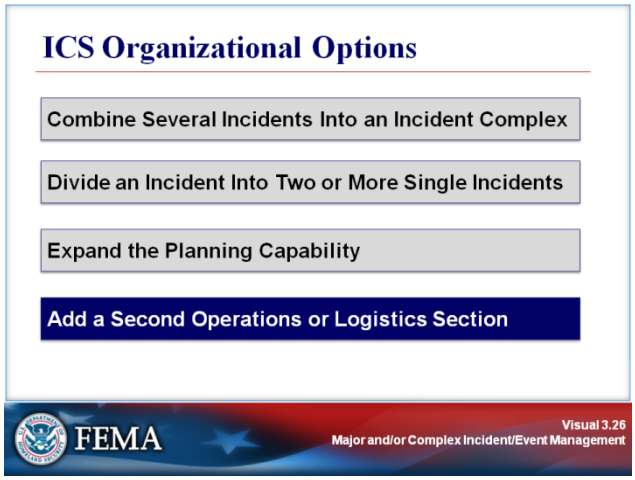
To ensure that advanced planning occurs, the Planning Section Chief may:
- Assign a Deputy Planning Section Chief to manage advanced planning.
- Assign technical specialists to perform advanced planning.
- Establish a special unit within the Planning Section.

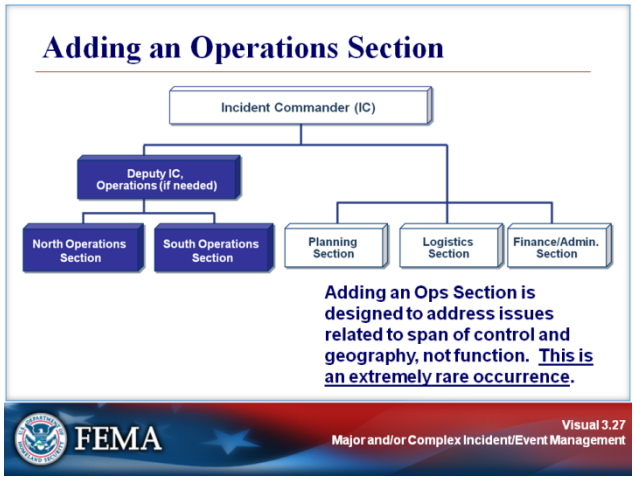
Advanced Incident Planning: Considerations

The goal of this advanced planning effort is to provide the Planning Section Chief and the Unified Command with a range of alternatives related to management of the incident beyond the next operational period.

Advanced planning should project ahead at least 36 to 72 hours, and consider:
- Overall goal and incident objectives.
- Adequacy of previous and present plan.
- Future resource availability.
- Strategy assessment and alternatives.
- Environmental factors.
- Organizational assessment and alternatives.
- Political and economic issues.
- Long-term recovery needs.

Visuals





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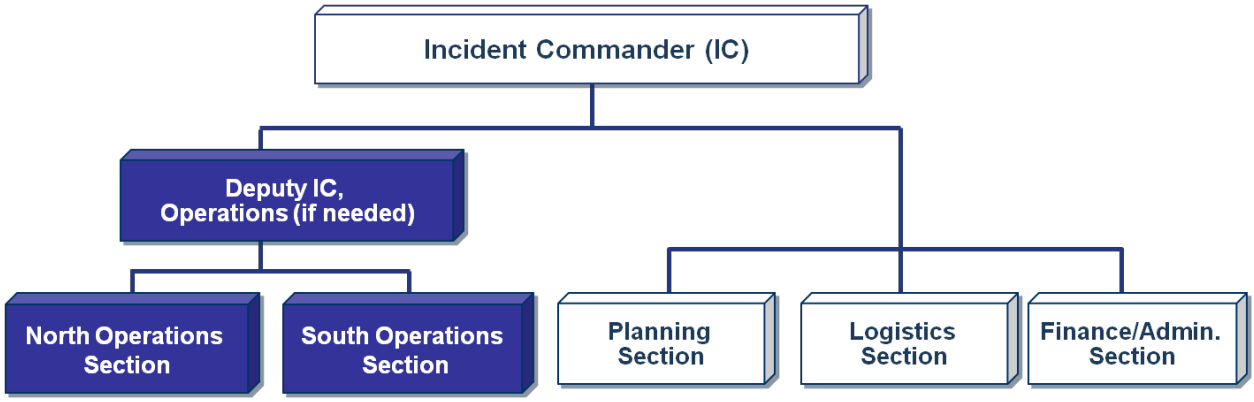

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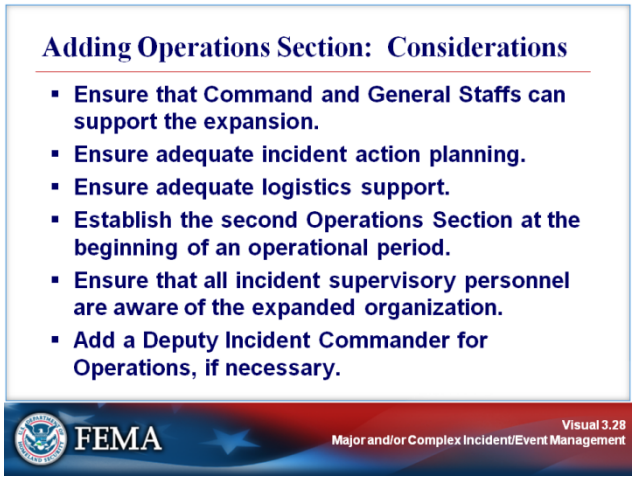

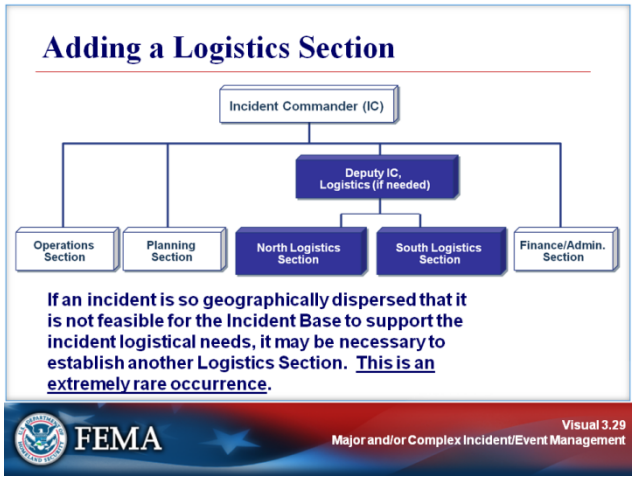

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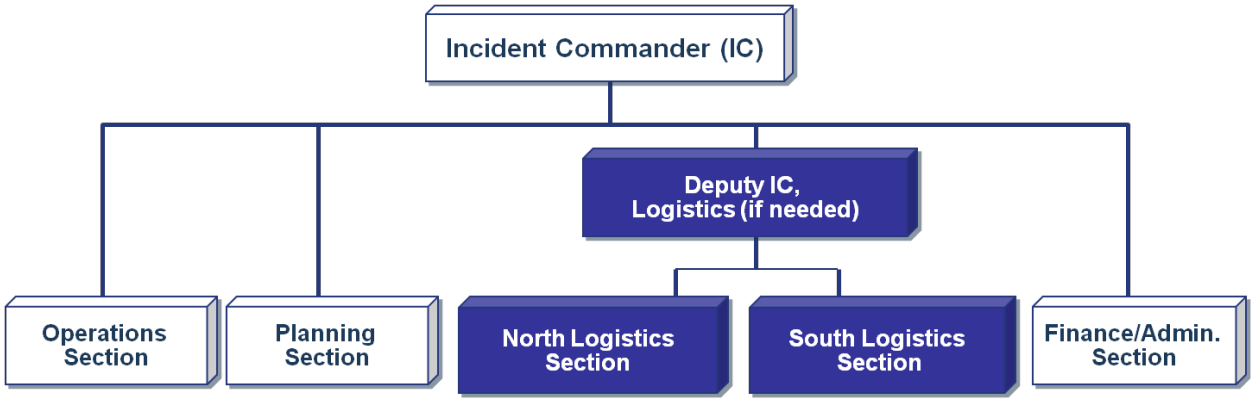

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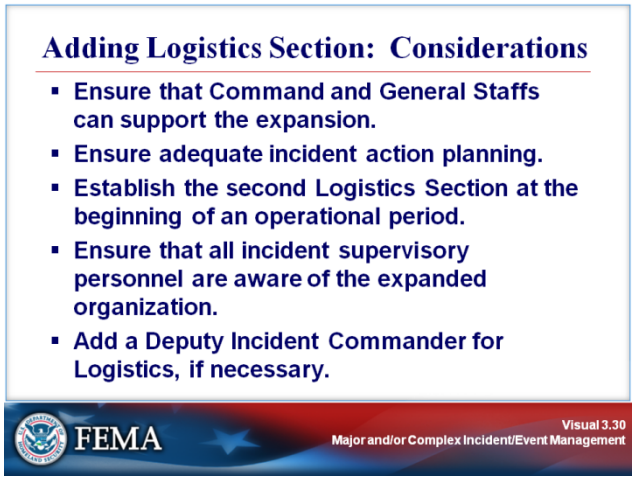

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Your Notes

Job Aid: Option 4: Creating Additional Operations or Logistics Sections

While not common, it is possible to establish a second Operations or Logistics Section within a single incident. This situation may arise when the incident is operating under Unified Command; however, Unified Command is not a requirement.

When To Add Operations or Logistics Sections

Operations Section. An additional Operations Section should be added in an incident in which the sheer volume of resources required means that the Operations Section cannot be further expanded without exceeding ICS span-of-control guidelines and it is not possible to establish separate incidents. Examples of situations where two Operations Sections may be established include:

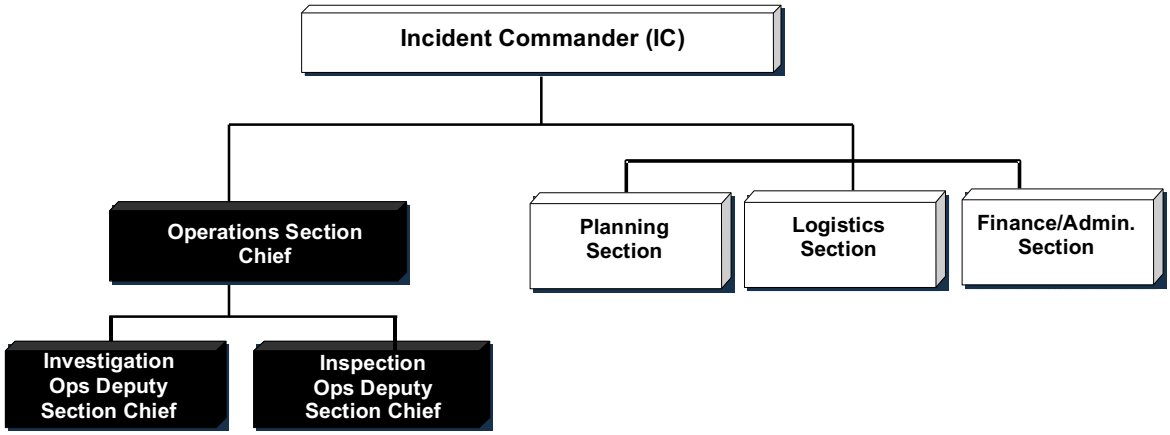
- Earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or flooding that covers several political jurisdictions.
- A major wildland fire that continues to expand.
- A major spill in a waterway.

Logistics Section. If an incident is so geographically dispersed that it is not feasible for the Incident Base to support the incident logistical needs, it may be necessary to establish another Logistics Section.

ICS Organizational Strategy

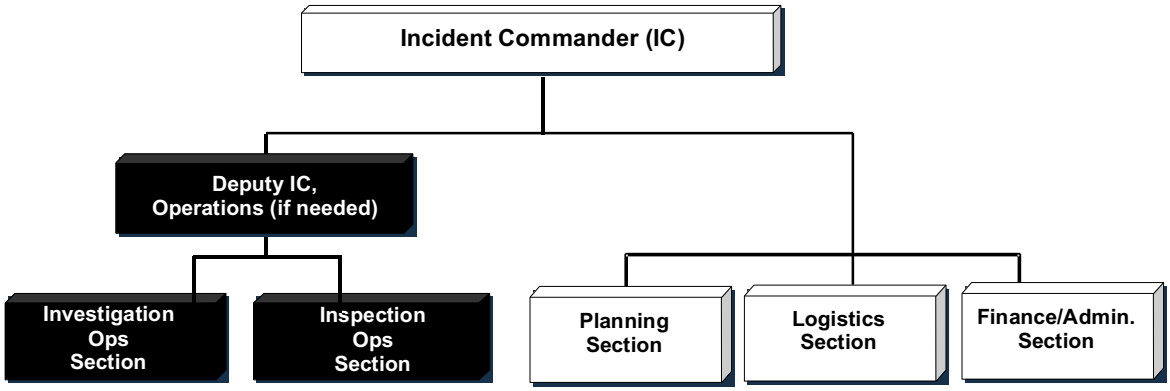
Operations Organization. If the organization grows so that it is not desirable to expand the Operations Section further, a second Operations Section may be established.

A more commonly used solution is to add Deputy Operations Section Chiefs under the Operations Section Chief to manage respective areas—for example, Investigation and Inspection Deputy Operations Section Chiefs reporting to the Operations Section Chief as shown in the diagram below.



Job Aid: Option 4: Creating Additional Operations or Logistics Sections (Continued)

Another option would be to split the Operations Section into Investigation and Inspection Sections, if needed under a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations, as shown below.



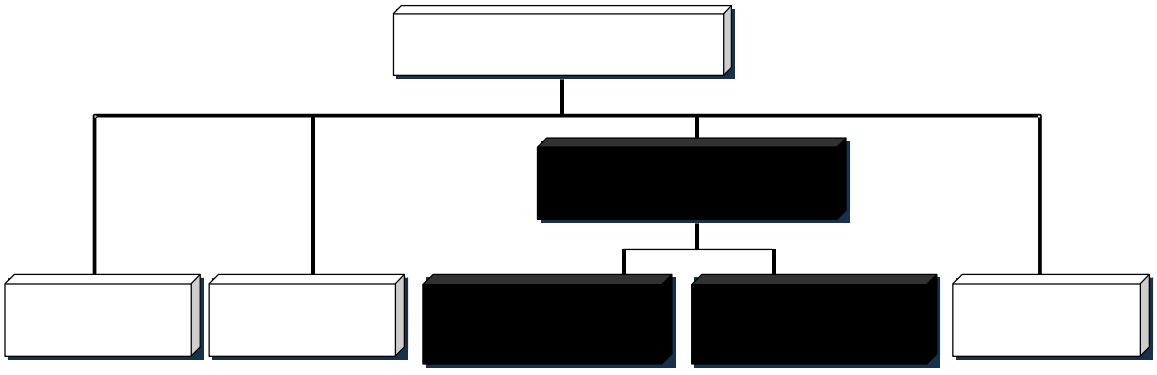
The Deputy Incident Commander for Operations or Deputy Operations Section Chiefs:

- Have the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of both the original and the additional Operations Sections are fully coordinated with each other and with other Sections.
- Are normally collocated with the Incident Commander at the Incident Command Post.

Separate Staging Areas are established to support each Operations Section.

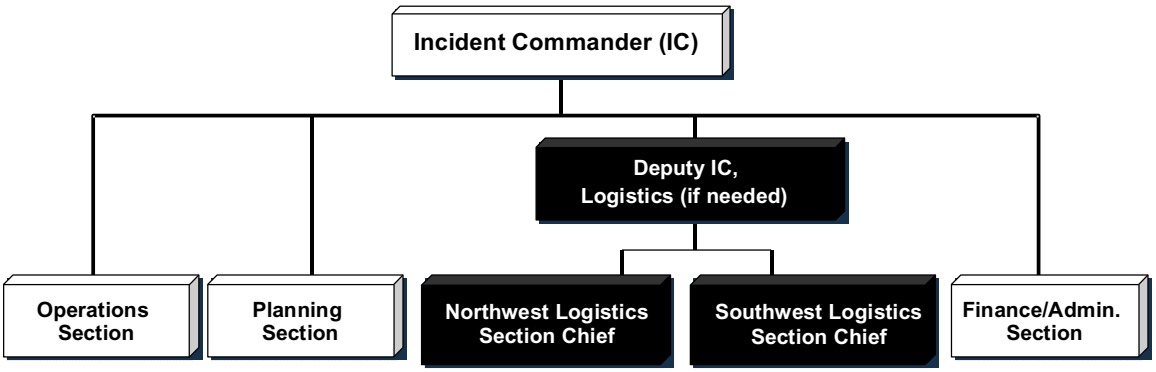
Logistics Organization. A second Logistics Section may be added in a geographically dispersed incident.

In this diagram, Northwest and Southwest Logistics Sections report to the Logistics Section Chief.



Job Aid: Option 4: Creating Additional Operations or Logistics Sections (Continued)

In this diagram, Northwest and Southwest Logistics Section Chiefs report to the Deputy IC for Logistics.



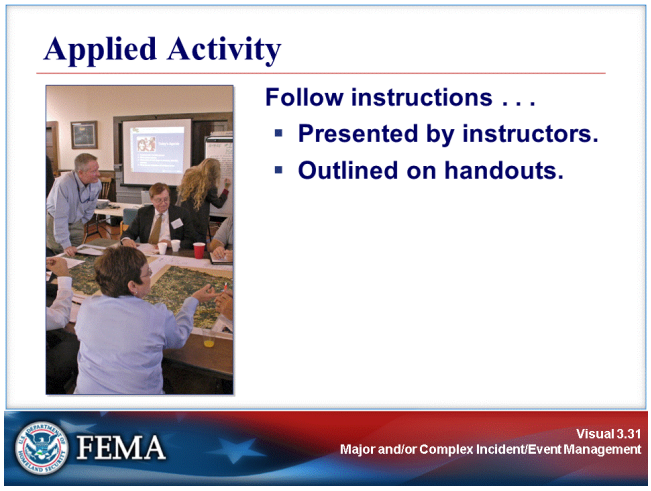
- Similar to the example with the Operations Section, a Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics could be added to the command structure if necessary to ensure coordination of the two Logistics efforts.
- The Deputy Incident Commander for Logistics would normally function from the Incident Command Post, while the two Logistics Section Chiefs could operate from separate Incident Bases. The Deputy Incident Commander would ensure that all necessary coordination was taking place between the two Logistics Sections.
- An Incident Base for each Logistics Section could be established. Also, additional camps supported by each Base could be established.

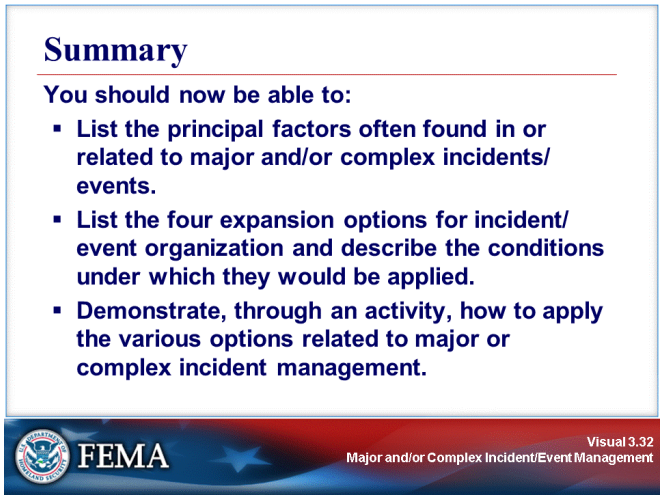
Considerations

The considerations for adding an Operations or Logistics Section include:

- Ensure that Command and General Staffs can support the expansion.
- Ensure there is adequate incident action planning.
- Ensure there is adequate logistics support for an additional Operations Section.
- Establish the second Operations or Logistics Section at the beginning of an operational period.
- Ensure that all incident supervisory personnel are aware of the expanded organization.
- Add a Deputy Incident Commander for Operations or Logistics or add Deputy Operations or Logistics Section Chiefs if necessary.

Visuals





Your Notes

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