Unit 4: Overview of the Check-in Function

STUDENT GUIDE

Objectives

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

• Complete the resource check-in process

• Identify potential check-in locations

• List and describe the kinds of information collected on ICS Form 211, Incident Check-in List

• Identify methods for reporting check-in information

• Given a scenario, complete an ICS Form 211, Incident Check-in List

Methodology

This unit uses lecture, an exercise, and discussion.

Knowledge of unit content will be evaluated through practical exercises or simulations and the administration of the Final Exam upon completion of the course.

The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the role that the Check-in function plays in ICS and to impart an understanding of the tasks involved in information gathering, organization, and distribution.

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	1 hour 20 minutes
Exercise 3	45 minutes
Total Time	**2 hours 5 minutes**

Topic   Overview of the Check-in Function

Key Points

S c o p e   S t a t e m e n t

Through this unit, students will gain a general understanding of the Check-in function. Through discussion of the check-in process and information gathering, organization, and distribution, students will gain insight into the pivotal role that the Check-in function plays in the ICS.

Topic   Unit Terminal Objective

Unit Terminal Objective

Complete the resource check-in process.

Unit 4:
Status/Check-In Function   Visual 4-2

Key Points

Unit Terminal Objective
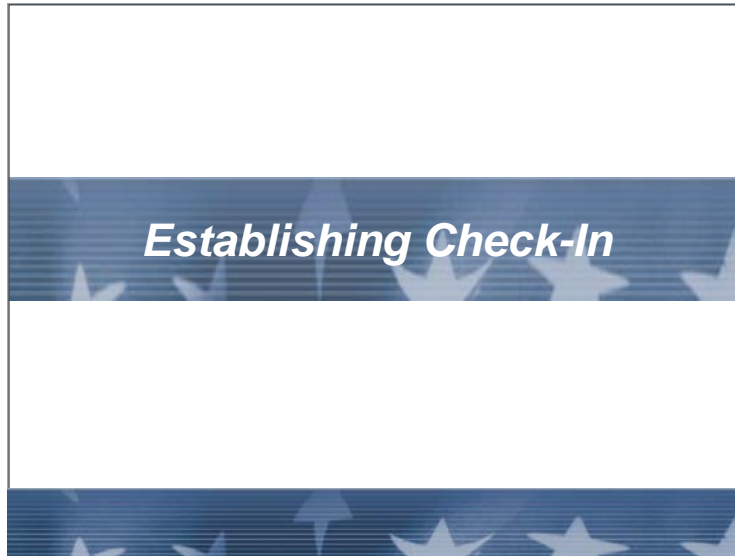
Complete the resource check-in process.

Remind students that the Final Exam questions are based on the Unit Enabling Objectives.

Unit Enabling Objectives

- Identify potential check-in locations

- List and describe the kinds of information collected on ICS Form 211, Incident Check-in List

- Identify methods for reporting check-in information

- Given a scenario, complete an ICS Form 211, Incident Check-in List

Topic   Establishing Check-in

Key Points

Establishing check-in:

Topic   Check-in

Key Points

The Resources Unit Leader and Status/Check-in Recorder play a key role in the success of the incident, and a large part of that role is check-in. Check-in sets the incident up for success or adversity, impacting the safety, finance, and record-keeping functions to name just a few.

The following is an example of the significance of check-in.

A small town had a major flood that caused $60 million in damages. The Federal disaster response called for a 75%/25% split in costs. The town's annual budget was only about $7 million, but they needed to contribute $15 million toward the disaster response. At check-in, every volunteer checked in. The town was able to use volunteer time as in-kind contributions. Volunteers were assigned a labor rate. These volunteer hours helped the town to make up their 25%. This was a huge help to a community in recovery, and it was the Status/Check-in Recorder's job to capture it.

Seeing that all incident resources are properly checked in is the first responsibility of the Resources Unit.

Check-in should be established as early as possible at the incident site.

Topic   Check-in Locations

Key Points

It is very important to clearly mark check-in locations with signs. The photos on this slide show two signs for the same check-in location—the photo on the left points to stairs that lead to the entrance; the photo on the right shows the signs on the entrance door.

Consider whether a Status/Check-in Recorder will be able to be at all check-in locations. If not, the Staging Area Manager or Division Supervisor may end up gathering check-in information. Regardless of staffing, the right questions must be asked.

The Resources Unit Leader should use all available resources:

• For example, the local Department of Transportation may have light-up message boards that could very clearly mark check-in locations, the Incident Command Post, and so forth

• The Resources Unit Leader or Status/Check-in Recorder could also use a marker board or spray paint on a large piece of plywood

Topic   Check-in Location Consideration

Key Points

On this map, there are a couple of Status/Check-in Recorder locations. The Status/Check-in Recorder should be next to the parking lot to catch responders right away. They shouldn't have to walk through the entire Incident Command Post to find the check-in station.

In this example, there is also a Status/Check-in Recorder by the helibase. That's a place that is often missed, and then those responders don't check in. They may never get to the Incident Command Post. There should be a check-in station positioned wherever there is an inflow of personnel, but this must be balanced with making sure that traffic coming onto the incident site is not disrupted.

Be flexible! Special situations may necessitate locating the check-in station away from the base.

Topic   ICS Form 211 – Incident Check-in List

ICS Form 211 – Check-In List

Key Points

ICS Form 211, Incident Check-in List:

Topic   ICS Form 211 – Incident Check-in List

Key Points

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

The Incident Check-in List is used for:

- Recording the arrival times of all overhead personnel and equipment

- Recording the initial location of personnel and equipment

- Supporting demobilization by recording the home base, method of travel, and so forth for all resources checking in

Topic   ICS Form 211 – Incident Check-in List (cont.)

Key Points

The Status/Check-in Recorder may have an ICS Form 211 for each type of resource, which should be noted in the top left-hand corner.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group publications catalogue has a color-coded booklet of ICS Form 211s. You could designate different colors to stand for different resources.

Some Resources Unit Leaders have a job aid with information that they want to be gathered at check-in. This helps to quickly bring new Status/Check-in Recorders, or others performing the check-in function, up to speed.

Some teams may have a computerized check-in process. Regardless of the method used, it is still important to determine what information must be gathered.

It is acceptable to skip lines as long as you are consistent. It can be difficult to write so small on the form, so find ways to be clear while using fewer words.

One way to check in Strike Teams is to abbreviate them as ST, then list the individual units that are part of the Strike Team, the Leader's name, and so forth. Check "yes" on the manifest and staple it to the check-in sheet. The manifest has all members of the Task Force (TF) listed. If there is no manifest, list each individual on the sheet.

Some teams create their own check-in list with information that they deem to be critical. For example, law enforcement may want to know the blood type of the responder. The

Status/Check-in Recorder can also cross off columns on the ICS Form 211 that are not needed and add space for critical information.

Order/Request number: The order/request number will be assigned by the ordering point for the incident in consultation with the Logistics Sections. A common system for creating this order/request number is to number them sequentially, using the following categories:

- O – Overhead

- E – Equipment

- C – Crews

- A – Aircraft

- S – Supplies

Topic   Resource Typing

Key Points

The purpose of resource typing is to define the resources. It may not tell you the exact sizes, but it will have a minimum.

Resource typing helps responders get the resources that they really need. Your definition of a Type 2 dozer may be different than what is in the definition. For example, they may go by the horsepower of the motor, when you go by something else.

Resources will work with the Supply Unit Leader on this. It is important to ask the Operations Section exactly what they are looking for: For example, a John Deere D60 is a different size than a D6. The Resources Unit Leader might add a separate note such as "must exceed D6" or "must have 15 gallon per minute or better pump." Understanding resource typing will help you get the resources that you really need.

Resource typing definitions provide Emergency Managers with the information that they need to request and receive resources during an incident.

Different organizations have different resource typing definitions. It is important to determine whether your jurisdiction has a resource typing system. An example of NIMS resource typing can be found at:
http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/ResourceMngmnt.shtm

Topic   Reporting Methods

Reporting Methods

- **Who needs information from the Status/Check-in Recorder?**
- **What should the Status/Check-in Recorder consider when reporting?**

Unit 4:
Status/Check-In Function   Visual 4-11

Key Points

Remember that the Status Check-in Recorder has to start a new form whenever a new form, such as the ICS Form 213, is sent to the Resources Unit.

Transmittal methods may vary depending on the incident situation and the needs. Some options are:

- Runner pick-up

- Radio

- Telephone or cell phone

- Computer or other electronic means

- Face-to-face at the Incident Command Post or base

It is important that everyone is on the same page and that the Staging Area Manager is giving the Operations Section the same information that the Status/Check-in Recorder is.

Topic   Self-Deployments

Key Points

Find out whether self-deployments are to be handled by Status/Check-in Recorders or the Liaison Officer. The Resources Unit Leader plays a major part in the determination of whether to keep self-deployments. The Status/Check-in Recorder has a responsibility to the Resources Unit Leader, depending on the parameters given in their work tasks.

Self-deployments may want to volunteer or charge for their services. It is important to know the process and the requirements for volunteer check-in. Find out the background and the expertise of the self-deployments. Do they bring something valuable that you could use?

Consider liability issues. You need to balance what they bring to the table with the potential liability.

Topic   Potential Pitfalls

Key Points

To avoid pitfalls, you may need to take some or all of the following actions:

- Reduce the number of check-in stations or order more people

- Be aware of staff personal space and supply needs

- Ensure that check-in stations operate efficiently

- Ensure that channels of communication are established

- Have an Equipment Manager inspect equipment prior to check-in

The Resources Unit Leader is not responsible for inspections. However, it is the RESL's responsibility to confirm or deny that the equipment has been checked in. For example, you need to inventory what's actually on an engine.
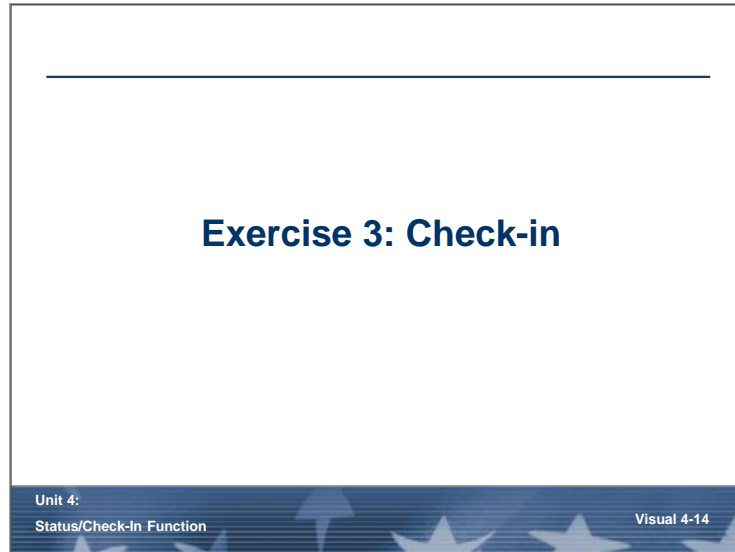
- Resources are discovered to be damaged upon arrival

Upon receipt of damaged resources, call in the responsible party at the incident site (for example, Ground Support or Air Operations) to conduct an inspection before checking in the resource. Then, the resource can be refused, avoiding potentially costly repairs.

- The Status/Check-in Recorder may also check the qualifications of arriving resources

  - There may be an insufficient number of Status/Check-in Recorders

- The span-of-control is too large

- Remote check-in

- There may be a breakdown in communications

- Self-deployments

Topic   Exercise 3: Check-in

Key Points

The purpose of Exercise 3 is to provide participants with an opportunity to begin tracking resources and to practice using two of the basic forms of documentation used in the Resources Unit (ICS Forms 201 and 211).

Topic   Objectives Review

Objectives Review

1. *What are some potential check-in locations?*

2. *What kinds of information are collected on the ICS Form 211 – Incident Check-in List?*

3. *What are some methods of reporting check-in information?*

Unit 4:
Status/Check-In Function   Visual 4-15

Key Points

U n i t   T e r m i n a l   O b j e c t i v e

Complete the resources check-in process.

U n i t   E n a b l i n g   O b j e c t i v e s

- Identify potential check-in locations

- List and describe the kinds of information collected on ICS Form 211, Check-in List

- Identify methods for reporting check-in information

- Given a scenario, complete an ICS Form 211, Check-in List