

**COMMAND:**

Incident Command has overall responsibility for the management of incident activity. Even if other functions are not filled, an Incident Commander will always be designated. The Incident Command function may be carried out in two ways:

1. Single Command
2. Unified Command

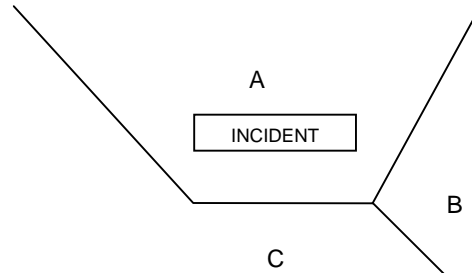
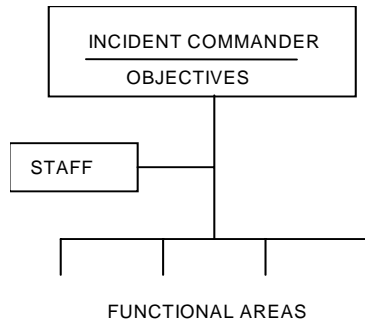
**Single Command - Incident Commander**

When an incident occurs within one jurisdiction, a single incident commander will typically manage the incident.

The Incident Commander prepares incident objectives, which provide the basis for the subsequent action planning. The Incident Commander approves the final action plan and approves all requests for ordering and releasing primary resources. The Incident Commander may have one or more deputies. The only ICS requirement regarding the use of a deputy, whether at the Incident Commander, Section, or Branch level is that the deputy must be fully qualified to assume the position. There are three primary reasons to designate a deputy Incident Commander:

1. To perform specific tasks as required by the Incident Commander.
2. To perform the incident command function in a relief capacity, e.g., to take over the next operational period. (In this case the deputy will assume the primary role.)
3. To represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

In a single jurisdiction incident where control is the primary responsibility of one agency, the deputy may be from the same agency as the Incident Commander. In a multi-jurisdictional incident or one that threatens to become multi-jurisdictional, an individual from the adjacent agency may fill the deputy position. More than one deputy may be involved. The example below depicts an incident with single Incident Command authority.



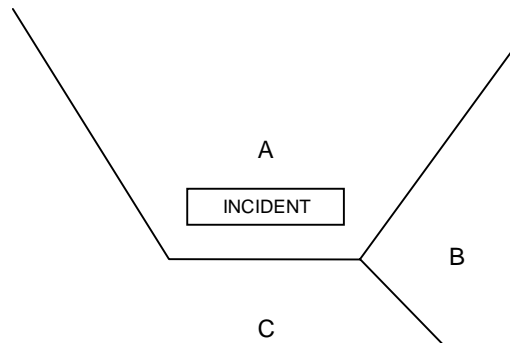
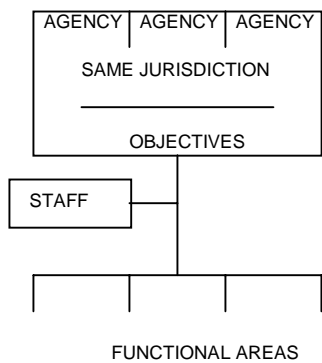
**Single Incident Command Structure**

Unified Command

A unified command is required when several agencies must manage an incident contained to one jurisdiction or when an incident affects multiple jurisdictions

— Single Jurisdiction/Multi Agency Incidents

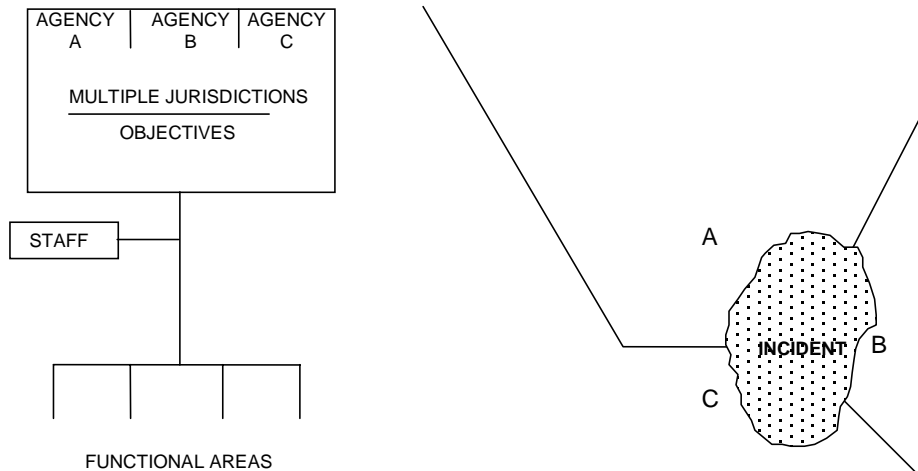
A Unified command is required when the incident is totally contained within a single jurisdiction, but more than one agency shares management responsibility because of the nature of the incident, the kinds or resources required, or statutory obligations. For example, if a passenger airliner crashes within a National Forest, fire, medical, aviation, and law enforcement agencies all have immediate but diverse objectives, abilities, and responsibilities. An example of a single jurisdictional command structure is shown below.



**Unified Command Structure**  
**Multi – Agency**

— Multi - Jurisdictional Incidents

A Unified command is required when the incident is multi-jurisdictional in nature, such as, a major wildland fire or a large earthquake. An example of a multi-jurisdictional, unified command structure is shown below.



**Unified Command Structure**  
**Multi - Jurisdictional**

In a unified command structure, individuals designated by their jurisdiction (or by departments within a single jurisdiction) must jointly determine objectives, strategies, and priorities. As in a single command structure, the Operations Section Chief will have the responsibility for implementation of the plan. The determination of which agency (or department) the Operations Section Chief will represent must be made by mutual agreement of the Unified command. The Operations Section Chief may be chosen on the basis of greatest jurisdictional involvement, number of resources involved, existing statutory authority, or by mutual respect for an individual's qualifications.

### Command Staff

Command staff positions are established for key activities that are not part of the line organization and are the responsibility of the Incident Commander. In the Incident Command System, three specific staff positions are identified:

- Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer

Assistant positions may be required depending on the nature and complexity of the incident or requirements established by Incident Command. Assistants are defined as a level of technical capability, qualifications, and responsibility subordinate to the primary position.

### Information Officer

The Information Officer is the central point for dissemination of information to the news media and other agencies and organizations. Only one Information Officer will be named to an incident, including those incidents, which are multi-jurisdictional. The Information Officer develops accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, resources committed, and other matters of general interest. The information officer may have an assistant(s) as necessary to meet the needs of the incident.

### Safety Officer

The Safety Officer function is to assess hazardous and unsafe situations, and develop measures for ensuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to directly stop unsafe acts if personnel are in imminent, life threatening danger. There is only one Safety Officer on any incident. Only one Safety Officer will be named to an incident. The Safety Officer may have an assistant(s) as necessary to meet the needs of the incident.

### Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is the point of contact at the incident for personnel from assisting and cooperating agencies. There is only one Liaison Officer on any incident. The Liaison Officer may have an assistant(s) as necessary to meet the needs of the incident.

### Agency Representative

Outside agencies may send an Agency Representative to the incident to work with the incident management team to coordinate between agencies or jurisdictional considerations. Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer.