



Incident Commander Characteristics

No. CC-2013-2 March 4, 2013

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to list ten characteristics of an Incident Commander.

While there is no one personality type that seems to create the “perfect” Incident Commander, there are some common characteristics that are desirable.

An effective IC should

- Think and act strategically.
- Be objective driven.
- Have strong communication skills.
- Be able to delegate authority.
- Facilitate a collaborative atmosphere.
- Be trustworthy.
- Be adaptive.
- Be a multitasker.
- Be a team player.
- Remain calm under pressure.

The IC should be focused on resources, safety (responders and community affected) and making sure the event stops or goes away. The IC should be careful not to underestimate the situation and suffer the consequences that might follow by not summoning appropriate resources.

The IC should be able to list problems, issues, and concerns and apply the priorities of life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation to come up with the list of problems that need the most immediate attention.

Finally, the IC should always be “customer centered.” The Command and the General Staff philosophy — and that of all of the responders — should be sensitive to the public’s needs. In a major emergency or disaster, the public looks to the professionals for help, understanding, direction and even compassion.

So, be quick to respond to the needs of the public, be nice and understanding when dealing with the public, and be helpful as possible in solving their problems.



There are no “perfect” Incident Commanders, but good leaders exhibit a variety of common characteristics.