



Incident Commander's Responsibilities

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

There are many issues that confront the Incident Commander when responding to an incident that is expanding in complexity. The low frequency of this type of incident can put a great deal of pressure on any IC not only because of the tactical complexity but also the added pressure of managing the communications, resources, planning and support functions needed to react to the growing emergency.

The early introduction of the Incident Command System into a complex incident is designed to assist the Initial Response IC in the transition from the reactive mode to the proactive mode of incident management and set up a smooth transfer of command to a superior officer or an incoming Incident Management Team.



Incidents can spiral out of control if the Incident Commander forgets his or her responsibilities.

The IC should be able to accomplish the following responsibilities without the assistance of support staff.

- Assess the situation.
- Determine the need for higher order command.
- Establish immediate priorities (life safety, incident stabilization, property conservation).
- Establish incident objectives and strategies.
- Establish an Incident Command Post.
- Manage tactical operations (give work assignments).
- Assure the safety of responders and the public.
- Determine the need to expand the organization.
- Ensure the appropriate facilities are established to support the organization.
- Identify and order the appropriate tactical and support resources.
- Keep superior officers, agency administrators and stakeholders informed of the situation.
- Identify staging areas.
- Ensure scene security and evidence preservation.
- Evaluate and anticipate contingencies.
- Develop and maintain an Incident Briefing Form (ICS-201).

It is a good idea to turn these responsibilities into a checklist to review during the early stage of even routine incidents so you can build the experience to use them when the complex incident does happen.