

RELATED TERMS

- Incident Command System
- Task Books
- Unified Command



Lessons Learned Information Sharing

www.LLIS.gov

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Fire
- Emergency Management

GOOD STORY

The Fire Department of the City of New York's Incident Management Teams

SUMMARY

The Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) established Incident Management Teams (IMT) in order to manage large, complex incidents more effectively.

BACKGROUND

IMTs are comprised of highly trained personnel who apply the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS) to respond to major incidents. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, two National Interagency Type 1 IMTs assisted in the rescue and recovery effort at the World Trade Center. The Forest Service's IMTs arrived at the site 48 hours after the incident response began. Several more days passed before FDNY overcame its initial reluctance and integrated the IMTs into its response operations.

Type 1 teams are the most highly trained of the five types of IMTs and handle the largest and most complex types of incidents. They operate through the US Forest Service.

The IMTs eventually performed critical roles in the ongoing response, primarily in the logistics and planning areas. They developed a plan to haul debris away by barge instead of trucks and coordinated the renovation of a warehouse to provide housing for the thousands of recovery workers who reported to the incident site everyday. The World Trade Center response operations demonstrated to FDNY leadership the need for the department to have its own personnel trained to manage large-scale incidents.

FDNY leadership began considering the establishment of an IMT that could rapidly respond to the next major incident in New York City. In February 2002, the commissioner of FDNY asked a group of outside consultants to evaluate the department's performance on September 11, 2001, and during other large-scale incidents. Their report concluded that FDNY could better incorporate ICS into its management of major incidents and recommended that FDNY build at least two IMTs to ensure the department has adequate around-the-clock coverage capabilities over prolonged periods of time. It stated that the IMTs should consist of high-performing individuals selected by the chiefs of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) operations. Each team member should be highly specialized in one specific ICS function but should also be able to carry out any other ICS role.

Department leaders quickly adopted many of the report's recommendations, including the development of IMTs. In January 2003, the commissioner of FDNY signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the US Secretary of Agriculture. The MOU called for FDNY leadership to receive training from instructors from the northeast area of the Forest Service

to develop IMT capabilities. In exchange for the training, FDNY agreed to allow its trained IMT personnel to assist in responding to major incidents outside New York City.

GOALS

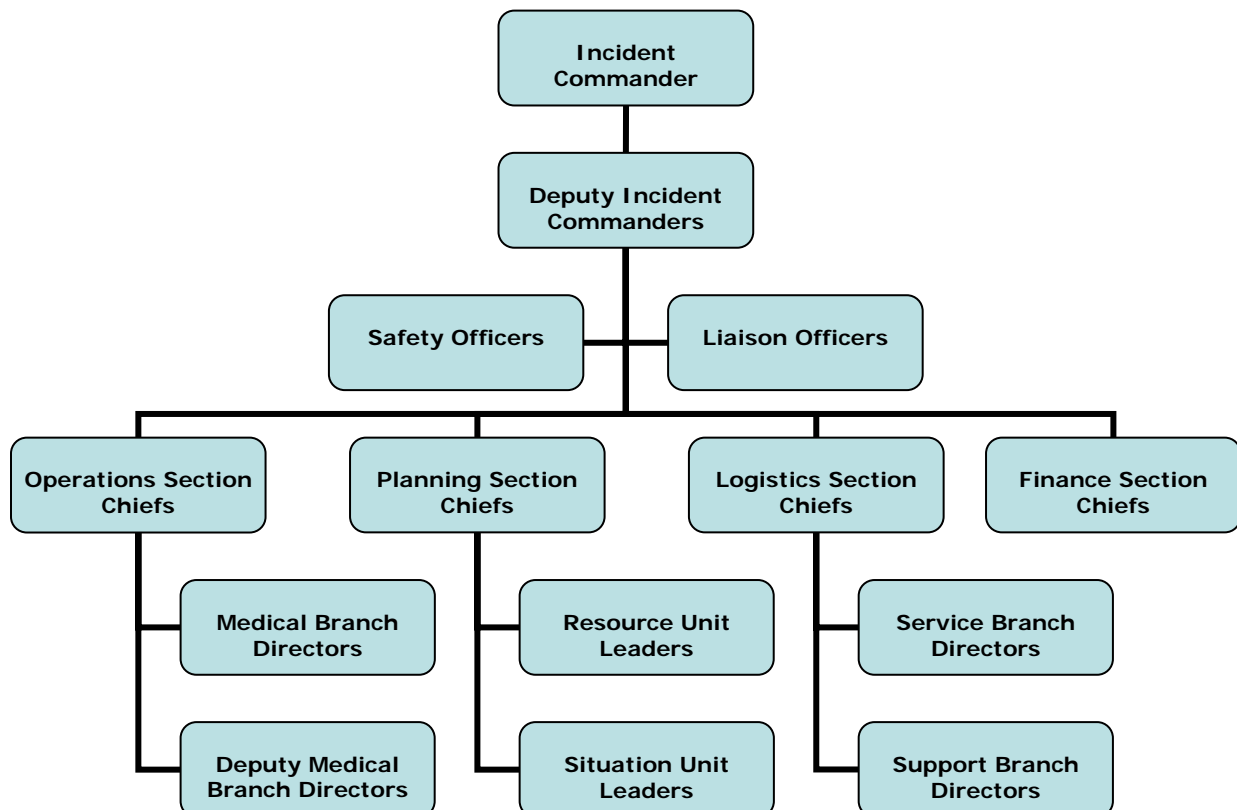
The IMTs provide FDNY with trained teams capable of managing large, complex incidents in an urban setting. The IMTs should be able to assume operational and logistical management within 6 hours of the beginning of the incident response.

DESCRIPTION

FDNY developed its IMTs over several years through collaborative training with other nationwide IMTs and participation in real-world incidents. In early 2003, the FDNY leadership began selecting the personnel who would take the lead in coordinating and managing the IMT program. These personnel would complete initial rounds of training and would be responsible for the development of teams in years to come. Once team members had achieved the necessary levels of certifications, they began to integrate into national IMTs during major incidents. By time Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, FDNY had enough trained personnel to deploy a full IMT to assist in the response.

Structure

FDNY's IMTs resemble the national-level IMTs that the Forest Service has been operating for 2 decades. The teams share many similarities in terms of training and assigning personnel to serve in the five functional areas of ICS. Among the differences, the Forest Service teams integrate personnel from dozens of federal, state, and local agencies, while all FDNY IMT members are FDNY personnel. Most national-level Type 1 and Type 2 IMTs come from the wildfire community. FDNY IMTs have a uniquely extensive background in responding to urban incidents.



Selecting IMT Leaders

For the initial IMT training, the department selected primarily high-ranking personnel who had distinguished themselves in command positions during the response at the World Trade Center. The selected personnel participated in classroom and shadow training, conducted in conjunction with the Forest Service throughout 2003, and began to fill the section chief, branch director, and unit leader positions on the IMTs. This core of IMT leadership has recruited and trained IMT personnel in the ensuing years as well as managed FDNY IMT deployments.

Forest Service Training

FDNY's collaborative IMT training with the Forest Service consisted of two phases. During the first phase, from February through April 2003, 70 high-level FDNY fire chiefs and EMS officers completed 2 weeks of classroom training in the ICS National Training Curriculum and participated in disaster mitigation scenarios. During the first week of training, instructors presented orientation, intermediate, and advanced levels of the ICS curriculum in the functional areas of command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance. The second week focused on functional simulation problem-solving situations for developing Type 2 IMTs.

Type 2 IMTs, like Type 1 IMTs, are federally or state certified, but they tend to have fewer staff members and less experience than Type 1 IMTs.

During the second phase, beginning in August 2003, six shadow teams of FDNY personnel traveled to the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Command Center (NRMAC) near Missoula, Montana, for five day-long "shadow training" sessions. The department wanted to expose FDNY personnel to an IMT in action to better understand ICS techniques. They shadowed the Forest Service's Alaska Type 1 IMT while it managed a 21,000 acre fire inside Flathead National Forest. Shadow Team members received the Daily Action Plan (DAP) and attended the Night Operations Briefing. They attended planning and strategy sessions, including day tour pre-strategy meetings, day tour strategy/operations meetings, and night tour DAP input meetings. By the end of the rotations, FDNY had the command staff and section chiefs in place for two Type 2 IMTs.

Team Development

Since its inception, FDNY has aggressively promoted the IMT concept within the department. Team leaders actively recruited personnel and coordinated training both within the department and in collaboration with the Forest Service. As of January 2007, the FDNY IMT program had enough trained personnel for two qualified Type 2 all-hazards teams. It can deploy a team of 56 firefighters outside New York City during a major incident and still have a second team of 56 firefighters ready for a major incident within the City. It has 137 total personnel qualified to serve in at least some ICS positions in IMTs.

Selecting IMT Personnel

From 2004 to 2006, the section chiefs recruited personnel to serve on IMTs. They made no specific demands for rank in the department or amount of experience. They only asked that applicants be prepared to commit to 5 years of service on the IMT. Applicants submitted resumes with approvals and recommendations from their superior officers. Section chiefs were responsible for selecting candidates for their own sections. They considered the experience the candidates had from participating in large-scale incident responses, such as FDNY's deployment to New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. The section chiefs also considered the experience candidates had from outside FDNY, such as military training. The chiefs personally recommended some qualified candidates for service in their sections. There was an average of eight applicants for each IMT position.

Advanced Training

A qualified IMT requires extensive, ongoing training to ensure an adequate amount of eligible personnel. In early 2005, FDNY sent 10 of its personnel to Tucson, Arizona, to attend the National Advanced Fire & Resource Institute's (NAFRI) S-420 course, a Type 2 command and general staff skill-building course. In the summer of 2005, 30 FDNY personnel served as trainees with position task books on Type 1 and large Type 2 wildland fires. In May 2006, FDNY partnered with members of the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest (PNW) Team 3 National IMT to present the S-420 course at its Randall's Island Fire Academy. Instructors divided the forty-seven participants into four nine-member IMTs and one eleven-member IMT. The course concluded with participants taking part in a mock simulation of a Category 3 hurricane making landfall in the Rockaway section of Queens, NY.

Position task books are documents drafted by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) that contain all the critical tasks required to perform a specific role within an IMT.

Deployments

FDNY IMT leaders deploy the teams outside the city both to support the incident response and to provide the IMTs the opportunity to develop during real-life incidents. The response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans gave FDNY the opportunity to deploy a full IMT for the first time. FDNY deployed 25 members of its IMT to manage the rest of its 300-member deployment and deployments from other firefighting agencies that would fall under its command.

Upon arriving in New Orleans, the FDNY IMT met with two New Orleans Fire Department (NOFD) district chiefs. The chiefs requested that FDNY provide support for a series of major fires that had broken out on the city's East Bank. NOFD and the FDNY IMT established a Unified Command (UC) and set the following incident objectives for their combined operation:

- Provide for firefighter and community safety;
- Provide the community with fire and emergency services;
- Establish a functional fire/emergency response system; and
- Establish a fire/command support structure.

Over the next several days, the FDNY IMT worked to provide an effective incident response under difficult conditions. While the team was only considered a Type 2 team by NWCG standards, it was responding to a Type 1-level incident. Command and general staffs produced an Incident Action Plan (IAP) for each operational period, usually 24 hours. The IAP included the incident objectives, individual operational assignments, organizational charts, a situation report, and a daily safety message.

The successful deployment of the FDNY IMTs in New Orleans indicates that New York City will likely be better prepared to respond to a major incident than it was on September 11. NOFD requested that the IMT extend its deployment beyond the initial 2 weeks it had planned. While the IMT transferred command of the operation to the Forest Service's PNW Type 1 IMT on September 18, 14 FDNY IMT members remained and worked with the PNW IMT in a UC structure.

REQUIREMENTS

Keys to Success Training

All IMT members receive extensive training in all aspects of ICS to become qualified to serve on an IMT. FDNY now has qualified instructors internally to conduct training in different ICS sections. It also sends its IMT personnel to integrate both as trainees and as fully qualified members with Forest Service Type 1 IMTs during major incidents throughout the year.

Organizational Commitment

FDNY leadership has made a significant commitment to developing its IMTs. IMT training can be both costly and time-consuming. All FDNY IMT members have other day-to-day duties within the department, so the department must cover for their absences when they are training outside of the city.

Collaboration

The FDNY's partnerships with the Forest Service and other firefighting agencies have been essential to the training and organization of the teams. The agreement the FDNY signed with the Forest Service in 2003 was the first major step in the construction of the IMTs. FDNY IMT members integrate with other multi-agency IMTs throughout the year to advance their training and to participate in real-world incident responses.

LINKS

National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Working Team

<http://www.fire.blm.gov/training/twt/index.htm>

REFERENCES

"FDNY and U.S. Forest Service to Hold 'All Risk' mock scenario Category 3 Hurricane in the Rockaways," New York City Fire Department press release. New York, NY. 16 May 2006.

http://nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/pr/2006/052406_3506.shtml

Fire Department of the City of New York. *FDNY Strategic Plan 2004-05*. 01 Jan 2004.

Matthews, Mark. "IMTs: Support in Any Emergency; Forest Service Teams Helped Cope With Attacks on Sept. 11," *The Washington Post*. 31 Dec. 2001, p. A15.

Maynes, Robert. Deputy Chief, IMT Training Coordinator, Operations Section Chief, Fire Department of the City of New York. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 18 Jan 2007.

Maynes, Robert. "FDNY Incident Management Team Supports New Orleans Fire Department," *Fire Engineering*. May 2006, pp. 79-91.

McKinsey & Company. *Increasing FDNY's Preparedness*. 01 Aug 2002.

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=379

Spadafora, Ronald R. "Origin and Development of FDNY Incident Management Teams – Part I," *WNYF: With New York City Firefighters, 4th/2003*. New York. Fire Department of the City of New York. Dec 2003, pp. 16-17.

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=22627

Spadafora, Ronald R. "Origin and Development of FDNY Incident Management Teams – Part II, Shadow Training," *WNYF: With New York City Firefighters*, 4th/2004. New York. Fire Department of the City of New York. Dec 2003, pp. 14-17.
https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=22628

Weinlein, Michael. "FDNY Deployment for Hurricane Katrina," *WNYF: With New York City Firefighters*, 1st/2006. New York. Fire Department of the City of New York. Jan 2006 pp. 2-25.

DISCLAIMER

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email Feedback@llis.dhs.gov or visit www.llis.gov.