



TOOLBOX MEETING GUIDE

TOPIC 1: INCIDENT COMMAND POST AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

Incident Command Post (ICP)

The Incident Command Post is the primary location for on-scene incident command and management. Staffing at the ICP typically includes the Incident Commander, Command Staff and General Staff, while, some roles may be assigned at other posts if necessary (e.g. Liaison Officer, Public Information Officer, and Finance could be located in the Corporate Office/EOC) in order to make best use of available staff resources.

Typically, the ICP is located at or near the incident site and is the centre for management of on-scene and tactical operations. Planning and communications could also be coordinated from this location. Although a less desirable option, incident command can also be located off-site (corporate headquarters) if there is not enough personnel at the site level to fill all necessary roles.

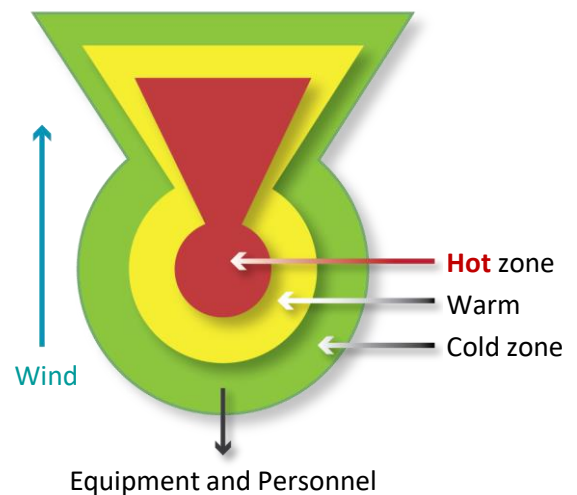
Ideal Characteristics of an ICP:

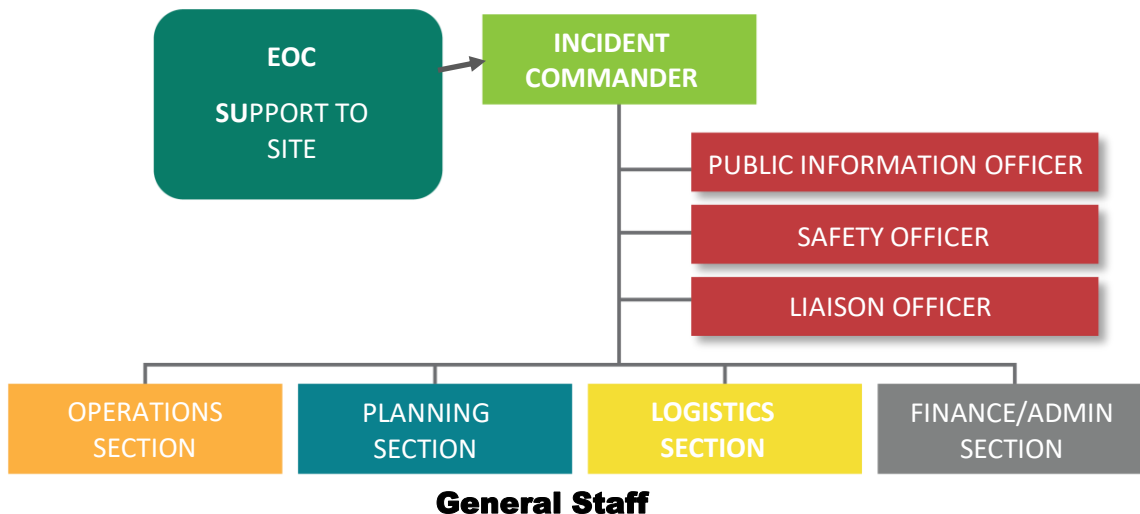
- **Communications** – The ICP should have reliable communications capability, including back-up options. If using cell service, are all assets located within good coverage? Will road radios be needed? Is power for communications dependent on a single, specific location, or are there additional options?
- **Accessibility** – Could access to the ICP be threatened by an incident at any of your operations, or is there an alternate route in/out? Are there seasonal impacts to accessibility, and if so, have resources been identified to restore access?
- **Site Supports** – Can the selected ICP location support the number of responders needed for a major incident (e.g. water, sanitation, possibly shelter/warming)?
- If a location for the ICP has not been predetermined, a safe site outside the 'hot' portion of the Hazard Response Zone (HRZ) must be chosen, and communicated to any other command posts (e.g. Emergency Operations Centre).

While the ideal ICP location has space for all roles to meet and allows for posting maps, lists and other materials, it may also need to be located in a pick-up truck working off the tailgate, to ensure the safety of everyone involved. When circumstances, such as a change in the Hazard Response Zone arise, plans need to be re-evaluated to determine the needs of the group in order to operate safely and efficiently in a new location.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE (EOC)

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) works in a similar fashion to the ICP, and the organization chart mirrors/expands that of the ICP. The EOC is usually activated either at the request of the Incident Commander or as part of established policy, to offer support for complex emergencies.





It is important to understand the EOC's role is to support the Incident Command Post and to focus on the Business Continuity aspects of the company/agency to continue to meet the needs of customers or fulfill contracts, and not to take over control and management of the incident.

The EOC Director oversees the operations at the EOC level and communicates directly with the Incident Commander at scheduled incident status update briefing meetings. In some cases, the EOC may assume full responsibility for certain roles to assist the ICP if there is a shortage of responding personnel at the site level (roles such as Liaison Officer or Public Information Officer can often be managed off-site).

When ICP roles are filled through the EOC, communication is key to maintaining the flow of information and ensuring the incident objectives are being met. Section Chiefs should all participate in the incident briefings, no matter where they are physically located.

Ideal Characteristics of an EOC:

- **Communications** – Similar to the ICP, reliable communications is essential, enabling EOC staff to exchange information with field staff, call regulators, residents, contract responders and other agencies. As EOC's are often based at corporate head offices, there should also be easy access to up-to-date contact lists and multiple phone lines. Headsets or break-out rooms can help manage noise levels and ensure each discussion is clearly heard.
- **Visual Aids** – Photos, site plans and high resolution mapping for each operating area will support understanding of current and potential challenges to the response. Organization charts for both the EOC and ICP should be displayed, and an up-to-date version of the Incident Action Plan should be posted, including key deliverables and responsibilities.
- **Access to Subject Matter Experts** – Key to a safe and effective response is having expert staff able to provide advice and guidance to field teams. Engineers, technicians and even third-party company representatives for specific pieces of equipment can be quickly organized through the EOC.
- **Financial and Strategic Decision Authority** – A major incident can incur significant costs, and the local Incident Commander may not have sufficient financial authority. Depending on the nature of the incident, there may also be decisions required that will have lasting impacts on capacity and production. Senior leaders either should be part of the EOC organization, or have delegated authority to the EOC Director, allowing them to make critical decisions in a timely manner.
- **Business Continuity** – The ability to open and operate an EOC should be built into your Business Continuity Plan, ensuring activity can be sustained throughout the full range of identified risks.