The Incident Command System (ICS) – An Introduction BY KD5BJ

Tonight, we explore the very basic concepts of the ICS with the purpose to help those who have not taken the test to become more familiar with the ICS, and those who have taken the test, to be refreshed.

The ICS is a management system that has been in use for over 30 years. It is designed to enable effective management of planned incidents, called events, or unplanned ones called incidents

It is a multi-hazard, flexible management system that coordinates incidents into five major functional areas: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and finance and or administrations.

Lately, in the last year or so, another optional area has been added, the intelligence / investigation. Generally, this is under Plans, but if the incident requires it, it can become a stand alone functional area.

The ICS manages most incident locally; use a standard set of doctrine and procedures; it is modular and scalable, has interactive components, established common terminology, standards, and procedures, incorporates measurable objectives; should disrupt as little as possible the existent system; and is created to be user friendly across a wide spectrum of disciplines and emergency response.

The ICS relies on the Incident Action Plan (IAP) or the Event Action Plan (EAP), it uses a manageable span of control, which should be one supervisor for five subordinates, identifies locations and facilities to be used, integrates communications, establishes command and transfers command; respects the chain of commands and practices unity of command. It procures, control, manages, and demobilize or transfer resources such as people, equipment and supplies; And finally, it manages information and intelligence.

Part of the ICS is the Command Staff, and the General Staff. The Command staff consists of the Incident Commander, the Liaison Officer, the safety Officer, and the Public Information Officer known also as PIO.

The General Staff consists of the Planning Section Chief, the Operation Chief, Logistic Chief, and the Finance/Administration Chief.

If there are multiple incidents requiring multiple ICS organizations that require coordination, an Area Command is established.

When the incident is very small, the Incident Commander might take up any of the roles needed. He or she can be also Planning Section Chief and/or Ops Chief, for example.

It is imperative that Chain of Command and Unity of Command be respected always.

The Unity of Command means that all individuals have a single designated supervisor they report to and receive assignments from.
The Chain of Command means that there is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the organization, with lower levels subordinate to, and connected to, higher levels.

This is the end of the training for tonight, This is KD5BJ back to net.