

FMA-110
Where Do We Fit In The
Incident Command System (ICS)?

Aired by KI5MA

We fit **NOWHERE** in the organization until asked.

There is no position within the ICS for “walk-on” operators!

If you wish to help in any event, contact your local ARES Emergency Coordinator and volunteer with that person.

DO NOT just show up to work.

The primary area of interest to Amateur Radio participants is the Logistics Section, Services Branch, Communication Unit. Typically, the primary contact at the served agency will notify the primary Amateur Radio leadership individual to advise the nature of the incident, and where to report. This may be a **staging area**, or to the **Command Post** area, usually to either the Logistics Section Chief, the Services Branch Director, or the Communications Unit Leader. One individual may be serving in all three capacities, so Amateur Radio operators serving at a command post need to understand the specific nature of the incident. The command post may be identified by a **green light or a green flag**. An Amateur Radio operator may be assigned to the Communications officer or they may be assigned as a Technical Specialist in another area.

Amateur Radio operators may be requested to perform non-ham radio activities and could conceivably be assigned anywhere. If an operator is assigned to a non-ham unit, operators need to comply with the directions of the unit supervisor, understand the mission and report actions back to that unit supervisor.

Amateur radio groups deployed as units should be structured into groups of 3 to 5 hams under one Amateur Radio unit supervisor. If we have more than 5 members, we may need to break the unit down into 4 or 5 units. This could be based upon geography (where the units will be deployed), time of day (shifts), specific function (HQ unit, field unit 1, field unit 2, etc), or any other reasonable, manageable division of labor. Then, instead of one Amateur Radio leader needing to get status or provide direction to 20 members, the 1 leader interacts with 4, and those four with 3 to 5 each. This allows for a much quicker and more manageable method of communications and control. Smaller units are also able to be re-assigned and moved more quickly than large units, so the smaller units also allow Incident Command more flexibility in the utilization of overall resources.

Everyone **MUST** insure that all assignments, delegation and hand-overs are done with explicit statement of intent and explicit statement of acceptance. The most likely problems will occur when duties are assigned/accepted implicitly.

If ALL assignment, delegation, handovers, acceptance etc. are explicit, the potential misunderstandings are minimized or eliminated. A good technique to insure understanding is to repeat back what you understand the order or instruction to be. This will expose errors before they can become a problem.

Amateur Radio leadership with the likelihood of serving in supervisory roles for an incident should familiarize themselves with the ICS structure, forms, methods and procedures. The 'higher up' the pyramid an individual Amateur Radio operator serves, the more important ICS training becomes. It would be mandatory for an Amateur Radio operator assigned to a served agency command post as the Amateur Radio liaison to be fully trained in the Incident Command System. Each Amateur Radio Emergency Services group should have a cadre of individuals "fully trained" in ICS.

ICS courses are available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the web at:

www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp
www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is200.asp
www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS700.asp
www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800.asp

As previously mentioned, the methods and procedures used by Amateur Radio operators: use of nets, methods such as packet or ATV, and other training such as Damage Assessment or Fire Weather training are items that remain in place, in use and ARE unaffected by ICS except for the nature of how information is reported up the chain and how commands are given down the chain. Amateur Radio operators should continue to receive training in these areas in addition to ICS training to expand their already valuable skills used to serve the public via Amateur Radio.

ICS Duties for ARES Operators:

To repeat some VERY important instructions that apply to all ARES operators:

Everyone MUST insure that all assignments, delegation and hand-overs are done with explicit statement of intent and explicit statement of acceptance. The most likely problems will occur when duties are assigned/accepted implicitly. If ALL assignment, delegation, handovers, acceptance etc. are explicit, the potential misunderstandings are minimized or eliminated. A good technique to insure understanding is to repeat back what you understand the order or instruction to have been. This will expose errors before they can become a problem.

Event Check List:

The following are YOUR responsibilities for every emergency and many exercise events. Remember that during an emergency you will either be part of the solution, or you will become part of the problem.

Before you leave your house, you should:

- Review your assignment to insure you understand what is expected of you for this specific assignment.
- Determine the Staffing and Operations Net frequencies, offset and tone.
- Record the Incident type, name and designation
- Determine the Incident check in location
- Record the reporting time
- Determine the anticipated length of stay
- Obtain the travel instructions (destination address, coordinates, etc.)
 - Review transportation requirements – to and from the assignment
- Update your “go-bag” with needed items not normally stored there. Ensure that you have sufficient copies of necessary forms.
- Prepare clothing and food, sufficient to handle the anticipated length of stay at your assignment.
- Review communication procedures as necessary
- Ensure that your family knows how to contact you while you are at the assignment. Contact information for a local ham might be necessary.

On departure from your house, check in with the staffing net to let them know you are in route to your assignment.

On arrival:

- Check in at the staging area so the served agency records reflect your help.
- Notify the staffing net that you are going to the operations frequency.
- Check in with operations NCS to let them know you are available.
- Determine where/when the event briefing will be (ASK!)
- Perform the duties assigned in a manner consistent with good safety procedures and good Ham techniques. This will include:
 - Monitor work progress.
 - Provide your supervisor with appropriate status updates and notification of any problems that may arise.
 - Keep a good log of your station activities.

Once your assignment is complete AND prior to departing you need to:

- Complete your work assignment
- Brief your subordinates on demobilization
- Complete event paper work
- Brief your replacement as applicable
- Follow incident check out procedures.

This means:

- Check out where you checked in (if at all possible)
- Notify Operations NCS of your departure
- Notify the Staffing Net you are checking out from your assignment and going home.

Upon arrival at your house, check out with the staffing net for demobilization and safety reasons.

That concludes tonight's training. Are there any questions, comments or suggested additions to this material?

Thanks, this is (*callsign*) clear to net control.