



Operations Guide

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Protecting Lives through Partnership

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This document guides the operation of the Type III Northwest Washington Incident Management Team (NWIMT), herein referred to as the Team. The team consists of members from municipalities, counties, tribes, fire districts, and regional agencies from Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan Counties, representing:

- Health Departments
- Law Enforcement
- Fire Service
- Public Works Departments
- Emergency Management Agencies
- Information Technology/ Geographical Information Systems
- Administrative Services
- Emergency Medical Services
- Tribal Nations
- Health Care

Operations Guide

The Northwest Washington Incident Management Team Operations Guide, herein referred to as the Guide, has been prepared and reviewed by the Incident Commanders, and the NWIMT Policy Board. It is intended to provide operational guidance to team members, alternate members, and trainees in preparing for and fulfilling their assignments.

This Guide should be used in conjunction with the Firescope California Field Operations Guide (ICS 420-1) current version (www.firescope.org) with the understanding the Team may need to adapt procedures to fit the circumstances of a specific assignment. The effective and efficient management of major emergency or critical incidents requires that a Team remain flexible, have freedom to apply sound judgment, and exercise creativity in action planning and operations to achieve desired ends.

As a Guide, this document is intended to be used as one of many tools available to the Team in effectively dealing with the circumstances and conditions of an incident.

This Guide does not replace any members home agency rules or policies. Team members are responsible to notify their team supervisor if an order or assignment would be in conflict with an agency rule or policy.

Team Objectives

The Team, when activated, must be prepared to accept complete management of the incident on or before the beginning of the next day operational period following call-out, or as agreed upon during the initial Agency Administrator briefing. The incident will be managed in an economical manner considering safety of public and incident personnel and Agency Administrator direction. All activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures the safety of all personnel and the general public.

Incident management will be conducted in a professional manner that helps develop a sense of confidence in the agency and public that the situation is under control. Desirable behaviors include:

- Assisting agencies in managing complex and/or large incidents to their conclusion or transition to a higher/lower level Incident Management Team
- Interfacing with requesting agencies in a caring, sensitive fashion that fosters collaboration, and increases the effective and efficient management of the event
- Maintaining safety as the overriding priority of all Team operations

Team Policies

The Team will establish incident specific procedures for complying with incident safety concerns as outlined within an Incident Action Plan to ensure:

- All activities are coordinated through the established chain of command.
- Responder fatigue is managed by adherence to agency work rest guidelines.

All Team members are responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe work environment
 - Report unsafe conditions or acts immediately
- Being a Team that can minimize the incident impact on the host agency and local community
 - Cooperate with host agency
 - Involve the community
 - Support the economy of the local communities
 - Keep the community informed on incident progress
- Providing a professional and respectful working environment
 - Making ethical decisions
 - Using prudent judgment in supervision of personnel to assure a respectful and harassment free environment.
- Achieving a sense of Team satisfaction through a quality, professional performance

Regulatory Compliance

Incident location will normally determine if the safety practices followed fall under the Federal Occupational Health and Safety Agency (OSHA) rules or the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) rules or other State specific OSHA guidelines. The Team needs to ensure that injuries and accidents

are properly and promptly reported and documented, so that follow up investigation can be done by the appropriate jurisdiction.

SECTION 2: TEAM ORGANIZATION

The Policy Board appoints the NWIMT Incident Commanders and Deputy Incident Commanders. Team configuration is determined by the Incident Commanders and approved by the Policy Board. The Team will consist of the following number of positions based on the location of the incident:

Long Team Configuration

– the default dispatch configuration is 21 positions;

- Incident Commander
- Deputy Incident Commander
- Public Information Officer
- Safety Officer
- Liaison Officer
- Operations Section Chief
- Deputy Operations Section Chief
- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Deputy Logistics Section Chief
- Finance Section Chief
- Resource Unit Leader
- Situation Unit Leader
- GIS Technical Specialist
- Resource Check in Recorder
- Division/Group Supervisor
- Communications Unit Leader
- Trainees

Short Team Configuration

– this configuration is incident specific and at the discretion of the IC, however, usually includes 10 positions;

- Incident Commander
- Operations Section Chief
- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Finance Section Chief
- Safety Officer
- Public Information Officer
- Resource Unit Leader
- Trainees

Refer to Appendix A to view organizational chart.

In addition to the positions identified on the Long and Short Team configuration, Agency Administrators may negotiate with the IC to have additional specialized resources added to the configuration; For example; a Technical Specialist.

Team Trainees are assigned to meet position needs as prioritized by the Incident Commander.

Membership Categories

There are three categories of Team members: Active, Alternate Pool, and Training Pool.

Active Team Members

Those listed on the 2007 Team Roster are expected to be available for dispatch whenever they are scheduled for deployment. When selecting candidates to fill IMT positions, the Peer Review Committee may contact an applicant's agency to check references, background, and whether the agency approves of the application and will support the candidate's participation.

Active Team Members are expected to be available for dispatch when their Team is in the "up" rotation position. When an active team member is unavailable for dispatch, they are responsible to find a replacement and immediately contact their Section Chief or Incident Commander.

Alternate Pool Members

When the NWIMT achieves full staffing, an "Alternate Pool" may be created. The Alternate Pool consists of members not annually assigned to a team, however, are available on case-by-case situation. The alternate pool consists of fully qualified position specific personnel who are available to substitute or supplement active team members when necessary.

Trainee Pool Members

The trainee pool consists of personnel who are not active team members, but are applicant candidates who meet the minimum requisites outlined in the State's *Type III Incident Management Team – Position Qualification and Training Requirements* (see org chart on NWIMT site) and have a Position Task Book assigned for the ICS position of interest.

Trainees who are assigned to Team positions are to complete their task book as soon as practical and be recommended for certification if appropriate. Once certified, the person leaves the Team and joins the Alternate Pool for the remainder of the year.

The Peer Review Committee is responsible for ensuring that applicants are fully qualified for the position or positions for which they have applied.

Member Selection

Team personnel selection will occur annually. Active Team Members, Trainees, and Alternate Pool Members must submit an application annually. The NWIMT Peer Review Committee administers the application process. General guidelines relating to the selection process include:

- a) Each applicant must be qualified for the position using classes sanctioned by one or more of the following agencies:
 - National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - National Fire Academy (NFA)
 - Emergency Management Institute (EMI)
- b) In the future, the Policy Board seeks to have the Team composition align with Washington State's *Type III Incident Management Team – Position Qualification and Training Requirements*. These documents are being developed by the State.
- c) All qualified candidates will be considered equally.

Deployment Expenses and Compensation

Each Team Member's sponsoring agency is responsible for all compensation, travel costs, or other associated costs with deployment. If Federal/State/Local responsible party deployment reimbursements for expenses are available, they will be distributed as soon as possible.

Member Equipment Inventory

All members need to be prepared for up to 72 hours of self-sufficiency in the event of an out of region deployment. To meet this standard, members should pre-assemble a kit (duffle or backpack recommended) containing the following items:

- Clothing
 - NWIMT uniform shirts and/or Nomex
 - Black BDU pants or Nomex
 - Underwear (3 sets)
 - Outerwear
 - Socks
 - Jacket (team provided)
 - Optional: rain or severe weather clothing
 - Hat/sunglasses
 - Sweater or sweatshirt
- Personal Hygiene Supplies
- Shelter: tent and sleeping bag
- Documentation: driver's license, medical information card

- Food/water: at least a day of snacks and water in case food services are temporarily unavailable.

Team Participant Tenure

The Incident Commanders have the right to suspend or terminate team members at any time for poor performance, unavailability, or unacceptable behavior. Such decisions shall be documented in writing and sent to the Policy Board, and forwarded to the employer, if appropriate. Team members may appeal the termination decision to the Policy Board. The Policy Board will review and their decision will be final and binding.

SECTION 3: ACTIVATION AND RESPONSE

Activation

The Prospect Fire/EMS dispatching agency in Whatcom County serves as the initial point-of-contact for deployment requests. Prospect will contact the “up” IC after receiving a deployment request. See Appendix B for Response Algorithm.

Response

A local incident commander or Agency Administrator who recognizes that it may grow beyond their local capability may call an IMT to mobilize into a developing, non-stabilized incident. Team members will respond to the incident and meet at a pre-determined Staging Area. The first team members to arrive should contact the Team IC to coordinate initial information gathering process.

Team Availability for Out-of-Region/State Assignment

The NWIMT was established primarily to meet incident management needs within the Northwest Region of Washington, however, deployment to other parts of the state or nation is a possibility. If out-of-Region/State requests are made, the Policy Board will determine if the Team should be voluntarily deployed. Out-of-Region/State deployments are beyond the scope of the NWIMT Interlocal agreement. The decision to deploy rests solely with each Team Member and his/her employer.

SECTION 4: TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Take pride in being able to transition quickly and smoothly with minimal impact to the incident host agency or to the incident itself.

A safe transition requires close and sensitive coordination with the local Incident Commander and Agency Administrator(s). Both parties should use the information below to create a smooth and seamless transition.

Incident Transfer to a Team

The host jurisdictional Agency Administrator, current Incident Commander and in-coming Incident Commander shall discuss and agree to the date, time, and

scope of responsibility that command will transfer to the Team.

The existing command organization retains control until it is officially transferred, if desired, and acknowledged in writing. A Delegation of Authority and Letter of Incident Acceptance outline the terms of the agreement. The Team Incident Commander must work with the existing command structure to ensure that the transition is safe, smooth and orderly.

SECTION 5: BRIEFINGS AND MEETINGS

There should be two major briefings of the incoming Incident Management Team.

- Briefing by the Agency Administrator at a site away from the incident
- Briefing by the current Incident Commander

The transition period of takeover/release will depend upon incident complexity, the expertise of current organization and/or problems.

Agency Administrator Briefing

Team members should arrive in time for the host agency (Agency Administrator) briefing. This should be done as soon as possible after arrival of all members of the team. Key documents related to this briefing include:

- Delegation of Authority
- Letter of Acceptance
- Developing Incident Situational Analysis

Active Incident Commander Briefing

This briefing should follow the Agency Administrator briefing and focus on the status and potential of the incident and incident resources. If possible, active overhead personnel should also attend and respond to specific issues and questions.

Key Document

- ICS-201

First Strategy Meeting

Approximately thirty (30) minutes after the host agency briefing(s), the Team will hold its first strategy meeting.

- Review situation and resource status – decide on base location.
- Ensure that everything is in place to receive incoming resources.
- List actions that can be taken to do effective work with available resources.
- List critical items to order immediately.
- Set time and location of first planning meeting.
- List functional priorities to be accomplished before first planning meeting.
At this time all team members will be expected to complete their portion of the initial order and forward to the Logistics Section.

SECTION 6: POSITION SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Incident Commander & Operations Chief

- Facilitate orderly transfer of command.
- Ensure ICS personnel are properly identified in vests and facilitate timely and accurate notification to all subordinate staff on transfer of command authority.
- Assume an ICS-201 has not been created by the local IC/unified command
 - If one has not been prepared, **start one**
 - Determine and/or identify current incident objectives and focus
 - Determine prior effective strategy and tactics (and non-effective strategy/tactics)
 - Identify status of deployed and ordered resources.
- Determine if there have been any injuries or claims on the incident.
- Determine if local resources and personnel are in place to deal with new incidents in the host district.
- Identify agencies with either jurisdictional or functional responsibility on the incident - if uncertain, include them.
- Identify assisting and cooperating agencies on the incident
 - Ensure the Team's Liaison Officer is notified of agencies at the incident
- Shift personnel and resources to address critical situations
 - Document the problem, the decision, and the time

Planning Section

- Help identify the allocated resources and personnel for the incident
- Gather information for Strategy Meeting
- Secure a local weather forecast for the next 24 to 48 hours
- Establish check-in point(s) with ICS-211 forms in place.
 - Provide check-in documents to IMT
- Locate a map that shows the area involved
 - Identify critical areas of concern
 - Identify life threat issues that require immediate focus
 - Map of ICP/Base Camp and travel routes

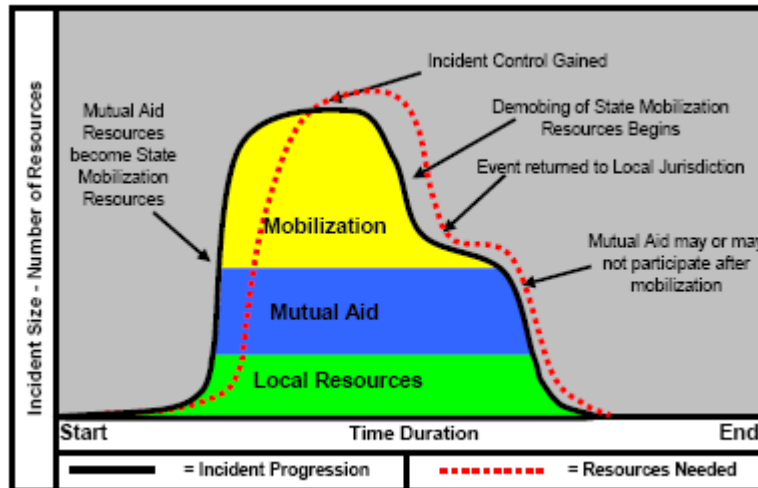
List current issues and opportunities for the incident:

- Input by initial IC and operations chief (who may have to be found).
- Post this list for the initial team transition meeting
- Delegate issues/problems
- Document assignments made, to whom, and times

- Identify current division/group sectors and assignments
 - With local operations chief

If qualified, start the Developing Incident Situation Analysis (DISA). Inquire about potential social, environmental, political, cultural and economic issues, and list them.

Forecast incident potential. Consider the “mobilization curve”. Look 24 to 48 hours ahead for resource needs.



Logistics Section

Survey the current ICP/base:

- Determine immediate logistical needs and current status of orders and ordering process
- Is it adequate, in view of incident potential and needs
 - If inadequate, suggest a facility conducive to planning and logistical functions
 - Need map of ICP/base camp with transportation routes

Information Officer

- Acquire list and contact information for all appropriate media.
- Prepare initial media policy and the initial release. Recognize all agencies.

SECTION 7: POST INCIDENT

Team Performance Reviews

At the end of each assignment, the Incident Commander is responsible to ensure that the team’s performance is critiqued by the host agency (or agencies) Agency

Administrator or designee. The team performance review should be shared by the Incident Commander with the Incident Management Team prior to departure.

Performance reviews are signed by both parties and a copy is sent to the Chair of the Policy Board to be used as a part of annual review by the Policy Board of the Team's overall performance.

A representative of the Policy Board will endeavor to attend each team close-out in order to hear first-hand about issues and concerns, and the Policy Board will provide feedback to each Incident Commander at the end of the year about his or her performance as an Incident Commander.

Individual Team Member Performance Review

Completion of the Position Task Books (PTB) is critical to ensuring Team professionalism and proficiency. At the end of each incident, all Team members who served in a supervisory capacity shall ensure they have signed off on all applicable PTB Evaluations for their assigned subordinates.