



Standard Operating Guidelines For National Area Command Teams

March, 2015

National Area Command Teams (ACTs) exist to assist and provide a service to the Agency or Agencies requesting help. We bring a highly professional, technically competent and efficient organization to the requesting unit(s). We will never forget our service orientation and will stay until the job is finished to the complete satisfaction of the host agency(s).

We will be accountable for the job we do and take responsibility for our actions. We will maintain a positive attitude and a cooperative, inclusive working relationship with all partners. We are here to help and our goal will be to exceed expectations in our quality and quantity of service.

We recognize the importance and value of local expertise and will utilize that which is available to help us succeed. We will listen to local advice and use their suggestions and assist them in any way we can, to accomplish our mission. We will set the example, by providing leadership, sincere concern, and mutual respect for incident personnel and all others we encounter during our assignments.

As part of our mission, we will share and inform others on the concept and utility of "Area Command" in order to promote understanding, acceptance and usage of the National Area Command Teams as another tool for complex incident management.

Incident Management is a fluid and dynamic process. As such, the processes and procedures identified in this document are guidelines only, and are subject to change and modification based upon the specific incident and situation.

Professionalism:

We set the example. We wear our area command shirts and position nametags on all assignments. We will approach our assignments and responsibilities with pride and perform in a quiet, but humble manner. We will let our actions speak for us rather than our words. Because we respect and value everyone's limited time, quality meeting management will be a high priority. Meetings and conference calls will begin promptly and be facilitated in a proactive, efficient manner. Daily Action Plans will be developed and communicated to all

interested parties on time and on schedule. They will be provided via technology most appropriate for the situation and will be maintained for currency on an ongoing basis.

Mobilization:

It is each team member's responsibility:

- To maintain contact with your coordination center and to meet the 2-hour response standards, when on call. If you are not available for activation with the team, you will notify the Area Commander and assist in finding a substitute with as much notice as possible.
- Your availability should be confirmed with the Area Commander prior to each team rotational period. We will "touch base" through conference calls or email, once the team is on 2-hour call.
- When an order is received the Area Commander will coordinate a conference call to share information, set travel schedules and designate a rally point.
- Each team member will share their travel plans with the rest of the team.
- Team members may travel independently to the assignment but will meet at the designated rally point prior to the in-briefing with the AA(s).
- Each Team member is responsible for the orientation of new team members and trainees that they supervise. This includes ACT values, expectations and work processes.

The Area Commander (ACDR):

- Will contact the Agency Administrator (AA) ordering the Team as soon as possible and obtain an initial briefing on the situation and circumstances.
- If necessary, inform AA(s) where to find information about ACT, to include roles, responsibilities and relationships.
- Will determine staffing needs for the assignment.
- The ACDR will negotiate with the ordering unit for any additional positions, above the approved 10 standard positions. The standard 10 positions will consist of the Area Commander, Assistant Area Commander Plans, Assistant Area Commander Logistics, and the Area Command Aviation Coordinator. The other six positions will be at the discretion of the Area Commander and the other primary members.
- Team members will pre-identify and confirm the above positions with personnel whenever possible. All staffing needs will be determined based on the Delegation of Authority, situational assessment, and expectations of the AA.
- Trainees will be a priority and may exceed the approved limit of 10

Assistant Area Commander Plans (ACPC):

- Determine staffing needs for Plans.
- Should contact the IMT's Planning Section Chiefs involved to gain situational awareness, including their challenges and needs.
- Access the IMT's web sites for current maps, IAP's and other pertinent information.
- Inform the IMT's PSC's of information for their use posted on our web site(s).
- Gather other local, geographic and national incident information for team situational awareness.
- Prepare a team briefing on the above items to be given at the rally point.

Assistant Area Commander Logistics (ACLC):

- Determine staffing needs for Logistics.
- Determine the best process to get team supplies to our assigned Area Command Post (ACP) by the time we arrive, with the appropriate people.
- Contact the host dispatch and expanded dispatch for a list of potential ACP locations, motels and transportation suggestions.
- Share with the host Dispatch or Expanded dispatch our criteria for an ACP to help facilitate locating a site. See "Team Facilities" described in this document.

Area Command Aviation Coordinator (ACAA):

- Determine staffing needs for ACAC function
- Contact local aviation managers and AOBD if assigned to gain situational awareness.
- Determine the need for additional Aviation Specialist.

Trainee / Currency:

- The team will maximize the use of trainees with any ACT assignment.
- Task book documentation will be completed on each trainee.
- Trainees will be assigned based on task book requirement needs. No more than two trainees will be used at one time for the same position, in order for the trainee to have a valuable experience.
- If the trainee has completed all of the tasks available on the assignment, another trainee maybe ordered to replace them.
- In addition the team will make use of individuals that are planning on attending S-620 in the future.
- It will be a priority to assist individuals with retention of currency

Team Briefings and Meetings:

All members of the team will be expected to attend and participate in the initial AA(s) briefing. This is the first opportunity we have to demonstrate our professional attitude. We will glean as much information from this meeting as possible and form relationships with the AA's, their staff, and local incident managers. We will use their advice and knowledge wherever we can to benefit the mission. Prior to the close of this meeting, we will reach an agreement about how and when to best involve the AA(s) and their staff in daily briefings.

The schedule for the IC/AC meetings and conference calls and internal ACT Strategy Meetings and Briefings will be agreed upon and facilitated by the ACPC. Team members should be present for all team meetings except when representing the ACT on field visits.

Daily briefings for AA(s) and Cooperators may be followed by a discussion that encourages interaction and problem-solving. As needed, the team should conduct a stand-up briefing to share information and maintain situational awareness of the AC issues. At any time when important information is received that effects the ACT or any Incident within AC, any member receiving the information can/will call for an immediate stand-up meeting to update all ACT members.

- The ACDR and Assistant Area Commanders will share equal authority.
- We will each cover for one another in addressing issues or needs in the absence of the member for an area of primary responsibility.
- Decision-Making will be by consensus when possible, with deference to the ACDR when circumstances require quick, decisive action. The ACDR and staff will strive to be available to the AA at all times. If possible, at least one of the primary staff will be present in the Area Command Office at all times.
- The Team will conduct an After Action Review (AAR) of the assignment prior to demobilization.

Time Keeping:

- Team members will fill out their own Fire Time Reports (FTR's): This includes any other units that we may supervise.
- We all need to monitor the length of operational periods our employees are working to meet the goals of fatigue management and length of "shift" to ensure Work/Rest Guidelines are followed by all team members.

Team Facilities:

- The location of the AC Post will be negotiated with the AA(s) and the ACDR, with input from the ACLC.
- The facility should have, as a minimum, a main room with workspace for 10-14 people and a smaller room for conference calls.
- Recommend space is not to be co-located with the Agency facilities but should be within a short travel distance if possible.

Supervision of Other Units:

- If delegated by the AA(s), the ACT may supervise other incident units, such as Expanded Dispatch, Joint Information Center, etc.
- Supervision of these type units may require additional ACT staffing.
- Transition and expectations will require AA and ACDR negotiations.
- It is recommended that should such supervision be an incident need, that the AA(s) consider assigning all separate functional unit operations within Area Command into single functional unit operation for the duration of the assignment (ex: individual Expanded Dispatch operations into a single Expanded Dispatch Center).

Section Specific Expectations:

Command:

- ❖ Facilitate a process for positive relations with:
 - The GMAC, NMAC or local MAC Group, ask for a time when we can visit and update them at their location.
 - Unit AA, Deputy and “Chief Officer” (FMO).
 - Local sub unit AA’s (and (FM). ACT will determine the expectations of the host agency for ACT interface and coordinate the expectations with these positions.
 - Other key Unit people such as the IBA, Safety Officer and local unit manager.
 - That will build on past relations and personalities of the IMT Command & General Staff to maximize success in these relationships.
 - During long-term incidents, ensure quality in-briefings for both new ACT team members coming as replacements or the return of ACT members from “R&R”.
 - Decisions made outside the Area Command Post will be shared with all the C&G as soon as possible.
 - Maintain positive relationships with cooperators and assisting organizations

- Establish, document, and practice a 2 minute drill for an Incident with-in Incident and assure IMT's do likewise
- ❖ Coordinate and facilitate information flow:
 - Between incidents and the managing agencies
 - Insure the information offices understand and follow the agency specific processes and procedures.
 - Insure the key agency messages and talking points are available to the information offices and are being used.
 - Between incidents within or near AC
 - Insure that each incident is coordinating and sharing information with neighboring incidents, both within and outside AC. This will result in a coordinated and effective information program with timely and accurate information to the public and media.
 - Between the incidents and the public
 - Insure that accurate, timely and approved information is being distributed to the public using all the tools and avenues available.
 - Provide assistance to the incidents in distributing information to the public in the use of stand alone websites, Joint Information Center, Call Center and other avenues as needed.
 - Facilitate effective liaison between the AC and local and state agencies and organizations
 - Use PowerPoint/ GoToMeeting or other similar communication technologies if possible.

Planning:

- ❖ Assemble and maintain basic information on individual incidents within the AC area, including:
 - Strategic Planning (WFDSS)
 - Home Unit direction, objectives, and constraints
 - Maps of incidents Incident Action Plans
 - Insure the IMT's understand that the critical resource allocation is from information declared on the ICS-209
 - Decision Support products such as FSPRO.
 - Determine process and procedures for decision support from GACC and GIS from local unit.
 - Post the Daily Unit Log Flip Charts, a schedule of daily conference calls, IMT transitions, etc.

- ❖ Prepare, present, and document all pertinent information for Incident Management Teams, including:
 - Prepare Delegation of Authority and Leader's Expectations documents from AC to Incident Commander
 - Prepare Return of Delegated Authority from Incident Commander to AC, and
 - Assemble inputs from AA(s), Area Commander(s), and other interested persons/organizations and prepare IMT Performance Evaluations

- ❖ Assemble and maintain list of incident **critical** resources:
 - Prepare recommendations for allocation and/or reallocation of **critical** resources

- ❖ Assist in Demobilization activities for AC, including:
 - Assist with preparation of the AC Demobilization Plan, including priorities and procedures
 - Establish direction for demobilization of critical resources
 - Ensure coordination of Incident Demobilization Plans between AC, and Agency Dispatch offices

- ❖ Facilitate Area Command Daily Activities, including:
 - Preparing Area Command Daily Action Plan
 - Sharing the Log of Significant Events and Decisions daily with ACT
 - Preparing and facilitate Area Command, Incident Commander, and AA(s) briefings
 - Preparing and distribute Area Command decisions to all affected parties
 - Planning and coordinate transition and performance evaluations of IMT's
 - Facilitating daily evening ACT Strategy and Priority Setting Meeting.
 - Establishing a long range outlook process (24/48/72 hour or beyond and significant event) and the short term travel schedule.
 - Including a specific safety item for the next operational period.
 - Organizing a strategic plan with a 5 to 7 day outlooks and IMT organizational adjustments
 - Facilitating a strategic plan for IMT organizations, adjustments in assignments and a 14 to 21 day forecast.
 - Facilitate the daily Team Stand Up Meetings.

- ❖ Maintain AC Documentation package in both "hard-copy" and electronic formats

- ❖ Prepare and distribute final AC narrative and final documentation

Logistics:

- ❖ Insure AC's allocation of critical resources is communicated to and understood by expanded dispatch in a timely manner
- ❖ Gather intelligence from Incident Logistics Section Chiefs, Dispatch Centers, Expanded Dispatch Centers, Buying Teams, GACC's and other sources responsible for the incident through conference calls to determine critical resource shortages and issues
- ❖ Establish a Logistics/Finance Conference Call with Incidents and support functions, (Expanded Dispatch and Buying Teams). Determine frequency of Logistics/Finance Conference Call with Incidents and support groups, daily or as needed.
- ❖ Insure that a least one team member has ROSS access.
- ❖ Establish procedure to facilitate sharing or reallocation of resources between individual teams in a timely manner.
- ❖ Identify and order resources and space required for AC organization and provide supervision and guidance to resources assigned to Logistics.
- ❖ Establish and maintain coordination and communications with other Area Commanders, IMTs, Coordination Center, Expanded Dispatch, Geographic MAC, agency personnel, Buying Team and others.
- ❖ Monitor effectiveness of Expanded Dispatch and the Buying Team and insure that each is performing as needed. Support each by scheduled visits from ACT members.

Aviation:

- ❖ Assess the status of aviation activities to assure safe activities including separation for IA, need for TFR's location of helibases/spots etc
- ❖ Provide focal point for AC for both air and ground coordination for initial attack procedures and agreements based on delegations of authority.
- ❖ Determine the need for Air Space or Frequency Coordinator and work with the local Unit to determine the best use and location for these positions.
- ❖ Coordinate with incident Air Operation Branch Directors, dispatchers, Airspace Coordinators, FAA, Department of Defense, and local aviation

authorities to ensure Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR's) are in place and Military Training Routes or Special-Use Airspace have been mitigated.

- ❖ Coordinate with local and adjacent initial attack dispatchers and aircraft bases to ensure procedures for transiting Initial Attack resources into and across the TFR area. Ensure flight following procedures, entry/exit routes and corridors, hazards, frequencies and air space are known to all affected.
- ❖ Following AA(s) briefing, coordinate with local unit aviation managers, dispatch centers, aviation facility managers and expanded dispatch to establish a working relationship.
- ❖ Evaluate and coordinate the IA Zone and boundary process with host agencies and the IMT's.
- ❖ Conduct an aviation conference call as needed with incidents, dispatch, airspace coordinator, frequency coordinator and local unit aviation.
- ❖ Provide incidents, local Initial Attack (IA) forces and IA Dispatchers with an AC Aviation Plan.
- ❖ Monitor Safecomms via the internet and during aviation conference calls. Ensure risk management is being used for incident mission planning and operations.
- ❖ Monitor incident aviation adherence to interagency policy and safety procedures.
- ❖ Establish a liaison with any military units assigned and coordinate the assignment, utilization, status, and disposition of military aviation assets.

Procedures for an “Incident within an Incident”:

The following procedure will be discussed with IMT’s and the AA(s) for their understanding and concurrence:

When a major injury or fatality occurs on an incident within an established AC it is the responsibility of the IMT to respond, size-up the situation, communicate with local responders, and provide care for the injured. AC’s role is to provide coordination and communication both internally and externally. When a serious incident, accident, injury, or fatality occurs within AC ~~rea Command~~ the following will be done:

1. **IMT’s** will:

- Respond within their established “Incident within an Incident” procedures and their Medical Plan.
- Notify local Law Enforcement, when appropriate.
- Notify Local Dispatch Office and AC ~~rea Command~~.

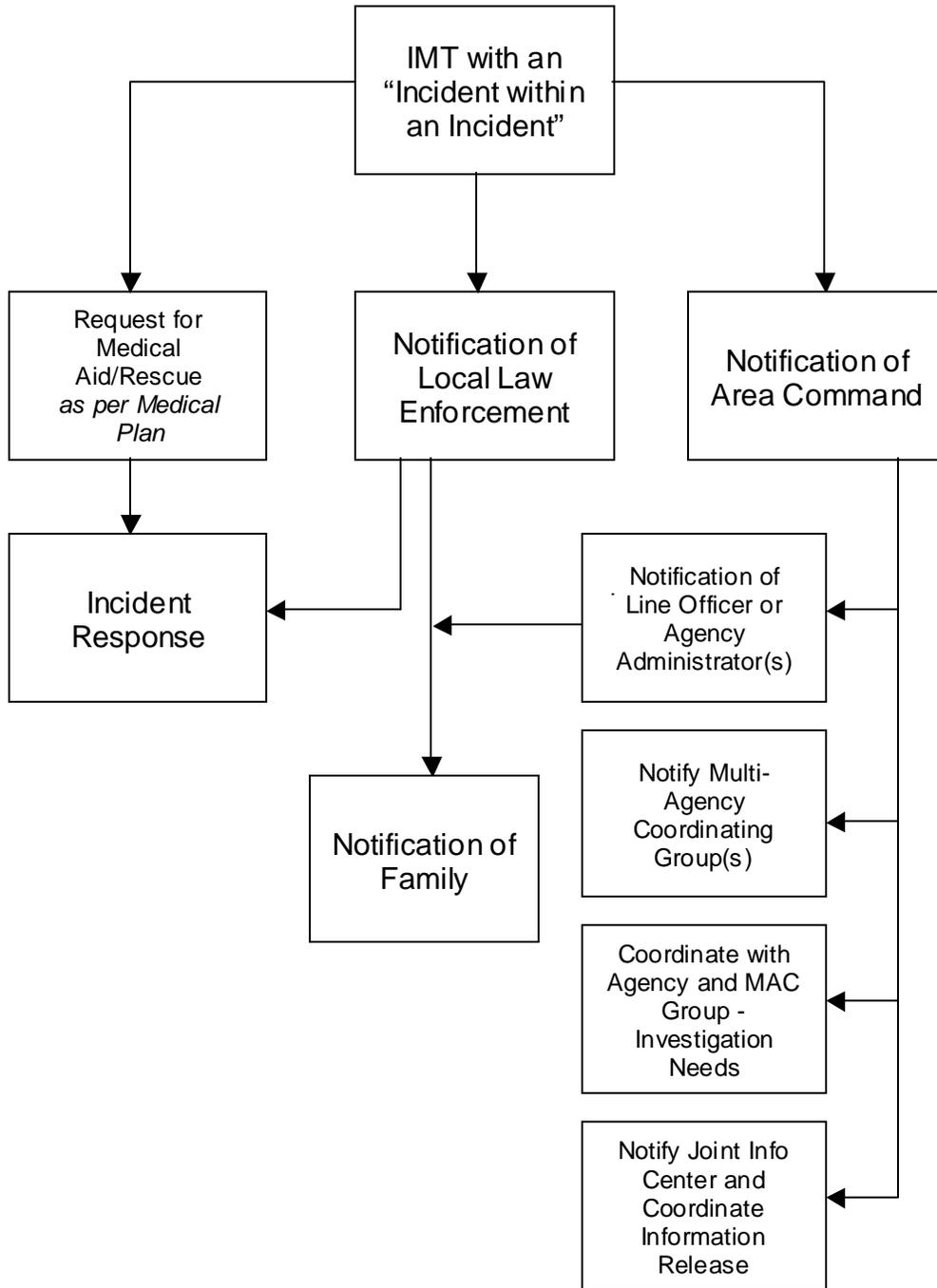
2. **AC** will

- Notify AA(s), the Sub-geographic and Geographic MAC Groups.
- Work with the Geographic MAC and assure that the proper level of investigation is mobilized to the incident, to include facilitating the Investigation and Critical Incident Stress Team(s) needs if necessary.
- Keep all parties updated as the situation develops.
- Assist AA(s) in accomplishing their duties.
- Notify the Area Joint Information Center and work with the AA(s) on the release of information to the public.

3. **AA(s)** will lead in fiscal, human resources processes associated with an incident, accident and/or fatality.

4. **Local Law Enforcement** will respond to incidents and take the lead in notification of families with the AA(s).

“Incident within an Incident Flow Chart”



Post Incident Close-out with the Agency Administrator(s):

- All members of the team are expected to attend the post incident close-out with the AA(s).
- For the close-out meeting, the team will prepare a final narrative and final assignment package to include all pertinent documentation for future reference by the host agency(s).
- A copy of the final package will be provided to every ACT member for reference.
- The ACPC will coordinate and compile the final package.

ACT Staff Meeting/Team Critique/AAR:

- The AC Team will meet at least once a day to discuss team working relationships and other team issues.
- These will be short, round-robin type meetings facilitated by the AACCP.
- At the end of each assignment, the team will debrief for the purpose of continuous improvement in team operations and processes.