



INTRODUCTION TO THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS

IS-100.SCA COURSE SUMMARY

Lesson 1: Course Overview

Incident Command System: Promoting Safer Schools

Each school day more than 50 million students are entrusted to our care. On most days, our schools are safe havens for teaching and learning.

In spite of our best efforts and preparation, school personnel may need to serve as first responders for an array of emergency incidents. Each year, natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, and severe storms affect schools. Health-related incidents such as flu outbreaks, food-borne diseases, and even rabid animals can threaten schoolchildren. And, accidents — whether in chemistry labs, sporting venues, or on schoolbuses — may occur.

Unfortunately, schools are not immune from intruders, crime, or violence. The terrorist attack against a school in Beslan, Russia, shocked the entire world. An analysis of the Beslan school attack found that responders failed to establish and maintain clear incident command.

Given today's threats, schools must be prepared to respond in partnership with local, State, tribal, and Federal agencies. As partners, you must respond together in a seamless, coordinated fashion using the same terminology and approach.

The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management approach. ICS allows school personnel and community responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure that matches the complexities and demands of the incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. The ICS structure is flexible. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost-effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations.

In this course, you'll learn ICS principles that can be applied to school-based incidents. And, more importantly, you'll be better able to interface with other community responders.

Course Goals

The Emergency Management Institute developed the Introduction to ICS for Schools (IS-100 for Schools) course in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education.

The overall course goal is to promote school safety by:

- Familiarizing you with how ICS principles can be applied in school-based incidents.
- Preparing you to interface with community response personnel.

Overall Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, you should be familiar with:

- ICS applications in school-based incidents.
- ICS organizational principles and elements.
- ICS positions and responsibilities.
- ICS facilities and functions.
- ICS planning.

In addition, you will learn the steps you should take to be accountable for your actions during an incident.

Lesson 2: ICS Overview

History of the Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires in California. Property damage ran into the millions of dollars, and many people died or were injured. Experts who analyzed the California fire response and other incidents, determined that problems could rarely be attributed to lack of resources or failure of tactics.

What were the lessons learned?

Surprisingly, studies found that response problems were far more likely to result from inadequate management than from any other single reason. Weaknesses in incident management were often due to:

- Lack of accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Poor communication, due to both inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Lack of an orderly, systematic planning process.
- No common, flexible, predesigned management structure that enables commanders to delegate responsibilities and manage workloads efficiently.
- No predefined methods to integrate interagency requirements into the management structure and planning process effectively.

A poorly managed incident response in a school setting would be devastating. With so much at stake, we must be able to effectively manage our response efforts. The Incident Command System, or ICS, allows us to manage school incidents and interface with trained responders.

ICS works. It saves lives.

What Is ICS?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management approach. ICS:

- Is based on proven incident management practices.
- Defines incident response organizational concepts and structures.
- Consists of procedures for managing personnel, facilities, equipment, and communications.
- Is used throughout the lifecycle of an incident (e.g., from threat to parent reunification).

Why Use ICS?

Think about the challenges you identified in the school bus accident scenario activity. ICS is designed to help school personnel ensure:

- The safety of students, staff, responders, and others.
- The achievement of incident objectives.
- The efficient use of resources.

The Bottom Line: ICS saves lives!

ICS Benefits

ICS:

- Meets the needs of incidents of any kind or size.

- Allows school personnel and responders to meld rapidly into a common management structure.
- Provides logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- Is cost effective by avoiding duplication of efforts.

ICS Built on Best Practices

The Incident Command System is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents.

ICS has been tested in more than 30 years of emergency and nonemergency applications, by all levels of government and in the private sector.

Without ICS: Confusion and Poor Decisions

More incident responses fail due to poor management rather than from insufficient resources. Without ICS, incidents typically:

- Lack accountability, including unclear chains of command and supervision.
- Have poor communications due to both inefficient uses of available communications systems and conflicting codes and terminology.
- Use unsystematic planning processes and fail to reach objectives.
- Are unable to efficiently integrate responders into standard organizational structures and roles.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5)

In response to the attacks on September 11, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) in February 2003.

HSPD-5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improved coordination of Federal, State, local, and private sector response to incidents and described the way these agencies will prepare for such a response.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is:

- A consistent, nationwide approach for all levels of government to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for and respond to domestic incidents.
- A core set of concepts, principles, and terminology for incident command and multiagency coordination.

NIMS requires the use of the Incident Command System.

ICS Mandates

NIMS requires the use of ICS for all domestic responses. NIMS also requires that all levels of government, including Territories and Tribal Organizations, adopt ICS as a condition of receiving Federal preparedness funding.

This requirement also applies to all schools and school districts receiving emergency preparedness funding including the U.S. Department of Education Readiness and Emergency

Management for Schools (REMS) grants, CFDA #84.184 E (formerly known as the Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) grant program).

When Is ICS Used?

ICS can be used to manage any of the following types of incidents:

- Disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, floods, ice storms, or earthquakes.
- Disease outbreaks and prevention measures.
- Search operations for a missing student.
- Hazardous materials accidents in chemistry labs.
- Hostile intruders or other criminal acts.
- Planned events, such as school drills, festivals, sporting events, and graduations.

Lesson 3: ICS Features & Principles

Making ICS Work

The features and principles used to manage an incident differ from day-to-day school management approaches. Effective incident management relies on a tight command and control structure. Although information is exchanged freely through the ICS structure, strict adherence must be paid to top-down direction.

To make ICS work, each of us must commit to following this command and control approach.

ICS Features

As you learned in the previous lesson, ICS is based on proven management principles that contribute to the strength and efficiency of the overall system.

ICS principles are implemented through a wide range of management features including the use of common terminology and plain language, and a modular organizational structure.

ICS emphasizes effective planning, including management by objectives and reliance on an Incident Action Plan. The ICS features related to command structure include chain of command and unity of command.

ICS helps ensure full utilization of all incident resources by:

- Maintaining a manageable span of control.
- Establishing predesignated incident locations and facilities.
- Implementing resource management practices.
- Ensuring integrated communications.

ICS supports responders and decisionmakers through effective information and intelligence management. ICS counts on each of us taking personal accountability for our own actions. And the mobilization process helps ensure that incident objectives can be achieved while responders and students remain safe. This lesson covers each of these ICS features in detail.

Common Terminology and Clear Text

The ability to communicate within the ICS is absolutely critical. During an incident:

- Communications should be in plain English or clear text.
- Do not use radio codes, school-specific codes, or jargon.

Modular Organization

The ICS organizational structure:

- Develops in a top-down, modular fashion that is based on the size and complexity of the incident.
- Is determined based on the incident objectives and resource requirements. Only those functions or positions necessary for a particular incident are filled.
- Expands and contracts in a flexible manner. When needed, separate functional elements may be established.
- Requires that each element have a person in charge.

Management by Objectives

As school personnel, you understand the value of learning objectives. Incident objectives are used to ensure that everyone within the ICS organization has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

Incident objectives are established based on the following priorities:

1. Life Safety
2. Incident Stabilization
3. Property Preservation

Reliance on an Incident Action Plan

Every incident must have an Incident Action Plan (IAP) that:

- Specifies the incident objectives.
- States the activities to be completed.
- Covers a specified timeframe, called an operational period.
- May be **oral or written**—except for hazardous materials incidents, which require a written IAP.

Incident Action Planning Process

- **Step 1:** Understand school incident policy and direction.
- **Step 2:** Assess incident situation.
- **Step 3:** Establish incident objectives.
- **Step 4:** Select appropriate strategy or strategies to achieve objectives.
- **Step 5:** Perform tactical direction (applying tactics appropriate to the strategy, assigning the right resources, and monitoring their performance).
- **Step 6:** Provide necessary followup (changing strategy or tactics, adding or subtracting resources, etc.).

Elements of an Incident Action Plan

Every IAP must have four elements:

- What do we want to do?
- Who is responsible for doing it?
- How do we communicate with each other?
- What is the procedure if someone is injured?

The important part is having a plan and communicating it. The illustration shows the first plan and organizational structure developed by the Incident Commander at the Pentagon following the 9/11 attacks.

ICS Organization

In the ICS organization:

- There is no correlation with the school administrative structure.
- The structure is unique in order to avoid confusion over whom you should take direction from.
- Everyone's titles are different from their daily school titles.

Chain of Command

Chain of command is an orderly line of authority within the ranks of the incident management organization. Chain of command:

- Allows an incident manager to direct and control the actions of all personnel under his or her supervision.
- Avoids confusion by requiring that orders flow from supervisors.

Chain of command does not prevent personnel from directly communicating with each other to ask for or share information.

Unity of Command

Under unity of command, personnel:

- Report to only one ICS supervisor.
- Receive work assignments only from their ICS supervisors.

Transfer of Command

The process of moving the responsibility for incident command from one Incident Commander to another is called transfer of command. Transfer of command may take place when:

- A more qualified person assumes command.
- The incident situation changes over time.
- There is normal turnover of personnel on long or extended incidents, i.e., to accommodate work/rest requirements.

The transfer of command process always includes a transfer of command briefing, which may be oral, written, or a combination of both.

Manageable Span of Control

Another basic ICS feature concerns the supervisory structure of the organization. Maintaining adequate span of control throughout the ICS organization is very important.

Span of control pertains to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident.

Maintaining an effective span of control is important at incidents where safety and accountability are a top priority.

Span of Control

The type of incident, nature of the task, hazards and safety factors, and distances between personnel and resources all influence span of control considerations.

Effective span of control on incidents may vary from three to seven, and a ratio of one supervisor to five subordinates is recommended.

Predesignated Incident Locations and Facilities

Incident activities may be accomplished from a variety of operational locations and support facilities.

The Incident Commander identifies and establishes needed facilities depending on incident needs. Standardized names are used to identify types of facilities.

In order to integrate with community responders, it is important to be familiar with the standard ICS facilities.

Incident Facilities Virtual Tour

This presentation introduces the ICS facilities. In smaller, school-based incidents you most likely will not need many of the standard ICS facilities. However, in large incidents, such as Hurricane Katrina, undamaged schools are often converted into ICS facilities.

The Incident Command Post, or ICP, is the location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident operations. There is generally only one ICP for each incident, but it may change locations during the event. Every incident must have some form of an Incident Command Post. The ICP may be located outside, in a vehicle, trailer, or tent, or within a building. The ICP will be positioned outside of the present and potential hazard zone but close enough to the incident to maintain command.

Staging Areas are temporary locations at an incident where personnel and equipment wait to be assigned. Staging Areas should be located close enough to the incident for a timely response, but far enough away to be out of the immediate impact zone. In large complex incidents, there may be more than one Staging Area at an incident. Staging Areas can be collocated with other ICS facilities.

A Base is the location from which primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered.

A Camp is the location where resources may be kept to support incident operations if a Base is not accessible to all resources. Camps are equipped and staffed to provide food, water, sleeping areas, and sanitary services. A school gym or cafeteria could be used as a Camp for a community-wide incident.

A Helibase is the location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted. Helibases are generally used on a more long-term basis and include such services as fueling and maintenance.

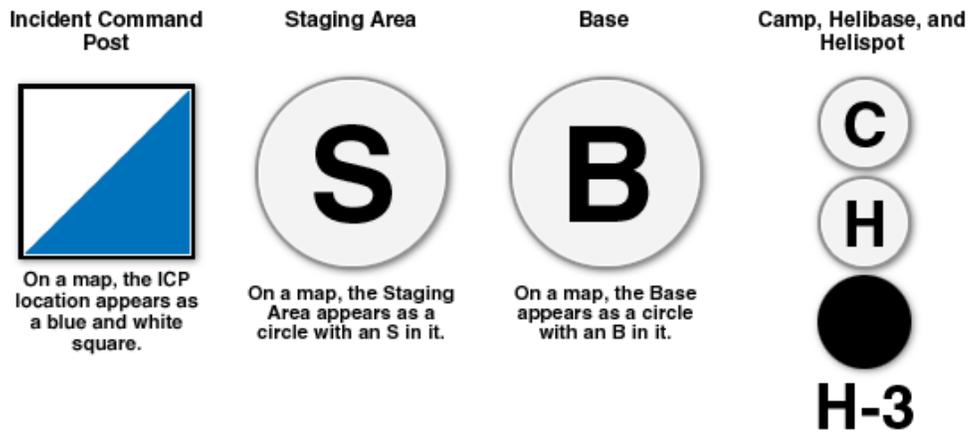
Helispots are more temporary locations at the incident, where helicopters can safely land and take off. Multiple Helispots may be used. Think about your school environment. Could you use a parking lot or athletic field for a temporary Helispot?

Let's review the different ICS facilities covered in this video.

- The **Incident Command Post** is the location from which the Incident Commander oversees all incident operations.
- **Staging Areas** are where personnel and equipment are gathered while waiting to be assigned.
- A **Base** is the location from which primary logistics and administrative functions are coordinated and administered.
- A **Helibase** is the location from which helicopter-centered air operations are conducted.
- **Helispots** are more temporary locations at the incident, where helicopters can safely land and take off.

Incident Facility Map Symbols

In ICS, it is important to be able to identify the map symbols associated with the basic incident facilities. The map symbols used to represent each of the six basic ICS facilities are:



ICS Facilities and Schools

Some points to remember about ICS facilities and schools are as follows:

- A single Incident Command Post should be established on all incidents, even on a small incident.
- School incidents may require additional facilities beyond those that are standard ICS facilities.

Example: For example, if you need a Student-Parent Reunification Area add that site to your incident facilities. It is preferable to add needed facilities rather than to use a standard ICS facility, such as a Staging Area, for a school unique function. A Staging Area is intended only for responders waiting for assignments, not parents waiting for their children.

Integrated Communications

A common communications plan is essential for ensuring that responders can communicate with one another during an incident.

The response to the Columbine school shooting incident was hampered by response agencies operating on radios set to different frequencies.

Prior to an incident, schools must work with local responders to ensure that communication equipment, procedures, and systems can operate together during a response (interoperable).

Information and Intelligence Management

The analysis and sharing of information and intelligence is an important component of ICS. Incident management must establish a process for gathering, sharing, and managing incident-related information and intelligence.

Intelligence includes other operational information that may come from a variety of different sources, such as:

- Risk assessments.
- Threats including potential for school violence.
- Surveillance of disease outbreak.
- Weather forecasts.
- Structural plans and vulnerabilities.

Accounting for Incident Resources

In ICS, resources refer to personnel, supplies, and equipment. During an incident, it is critical to know:

- What resources are needed and available.
- Where deployed resources are located.

Effective resource management ensures that response personnel are safe and incident objectives are achieved.

Resource Management

Resource management includes processes for:

- Categorizing resources.
- Ordering resources.
- Dispatching (activating) resources.
- Tracking resources.
- Recovering resources.

It also includes processes for reimbursement for resources, as appropriate.

Mobilization

At any incident, resources must be organized, assigned, and directed to accomplish the incident objectives.

As school personnel, you should be mobilized or activated to join the incident response. Unless you must take an immediate life-saving action, you should not start responding without being mobilized. The mobilization process improves safety and cuts down on unnecessary chaos.

If you are mobilized, you need to check in to receive an assignment.

ICS and Personal Accountability

Incidents succeed when everyone assumes personal accountability by:

- **Not going around the chain of command.** Only take direction from your immediate ICS supervisor (not your day-to-day supervisor). Exchange of information is encouraged; however, all assignments and resource requests must go through your immediate ICS supervisor.
- **Reporting critical information** about safety hazards, status, changing conditions/needs within assigned areas, and resource needs.
- **Not freelancing.** Do not start responding unless you are deployed or your actions are critical for life and safety. Make sure to check in when you begin your assignment. If the plan is not working or your assigned activity cannot be completed, tell your supervisor. Do not create your own plan of action.

Lesson 4: Incident Commander & General Staff Functions

Standard ICS Position Titles

In this course, standardized ICS titles are used. Using standard ICS position titles serves three important purposes:

- Titles provide a common standard for all responding agencies. For example, if one school uses the title Incident Commander, another School Commander, etc., this lack of consistency can cause confusion at an incident.
- The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by seniority.
- Standardized position titles help ensure that the personnel in those positions are qualified.

Performance of Management Functions

Every incident requires that certain management functions be performed. The problem must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for.

Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions still will apply.

Five Major Management Functions

There are five major management functions that are the foundation upon which the ICS organization develops.

These functions apply whether you are handling a routine emergency, organizing for a major nonemergency event, or managing a response to a major disaster.

Management Function Descriptions

Below is a brief description of the major ICS functions:

- Incident Command** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident.
- Operations** Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes the tactics and directs all operational resources.
- Planning** Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.
- Logistics** Provides resources and needed services to support the achievement of the incident objectives.
- Finance & Administration** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Incident Commander

The Incident Commander has overall responsibility for managing the incident by establishing objectives, planning strategies, and implementing tactics. The **Incident Commander is the only position that is always staffed in ICS applications**. On small incidents and events, one person, the Incident Commander, may accomplish all management functions.

The Incident Commander is responsible for all ICS management functions until he or she delegates the function.

Delegating Incident Management Functions

As you learned in the previous lesson, the ICS organization is modular and has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. On a larger incident, the Incident Commander may create Sections and delegate the Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration functions.



Remember . . . The Incident Commander only creates those sections that are needed. If a Section is not staffed, the Incident Commander will personally manage those functions.

Incident Commander's Overall Role

The Incident Commander must have the authority to manage the incident and be briefed fully. In some instances, a written delegation of authority should be established.

Personnel assigned by the Incident Commander have the authority of their assigned positions, regardless of the rank they hold within the school administration.

Incident Commander's Overall Role

My job is to provide the overall leadership for incident response. I am able to delegate my authority to others to manage the ICS organization. I take general direction and receive my delegation of authority from school administration. However, at the incident scene, I am in charge.

Incident Commander Responsibilities

In addition to having overall responsibility for managing the entire incident, the Incident Commander is specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring incident safety.
- Providing information services to internal and external stakeholders, such as parents.
- Establishing and maintaining liaison with other agencies participating in the incident.

The Incident Commander may appoint one or more Deputies. **Deputy Incident Commanders must be as qualified as the Incident Commander.**

Incident Commander's Responsibilities

As the Incident Commander, I am responsible for all activities and functions until I delegate them. So, one of the first things I do is assess my need for staff. I know that for an incident that is both complex and long term, I will need more staff. In addition, I may decide that I need a Deputy.

Also, I establish incident objectives for the organization based on the situation and direction given by the school administration. The type of plan depends on the magnitude of the incident. Most simple incidents don't require written plans. If it were a complex incident, I would direct my staff to develop a written Incident Action Plan. The benefit of ICS is that the organization can be tailored to match the need.

Selecting and Changing Incident Commanders

As incidents become more or less complex, command may change to meet the needs of the incident.

Rank, grade, and seniority are not the factors used to select the Incident Commander. **The Incident Commander is always a highly qualified individual trained to lead the incident response.** For example, the school principal may not automatically be the Incident Commander.

A formal transfer of command at an incident always requires a transfer of command briefing for the incoming Incident Commander.

Expanding the Organization

As incidents grow, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performance of certain activities to the Command Staff and the General Staff. The Incident Commander will add positions only as needed.



Command Staff

Depending upon the size and type of incident or event, the Incident Commander may designate personnel to provide information, safety, and liaison services. In ICS, the following personnel comprise the Command Staff:

- **Public Information Officer**, who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or parents.
- **Safety Officer**, who monitors safety conditions and develops measures for assuring the safety of all response personnel.
- **Liaison Officer**, who serves as the primary contact for supporting agencies assisting at an incident.

The Command Staff reports directly to the Incident Commander.

Meet the Command Staff

Public Information Officer

I report directly to the Incident Commander. I am the primary contact for anyone who wants information about the incident and our response to it. I provide information to the media, public, and parents. School incidents attract a lot of media attention. Without me, media requests would overwhelm the Incident Commander. I also coordinate communications to our internal audiences including both incident staff and school personnel. It's very important for me to coordinate with other public information staff to ensure that we do not issue confusing or conflicting information.

Accurate information is essential. In the end, the Incident Commander will approve all information that I release. During a complex incident, I will probably need several Assistant Public Information Officers to help me.

Safety Officer

My job is to make sure everyone is safe. I advise the Incident Commander on issues regarding incident safety, but I would like to emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility. I work very closely with responders to make sure they are as safe as possible under the circumstances. I conduct risk analyses and implement safety measures. I have the authority to stop any unsafe activity that I observe. During a complex incident, I will need quite a few assistants to be my eyes and ears.

Liaison Officer

I'm the go-between. I assist the Incident Commander by serving as the point of contact for other response organizations participating in the operation. I provide briefings to school administration

and other agencies involved in the operation. I respond to requests from incident personnel for contacts among the assisting and cooperating agencies. I also monitor incident operations in order to identify any current or potential problems between the school and response agencies.

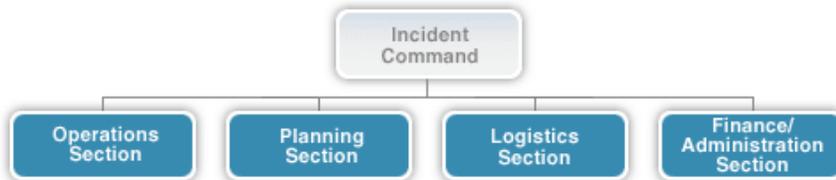
Training and Qualifying Command Staff

Incident Commander	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority to commit school resources • Past experience as incident responder • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Take command ◦ Balance response initiatives with safety concerns ◦ Motivate responders ◦ Communicate clear directions ◦ Size up the situation and make rapid decisions ◦ Assess the effectiveness of tactics/strategies ◦ Be flexible and modify plans as necessary
Public Information Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media relations training/experience • Authority as designated spokesperson • Ability to maintain grace under fire
Safety Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker safety and HazMat training/experience • Ability to assess risk and develop safety measures
Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to represent the concerns and needs of all parties involved in a response

Lesson 5: General Staff Functions

General Staff

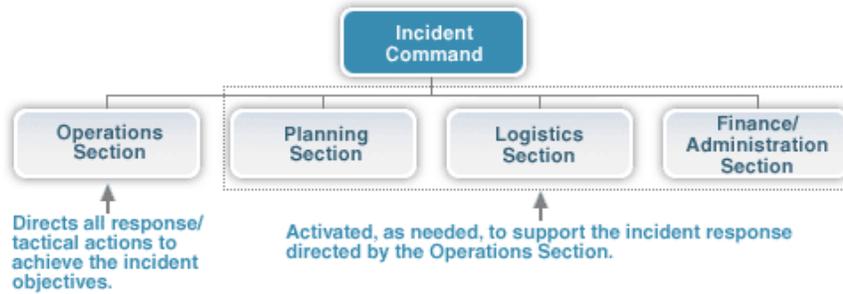
To maintain span of control, the Incident Commander may establish the following four Sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.



The General Staff report directly to the Incident Commander.

General Staff Overview

The General Staff overall responsibilities are summarized below:



In an expanding incident, the Incident Commander first establishes the Operations Section. The remaining Sections are established as needed to support the operation.

ICS Position Titles

Additional levels of supervision are added as the ICS organization expands. Let's review the ICS supervisory titles:

Organizational Level	Title	Support Position
Incident Command	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
General Staff (Section)	Chief	Deputy
Branch	Director	Deputy
Division/Group	Supervisor	N/A
Unit	Leader	Manager
Strike Team/Task Force	Leader	Single Resource Boss

ICS Organizational Components

Sections: The organizational levels with responsibility for a major functional area of the incident (e.g., Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration). The person in charge of each Section is designated as a Chief.

Divisions: Used to divide an incident geographically. The person in charge of each Division is designated as a Supervisor.

Groups: Used to describe functional areas of operations. The person in charge of each Group is designated as a Supervisor.

Branches: Used when the number of Divisions or Groups exceeds the span of control. Can be either geographical or functional. The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a Director.

Task Forces: A combination of mixed resources with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Task Force Leader.

Strike Teams: A set number of resources of the same kind and type with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Strike Team Leader.

Single Resources: May be individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor that can be used at an incident.

ICS Section Chiefs and Deputies

As mentioned previously, the person in charge of each Section is designated as a Chief. Section Chiefs have the ability to expand their Sections to meet the needs of the situation.

Each of the Section Chiefs may have a Deputy, or more than one, if necessary. The Deputy:

- May assume responsibility for a specific portion of the primary position, work as relief, or be assigned other tasks.
- Should always be as proficient as the person for whom he or she works.

Increasing Interagency Coordination

When an incident involves multiple agencies, assigning Deputies from other organizations can increase interagency coordination.

For example, in the case of a bomb threat, Incident Command may be transferred to a first response organization while a school official may serve as a Deputy. When first responders and school personnel are integrated into the same ICS organizational structure, valuable information can be shared and crisis decisionmaking improved.

Operations Section Chief

Typically, the Operations Section Chief is the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand. The Operations Section Chief:

- Develops and implements strategy and tactics to carry out the incident objectives.
- Organizes, assigns, and supervises the response resources.

Operations Section Chief's Role

I take direction from the Incident Commander. I'm responsible for developing and implementing strategy and tactics to accomplish the incident objectives. This means that I organize, assign, and supervise all the tactical or response resources assigned to the incident. I would also manage the Staging Area, if one were established.

Operations Section: Single Resources

Single Resources are individuals, a piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or a crew or team of individuals with an identified supervisor. On a smaller incident, the Operations Section may be comprised of an Operations Section Chief and single resources.



Operations Section: Teams

Single resources may be organized into teams. Using standard ICS terminology, the two types of team configurations are:

- **Task Forces** are a combination of **mixed resources** with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Leader.
- **Strike Teams** include all **similar resources** with common communications operating under the direct supervision of a Leader.

Most school-based incidents typically use the terms, "Teams and Team Leaders." The terms Task Forces and Strike Teams comply with ICS common terminology and would be more easily understood by community-based responders.

School Incident "Strike Teams"

The Operations Section organization chart shows possible team assignments in a school incident. Each team would have a Team Leader reporting to the Operations Section Chief.



Note that these are examples of possible teams. Teams should be established based on the type of incident and unique requirements of the school.

Potential Operations Section Strike Teams

Note that these are examples of possible teams. Teams should be established based on the type of incident and unique requirements of the school.

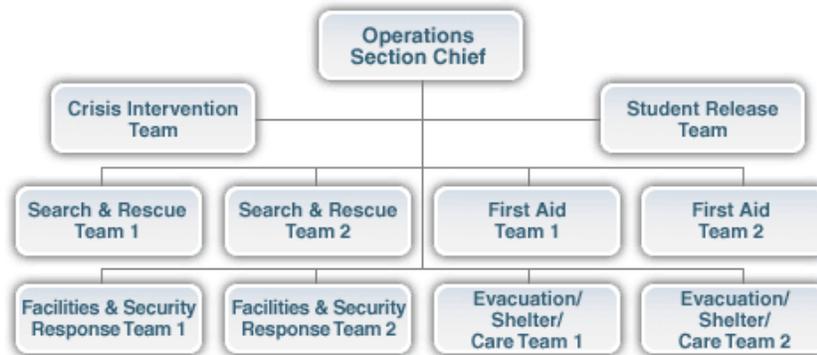
Strike Team	Potential Responsibilities
Search & Rescue Team	Search & Rescue Teams search the entire school facility, entering only after they have checked the outside for signs of structural damage and determined that it is safe to enter. Search & Rescue Teams are responsible for ensuring that all students and staff evacuate the building (or, if it is unsafe to move the persons, that their locations are documented so that professional responders can locate them easily and extricate them). Search & Rescue Teams are also responsible for:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and marking unsafe areas. • Conducting initial damage assessment. • Obtaining injury and missing student reports from teachers.
First Aid Team	<p>First Aid Teams provide triage and treatment for students and other disaster victims. First Aid Teams are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up first aid area for students. • Assessing and treating injuries. • Completing master injury report. <p>Note: The Logistics Section Medical Unit provides care to responders. The Operations Section First Aid Team is dedicated to students or other disaster victims.</p>
Evacuation/ Shelter/Care Team	<p>Evacuation, shelter, and student care in an emergency is one of the most important tasks faced by schools. It includes student accounting, protection from weather, providing for sanitation needs, and providing for food and water. The Evacuation/Shelter/Care Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting for the whereabouts of all students, staff, and volunteers. • Setting up secure assembly area. • Managing sheltering and sanitation operations. • Managing student feeding and hydration. • Coordinating with the Student Release Team. • Coordinating with the Logistics Section to secure the needed space and supplies.
Facilities & Security Response Team	<p>The Facilities & Security Response Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating all utilities and turning them off, if necessary. • Securing and isolating fire/HazMat. • Assessing and notifying officials of fire/HazMat. • Conducting perimeter control.
Crisis Intervention Team	<p>The Crisis Intervention Team is responsible for assisting students and school personnel who are unable to cope with the fears and psychological trauma associated with emergencies and disasters. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing need for onsite mental health support. • Determining need for outside agency assistance. • Providing onsite intervention/counseling. • Monitoring well-being of school emergency team, staff, and students, and reporting all findings to the Operations Section Chief.
Student Release Team	<p>Reunification refers to getting students reunited with their parents or guardians in an efficient and orderly manner. Reunification can be an enormous challenge and takes a lot of planning. The Student Release Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up secure reunion area. • Checking student emergency cards for authorized releases. • Completing release logs.

- Coordinating with the Public Information Office on external messages.

Too Many Teams!

To maintain span of control, each team should be comprised of a Team Leader and no more than five to seven team members. As teams are added, what happens to the Operations Section Chief's span of control?



The Solution: Add Groups or Divisions

On a large, complex incident the Operations Section may become very large. Using the ICS principle of modular organization, the Operations Section may add the following elements to manage span of control:

- **Groups** are used to describe functional areas of operation.
- **Divisions** are used to divide an incident geographically.

Maintaining Span of Control: Groups

The organizational chart below illustrates how Groups can be used to maintain span of control within the Operations Section.



Maintaining Span of Control: Groups and Divisions (Geographic Areas)

The organizational chart below illustrates how Groups and Divisions can be used together to maintain span of control within the Operations Section. The use of Divisions would be effective if the incident covered a large or isolated area of the school campus. Note this complex organization would include both school and community responders.



Operations Section: Establishing Branches

The Operations Section Chief may add Branches to supervise Groups and Divisions and further reduce his or her span of control.

The person in charge of each Branch is designated as a **Director**.

Operations Section: Expanding and Contracting

The Operations Section Chief at an incident may work initially with only a few single resources or staff members.

The Operations Section usually develops from the bottom up. The organization will expand to include needed levels of supervision as more and more resources are deployed.

Single resources may be grouped into Strike Teams or Task Forces who report to a Leader.

Remember, Strike Teams are comprised of similar resources while Task Forces combine different types of resources.

Groups may be added to supervise the growing number of resources, teams, or task forces. Or, geographic Divisions along with Groups may be used.

The Operations Section Chief may add Branches to supervise the Groups and Divisions and further reduce his or her span of control.

At some point, the Operations Section and the rest of the ICS organization will contract. The decision to contract will be based on the achievement of incident objectives.

Demobilization planning begins upon activation of the first personnel and continues until the ICS organization ceases operation.

Planning Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section and if so, will designate a Planning Section Chief. If no Planning Section is established, the Incident Commander will perform all planning functions. It is up to the Planning Section Chief to activate any needed additional staffing.

Planning Section Chief's Role

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Planning Section, and if so, will designate a Planning Section Chief. In a school incident, the Planning Section helps ensure responders have accurate information, such as the number of students remaining in the building. We can also provide resources such as maps and floor plans. In addition to developing plans, we can provide an invaluable service by recording a chronology of incident events for legal, analytical, fiscal, and historical purposes.

Planning Section: Major Activities

The major activities of the Planning Section may include:

- Collecting, evaluating, and displaying incident intelligence and information.
- Preparing and documenting Incident Action Plans.
- Tracking resources assigned to the incident.
- Maintaining incident documentation.
- Developing plans for demobilization.



Planning Section: Units

The Planning Section can be further staffed with four Units. In addition, Technical Specialists who provide special expertise useful in incident management and response may also be assigned to work in the Planning Section. Depending on the needs, Technical Specialists may also be assigned to other Sections in the organization.



- **Resources Unit:** Conducts all check-in activities and maintains the status of all incident resources. The Resources Unit plays a significant role in preparing the written Incident Action Plan.
- **Situation Unit:** Collects and analyzes information on the current situation, prepares situation displays and situation summaries, and develops maps and projections.
- **Documentation Unit:** Provides duplication services, including the written Incident Action Plan. Maintains and archives all incident-related documentation.
- **Demobilization Unit:** Assists in ensuring that resources are released from the incident in an orderly, safe, and cost-effective manner.

Logistics Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Logistics Section at the incident, and if so, will designate an individual to fill the position of the Logistics Section Chief.

The Logistic Section Chief helps make sure that there are adequate resources (personnel, supplies, and equipment) for meeting the incident objectives.

Logistics Section Chief's Role

Logistics can make or break an incident response. I assist the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief by providing the resources and services required to support incident activities. During a school incident, Logistics is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient food, water, and sanitation supplies. We are also responsible for arranging buses for evacuations and communication equipment.

Logistics and Finance have to work closely to contract for and purchase goods and services needed at the incident.

Logistics Section: Major Activities

The Logistics Section is responsible for all of the services and support needs, including:

- Ordering, obtaining, maintaining, and accounting for essential personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- Providing communication planning and resources.
- Setting up food services.
- Setting up and maintaining incident facilities.
- Providing support transportation.
- Providing medical services to **incident personnel (not injured students)**.



Logistics Section: Branches and Units

The Logistics Section can be further staffed by two Branches and six Units.

The titles of the Units are descriptive of their responsibilities.

Service Branch

The Logistics Service Branch can be staffed to include a:

- **Communication Unit:** Prepares and implements the Incident Communication Plan (ICS-205), distributes and maintains communications equipment, supervises the Incident Communications Center, and establishes adequate communications over the incident.
- **Medical Unit:** Develops the Medical Plan (ICS-206), provides first aid and light medical treatment for personnel assigned to the incident, and prepares procedures for a major medical emergency.
- **Food Unit:** Supplies the food and potable water for all incident facilities and personnel, and obtains the necessary equipment and supplies to operate food service facilities at Bases and Camps.



Support Branch

The Logistics Support Branch can be staffed to include a:

- **Supply Unit:** Determines the type and amount of supplies needed to support the incident. The Unit orders, receives, stores, and distributes supplies, services, and nonexpendable equipment. All resource orders are placed through the Supply Unit. The Unit maintains inventory and accountability of supplies and equipment.
- **Facilities Unit:** Sets up and maintains required facilities to support the incident. Provides managers for the Incident Base and Camps. Also responsible for facility security and facility maintenance services such as sanitation, lighting, and cleanup.
- **Ground Support Unit:** Prepares the Transportation Plan. Arranges for, activates, and documents the fueling, maintenance, and repair of ground resources. Arranges for the transportation of personnel, supplies, food, and equipment.



Finance/Administration Section

The Incident Commander will determine if there is a need for a Finance/Administration Section at the incident, and if so, will designate an individual to fill the position of the Finance/Administration Section Chief.

Finance/Administration Section Chief's Role

I'm the one who worries about paying for the response efforts. I'm responsible for all of the financial and cost analysis aspects of an incident. These include contract negotiation, tracking

personnel and equipment time, documenting and processing claims for accidents and injuries occurring at the incident, and keeping a running tally of the costs associated with the incident. I work most closely with Logistics to be sure that we are able to contract for and procure the resources necessary to manage an incident.

Finance/Administration Section: Major Activities

The Finance/Administration Section is set up for any incident that requires incident-specific financial management. The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for:

- Contract negotiation and monitoring.
- Timekeeping.
- Cost analysis.
- Compensation for injury or damage to property.

Note: On some incidents, the Finance/Administration function is not done at the incident scene but rather is handled by the school district.



Finance/Administration Section: Units

The Finance/Administration Section may staff four Units.



- **Procurement Unit:** Responsible for administering all financial matters pertaining to vendor contracts, leases, and fiscal agreements.
- **Time Unit:** Responsible for incident personnel time recording.
- **Cost Unit:** Collects all cost data, performs cost effectiveness analyses, provides cost estimates, and makes cost savings recommendations.
- **Compensation/Claims Unit:** Responsible for the overall management and direction of all administrative matters pertaining to compensation for injury-related and claims-related activities kept for the incident.

Training and Qualifying General Staff

<p>Operations Section Chief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past experience as incident responder • Completion of ICS training • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Size up the situation and make rapid decisions ◦ Communicate clear directions ◦ Balance response initiatives with safety concerns ◦ Lead and motivate responders
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assess the effectiveness of tactics/strategies ◦ Be flexible and modify plans as necessary
Planning Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of ICS training • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Organize and analyze information ◦ Write clear, accurate documents ◦ Interpret diagrams and maps ◦ Develop and present briefings ◦ Use computer-based applications including databases and spreadsheets ◦ Direct others in a crisis
Logistics Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of ICS training • Knowledge of school logistics (food services, sheltering, transportation, emergency caches, etc.) • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Organize and prioritize resource requests ◦ Anticipate and plan for resource needs ◦ Maintain records and documentation ◦ Track resource requests ◦ Solve resource problems creatively ◦ Communicate effectively orally and in writing ◦ Direct others in a crisis
Finance/Administration Section Chief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of ICS training • Knowledge of workers' compensation, insurance claims, and contracting requirements • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Keep accurate accounting records ◦ Purchase/contract for needed resources ◦ Process insurance and workers' compensation claims ◦ Communicate effectively orally and in writing ◦ Direct others in a crisis

Lesson 6: Unified Command

Unified Command

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure.

Unified Command Benefits

In a Unified Command, schools and responding agencies blend into an integrated, unified team. A unified approach results in:

- A shared understanding of priorities and restrictions.
- A single set of incident objectives.
- Collaborative strategies.
- Improved internal and external information flow.
- Less duplication of efforts.
- Better resource utilization.

Incident Commanders Work Together

When implemented properly, Unified Command enables agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command make joint decisions and speak as one voice. Any differences are worked out within the Unified Command.

Unity of command is maintained within the Operations Section. Each responder reports to a single supervisor within his or her area of expertise. Within a Unified Command the police officer would not tell the firefighters how to do their job nor would the police tell school personnel how to manage parent-student reunification.

Unified Command and NIMS

NIMS encourages the use of Unified Command.

“As a team effort, Unified Command overcomes much of the inefficiency and duplication of effort that can occur when agencies from different functional and geographic jurisdictions, or agencies at different levels of government, operate without a common system or organizational framework.”

Single Integrated Incident Organization: Command Staff

Unified Command results in a single integrated incident organization. Below is a sample Command Staff organizational chart for the school bus incident. Notice that personnel from the different agencies often are assigned as Assistant Officers.



Single Integrated Incident Organization: Operations Section

In a Unified Command there is only one Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief should be the most qualified and experienced person available. Below is a sample Operations Section organization chart for the school bus incident.



Unified Command Features

Collocated (Shared) Facilities

In a Unified Command incident facilities are collocated or shared.

Bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post can promote coordination.

Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan

Unified Command uses a single planning process and produces one Incident Action Plan (IAP). The planning process for Unified Command is similar to the process used on single jurisdiction incidents.

Integrated General Staff

Integrating multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas may be beneficial. For example:

- In Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction.
- In Logistics, a Deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support.

Incident Commanders within the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs. The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the Incident Action Plan.

Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command work together to establish resource ordering procedures that allow for:

- Deployment of scarce resources to meet high-priority objectives.
- Potential cost savings through agreements on cost sharing for essential services.

Unified Command and Preparedness

For Unified Command to be used successfully, it is important that schools and agencies prepare by:

- Including Unified Command in local operations plans.
- Train often as a team. Incident Commanders who work and train together will be better able to manage incidents together.

Lesson 7: Putting It All Together

Assuming Accountability

ICS requires that you be accountable for:

- Abiding by school policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Working on objectives outlined in the Incident Action Plan.
- Ensuring Unity of Command and Chain of Command by taking directions from the incident supervisor.
- Managing your stress and being professional during the incident.

Preparedness Question



- **Are you ready to assume accountability?**

Mobilization and Check-In

When a school incident occurs, you must be mobilized or assigned to become part of the incident response. In other words, until you are mobilized to the incident organization, you remain in your everyday school role.

After being mobilized, your **first task is to check in and receive an assignment.**

Preparedness Questions



- **Do you know the procedure at your school for being mobilized/assigned to an incident?**
- **Do you know the procedure for check-in?**

Initial Briefing

After check-in, you will locate your incident supervisor and obtain your initial briefing. The briefings you receive and give should include:

- Current assessment of the situation.
- Identification of your specific job responsibilities.
- Identification of coworkers.
- Location of work area.
- Identification of break areas, as appropriate.
- Procedural instructions for obtaining needed resources.
- Operational periods/work shifts.
- Required **safety procedures** and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as appropriate.

Preparedness Question



- **Do you have a checklist to help ensure that you receive all needed information?**

Recordkeeping

All incidents require some form of recordkeeping. Requirements vary depending upon the agencies involved and the nature of the incident. Below are general guidelines for incident recordkeeping:

- Print or type all entries.
- Enter dates by month/day/year format.
- Enter date and time on all forms and records. Use local time.
- Fill in all blanks. Use N/A as appropriate.
- Use military 24-hour time.

Preparedness Questions



- **Do you know what ICS forms your school uses?**
- **Do you have copies of these forms?**

Lengthy Assignments

Many school incidents last only a short time. However, if you were asked to deploy to support a lengthy assignment (e.g., Hurricane Katrina response) away from home you would need to prepare yourself and your family.

Preparedness Questions



Have you:

- **Assembled a travel kit containing any special technical information (e.g., maps, manuals, contact lists, and reference materials)?**
- **Prepared personal items needed for your estimated length of stay, including medications, cash, credit cards, etc.?**
- **Made arrangements to take care of your personal and home matters?**

Demobilization

Resource demobilization occurs at the end of your assignment or when the incident is resolved. Before leaving an incident assignment, you should:

- Complete all tasks and required forms/reports.
- Brief replacements, subordinates, and supervisor.
- Evaluate the performance of subordinates.
- Follow check-out procedures.
- Return any incident-issued equipment or other nonexpendable supplies.

- Complete postincident reports, critiques, evaluations, and medical followup.
- Complete all time records or other accounting obligations.

Preparedness Question



- Do you know the demobilization procedures?

Personal ICS Readiness Assessment

Instructions: Use this job aid to assess your readiness for participating in the ICS response organization at your school. At the bottom, note actions you can take to get yourself ready.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Are you ready to assume accountability?			
Do you know the procedure at your school for being mobilized/assigned to an incident?			
Do you know the procedure for check-in?			
Do you have a checklist to help ensure that you receive all needed information?			
Do you know what ICS forms your school uses? Do you have copies of these forms?			
Have you assembled a travel kit containing any special technical information (e.g., maps, manuals, contact lists, and reference materials)?			
Have you prepared personal items needed for your estimated length of stay, including medications, cash, credit cards, etc.?			

Have you made arrangements to take care of your personal and home matters?			
Do you know the demobilization procedures?			

Comments & Action Steps:

About School Safety Partners

This document is presented by School Safety Partners as part of a free online course on school safety. School Safety Partners (www.SchoolSafetyPartners.org) is dedicated to creating long-term funding partnerships to support school safety best practices. We are a facilitator of joint research projects, reaching out to the general public as well as stakeholders in the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors. Since our start in January, 2008, our projects have addressed the legislative, training, compliance, funding, and public awareness sides of school safety. Here are some highlights:

1. ***We created a reference library documenting all aspects of Colorado Senate Bill 08-181, a first-of-its-kind measure introduced by Senator Tom Wiens to modernize emergency planning in schools, so students, teachers, and first responders can act fast in an emergency.***
2. ***For the 10th anniversary of the Columbine High School tragedy, we produced the national media event, "Colorado Rising," focusing on the future of school safety in America, and our guests and speakers were covered by NBC-TV, CNN, NPR, FOX, Oprah Radio, Channel One News, Associated Press, Reuters, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, German Public Radio, the Guardian, and dozens of other news sources.***
3. ***We assisted in the 2008 Symposium and the 2009 Symposium on the Prevention of School Violence at Johnson & Wales University, and in the tabletop exercises on interoperable communications conducted for these events by one of our partners, SchoolSAFE Communications (www.SchoolSAFEcom.org).***
4. ***We produced over 4 hours of video footage, with 2 video crews, covering a full-scale active shooter and multi-hazard school exercise that involved 18 agencies and over 1,200 persons, and tested interoperable communications in several school-related settings.***
5. ***We co-created the School Response Framework Fund in support of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to help Colorado schools become NIMS-compliant as quickly as possible.***
6. ***We also developed a virtual campus that schools can use as an online training site for their safety teams, and as an action center where schools can build strong relationships with community partners, or local responders.***
7. ***We have developed with ABC-TV a nationwide community awareness campaign, giving recognition to educators as first responders, and calling for the creation of public-private partnerships to make school safety sustainable in communities across America.***
8. ***We have also developed with the creators of the feature motion picture, "April Showers," the educational and school safety materials to accompany the film as it is released to the worldwide educational market.***
9. ***Other states have shown an interest in what we have done in Colorado about school crisis response, and for them we have designed webinars and information kits about improving school safety legislation and finding long-term funding solutions.***

We hope that you find our information useful and our contacts productive. We invite you to explore all parts of our website, and also share with us your views, experiences, lessons learned, best practices, and innovations. Please visit us at www.SchoolSafetyPartners.org and register online in order to access all of our sections. Registration is free.