

EOC Organizations

Source: NIMS (October 2017) Appendix B

Purpose: This NIMS 2017 appendix provides additional explanation and examples of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) organizational structures commonly used in EOCs in the United States.

They are not intended to be mandatory, definitive, or exclusive. Jurisdictions or organizations may choose to use one of these structures, a combination of elements from different structures, or an entirely different structure.

The description of each organization includes information on when and why a jurisdiction or organization might wish to use it and a description of the typical functions the various elements in the organization perform.

While it is not depicted on the various organizational graphics, EOCs are guided by policy groups that typically include elected and appointed senior officials such as governors, mayors, city managers, and tribal leaders.

1—INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS) OR ICS-LIKE EOC STRUCTURE

Many jurisdictions/organizations opt to use an ICS or ICS-like structure in their EOCs. This is typically because people are familiar with the structure, and it aligns with what is used in the field. Additionally, it is a useful functional breakdown, particularly for EOCs that might take on operational missions. ICS and EOC personnel may agree to adjust responsibilities among the organizations to meet incident needs and fulfill resource and information requests.

When using this type of EOC organization, field and EOC personnel performing the same function (e.g., Public Information Officer [PIO]) should agree on how to divide their responsibilities to avoid gaps and/or duplication of effort. Ideally, this coordination will occur before an incident, and the result will be documented in the jurisdiction/organization's emergency operations plan.

EOC leaders may opt for a standard ICS organization if:

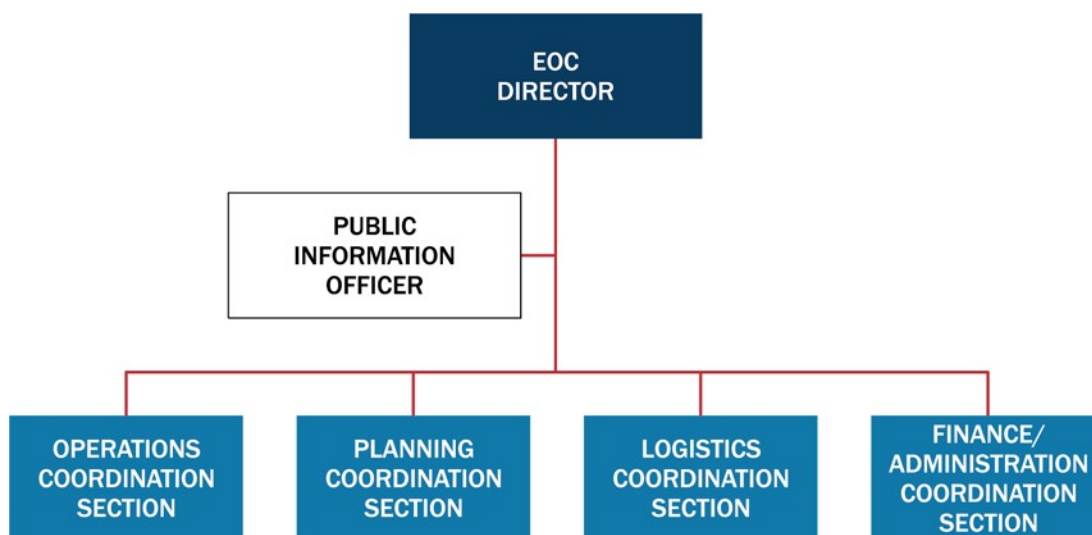
- EOC staff are providing tactical direction to an incident
- EOC management wishes to use ICS-trained personnel with no additional training requirements
- EOC managers want to mirror the organization of on-scene personnel

Standard ICS Structure versus ICS-like Structure

If a jurisdiction/organization is using standard ICS, as practiced in the field, they will follow ICS procedures and processes as described in Appendix A. However, many EOC leaders find that modifying ICS slightly provides many of the benefits of the standard ICS structure while accommodating the differences between EOCs and Incident Command Posts (ICP).

An ICS-like EOC structure generally reflects the standard ICS organization but with varying nuances and possible title changes to emphasize the coordination and support mission of EOCs, as opposed to the tactical and logistics management role of on-scene responders. For example, EOC leaders often opt to adjust titles to differentiate between field and EOC functions/personnel by adding “Support” or “Coordination” to section titles (figure below). Additionally, some EOC leaders opt to modify certain ICS processes or functions to better reflect the activities and responsibilities of EOC personnel.

Example of an ICS-like EOC Organization Structure:



ICS-Like EOC Command Staff

The EOC Command Staff (often called EOC Management Staff to clarify that they do not command on-scene operations) includes an EOC director who guides and oversees EOC staff and activities. The EOC Command Staff typically includes a PIO and may include others such as a Legal Advisor and a Safety Officer. The EOC director, possibly with the support of Command Staff, sets EOC objectives and tasks, integrates stakeholders, works with senior officials to facilitate the development of policy direction for incident support, and ensures the dissemination of timely, accurate, and accessible information to the public.

ICS-Like Operations Coordination Section

Operations Coordination Section staff help ensure that on-scene incident personnel have the resources and operational support necessary to achieve incident objectives and address leadership priorities. The staff in this section are often organized functionally—by Emergency Support Function (ESF) or Recovery Support Function (RSF), for example—and are the primary points of contact for on-scene response personnel within their respective functions. They coordinate closely with incident personnel to identify and address unmet resource needs. When necessary for geographically widespread or complex

incidents or when establishing a local ICP is not possible, staff in the section can also support operational activity directly from the EOC.

ICS-Like Planning Coordination Section

The Planning Coordination Section has two primary functions: managing situational awareness efforts and developing activation-related plans. Staff in this section work closely with personnel in the ICS Planning Section to collect, analyze, and disseminate incident and incident-related information, including integrating geospatial and technical information and developing reports, briefings, and presentation products for a variety of stakeholders, including leadership, EOC personnel, and other internal and external stakeholders. Planning Coordination Section personnel also facilitate a standard planning process to achieve the EOC objectives and provide a range of current and future planning services to address current needs and anticipate and devise the means to deal with future needs.

ICS-Like Logistics Coordination Section

Logistics Coordination Section staff provide advanced resource support to the incident. They work closely with Operations Coordination Section staff to source and procure resources by implementing contracts or mutual aid agreements or by requesting other government assistance (e.g., local or tribal to state, state or tribal to Federal). Staff in this section also provide resources and services to support the EOC staff. This includes information technology (IT) support, resource tracking and acquisition, and arranging for food, lodging, and other support services as needed.

Resource Management in an ICS-like EOC

EOC leaders often adjust ICS resource management processes to fit an EOC environment better. The various departments and agencies represented in the Operations Coordination Section may have access to internal departmental resources that they can order without going through the Logistics Coordination Section. The Logistics Coordination Section may have expertise in advanced resource ordering, such as (1) through mutual aid, (2) by leasing or purchasing, or (3) through a request for assistance from a governmental organization (e.g., state or Federal support). The personnel in the Operations Coordination Section may be better positioned to track incident resources than personnel in the Planning Coordination Section. Staff in each EOC establish protocols on how to coordinate and track the resource ordering functions at the EOC and with field personnel.

ICS-Like Finance/Administration Coordination Section

Finance/Administration Coordination Section staff manage the activation's financial, administrative, and cost analysis aspects. Finance/Administration Coordination Section staff track all expenditures associated with the activation, including monitoring funds from multiple sources. Reporting on costs as they accrue enables EOC leadership to estimate needs accurately and request additional funds if needed. Finance/Administration Coordination Section staff

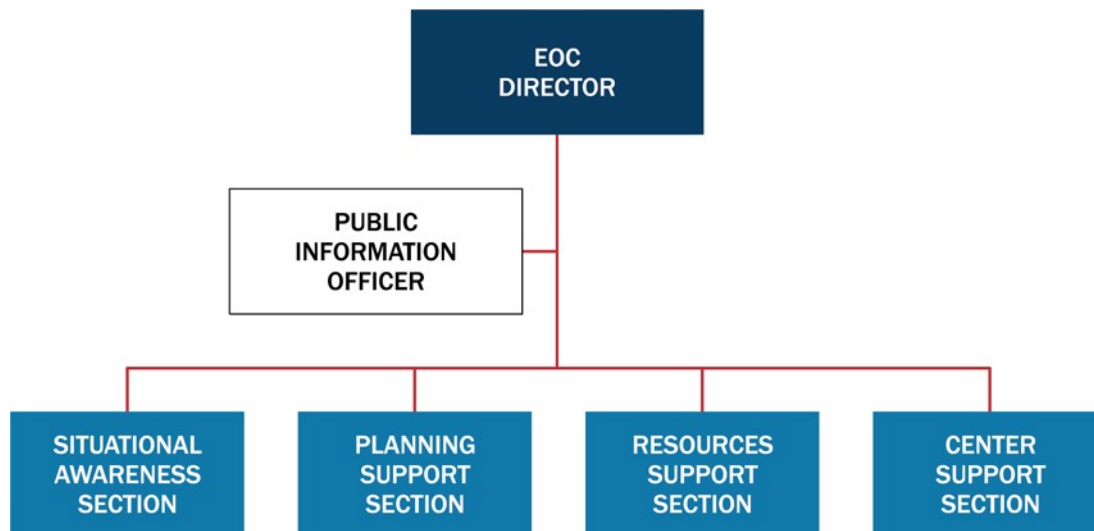
may provide administrative support to other EOC sections. In some cases, the EOC Finance/Administration Coordination Section staff assume responsibilities of their ICS counterparts and perform functions on their behalf.

2—INCIDENT SUPPORT MODEL (ISM) EOC STRUCTURE

The ISM is a variation of the ICS structure that separates the information management/situational awareness function from the ICS Planning Section and combines the functions of the ICS Operations and Logistics Sections and comptroller/purchasing functions from the ICS Administration/Finance Section. EOC staff in jurisdictions or organizations that use an ISM structure typically focus exclusively on support functions rather than operations or managing actual response/recovery efforts.

As with the ICS/ICS-like model, the director of an ISM EOC is supported by personnel designated to key functions, subject matter experts, and technical specialists. Staff supporting the EOC director typically include a PIO and may include others such as a legal advisor. The General Staff sections consist of Situational Awareness, Planning Support, Resources Support, and Center Support. The figure below shows a top-level management structure for an ISM EOC.

Example of an Incident Support Model EOC Organization Structure



ISM EOC Director's Staff

As with the ICS/ICS-like EOC Command Staff, the ISM EOC director's staff typically includes a PIO and may include others such as a Legal Advisor and a Safety Officer. The EOC director and director's staff set EOC tasks, work with senior officials to facilitate the development of policy direction for incident support, and ensure the dissemination of timely, accurate, and accessible information to the public.

ISM Situational Awareness Section

Situational Awareness staff collect, analyze, and disseminate incident information. This section's personnel typically create and provide a variety of products for EOC policy-level leadership, public affairs, and other internal and external stakeholders. The Situational Awareness Section essentially elevates the functions of the ICS Planning Section Situation Unit to a General Staff position in the EOC, reporting directly to the EOC director. The staff in this section also process requests for information; develop reports, briefings, and presentation products; integrate geospatial and technical information; and develop material to support public warning messages.

Staff in the Situational Awareness Section may include representatives or liaisons from ESF #15 – External Affairs.

ISM Planning Support Section

The Planning Support Section staff provide a range of current and future planning services that may include developing contingency, deactivation, and recovery plans. Staff in the Planning Support Section assist in developing and executing the shared goals of multiple jurisdictions and organizations involved in managing the incident and coordinate a standard planning process to achieve the objectives of the EOC leadership and foster unity of effort among all organizations represented in the center. The Planning Support Section staff coordinate closely with the ICS Planning Section to ensure that both on-scene and EOC personnel have appropriate contingency plans in place.

ISM Resources Support Section

Staff in the Resources Support Section work to ensure that on-scene incident management personnel have the resources and operational support they need. Resource Support Section staff source, request/order, and track all resources. This includes supplies, equipment, and personnel acquired from departments and agencies represented in the EOC, other community organizations, mutual aid/Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) sources, or nongovernmental partners, as well as items purchased or leased. Staff in the Resources Support Section may be organized by department/agency or by ESF/RSF.

Resource Management in an ISM EOC

The departments and agencies represented in an EOC generally have access to a variety of resources that are specific to the department or agency's responsibilities. A typical ICS Logistics Section has expertise in ordering resources through mutual aid, purchasing/contracting/leasing, or from external government organization via requests for assistance. Funding for purchases/contract/leases or reimbursement of expenses is usually handled in the ICS Administration/Finance Section. ISM EOCs combine all these functions in the Resources Support Section, which provides a one-stop shop for acquiring, deploying, and tracking resources and services.

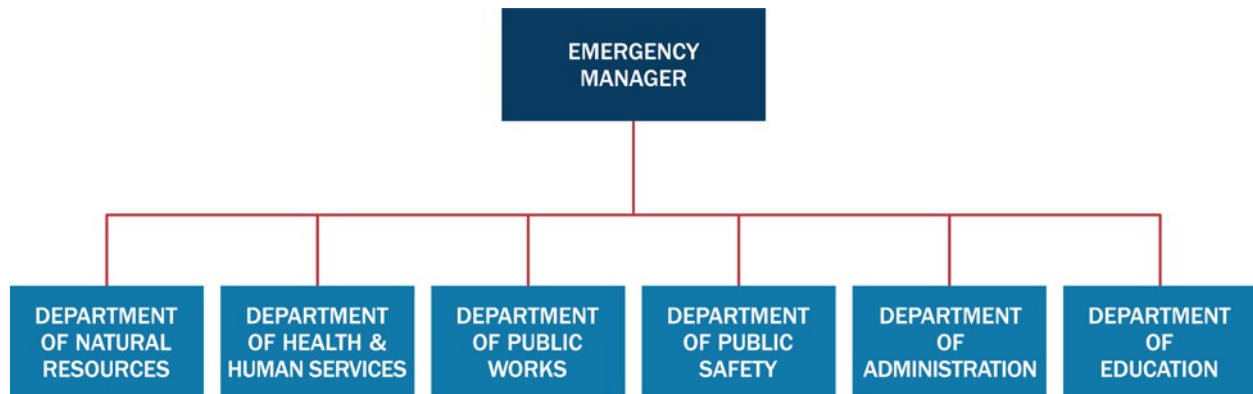
ISM Center Support Section

EOCs require a variety of communications, IT, administrative, and general services, as well as staff support, such as food, to function most effectively. Staff in the Center Support Section support the needs of the facility and staff in the EOC and any associated facilities such as a Joint Information Center (JIC). In this role, staff in the Center Support Section communicate and gather requirements for supplies, equipment, administrative processes, security, maintenance, and other logistics to ensure the EOC staff have the resources and capabilities required to perform their roles.

3—DEPARTMENTAL EOC STRUCTURE

Jurisdictions or organizations may choose to retain the day-to-day relationships they have with the various departments and agencies that they also work with in responding to and recovering from incidents. These organizations or jurisdictions may configure the personnel who assemble in the EOC by the participants' departments, agencies, or organizations. Such departmentally structured EOCs typically require less training and emphasize coordination and equal footing for all departments and agencies. In this model, a single individual, either the jurisdiction or organization's emergency manager or another senior official, directly coordinates the jurisdiction's support agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and other partners. This model can also be organized using ESFs instead of departments. The figure below presents an example of a Departmental EOC structure.

Example of a Departmental EOC Organization Structure:



In this example, the Emergency Manager, as EOC director, directly facilitates EOC planning and reporting. The EOC director may also be responsible for the office equipment, phones, radios, and/or computers in the EOC and ensuring food is available for the staff.

For the departments, representatives bring the various resources, expertise, and relationships that are associated with those organizations and functions. Decisions are made within the group to achieve mutually agreed-upon objectives, as in a Unified Command.

The roles and responsibilities of a departmental EOC reflect the day-to-day responsibilities of the represented departments and agencies. For example:

- EOC representatives from the department that deals with natural resources may be responsible, according to their normal authorities, for historic preservation, air and water quality, parks and recreation, game and wildlife, and wildfire suppression.
- Representatives in the EOC from the agencies that deal with public health, medical, and human services issues would be responsible for and provide resources associated with elder services; community hospitals, clinics, and medical services; sheltering and mass care; disease investigations; pharmacy services and mass dispensing sites; and liaison with humanitarian relief organizations.
- Representatives from public works are responsible for issues and resources in the EOC involving roads and grounds, sewers and sanitation, water purification, fuel, utilities, transportation, and solid waste.
- Police, sheriff, fire, and/or emergency medical services organizations all have representatives who coordinate their respective functions and resources in the EOC.

- EOC representatives from the jurisdiction or organization's administrative department or agency coordinate public information, finance, training, private sector and tribal liaison, and social/cultural centers.
- The public schools' officials assigned to the EOC are responsible for day care services, schools facilities (e.g., when used as emergency shelters), and school transportation.

These responsibilities would vary according to the jurisdiction's day-to-day departmental organization and responsibilities. This enables jurisdictions or organizations to address incidents effectively while maintaining their normal authorities, responsibilities, and relationships.