MODEL NATIONAL POLICY ON INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEMS

A Standardized Approach for the On Scene Management of an Incident

Model National Policy on the Incident Command System

1.0   Abbreviations

EOC   Emergency Operations Centre

EFT   Emergency Function Team

IAP   Incident Action Plan

IC   Incident Commander

ICP   Incident Command Post

ICS   Incident Command System

NEOC   National Emergency Operations Centre

Other abbreviations reflecting local conditions and arrangements could be included if desired, such as names of national organisations

2.0   Definitions

In this policy:
a. *"Impact Zone"* means the concentration of the hazard impact in space; usually geographical areas where negative consequences and response are taking place
b. *"Incident Command System"* means a standardized on-site management **system** designed to enable effective, efficient **incident** management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.
c. *"Incident commander"* means is the person responsible for all aspects of an emergency response; including quickly developing **incident** objectives, managing all **incident** operations, application of resources as well as responsibility for all persons involved.
d. *"Municipality" means* a city or town (region/parish) that has corporate status and local government.
e. *"National Emergency Operating Centre"* means the central command and control facility responsible for carrying out, emergency management functions at strategic and operational levels in an emergency situation, and ensuring the continuity of operation of a company, political subdivision or other organization

3.0   Background

(Name of Country) is exposed to a multitude of hazards. These include but are not limited to, natural hazards such as hurricanes, earthquakes and floods as well as manmade incidents such as oil spills, chemical emergencies and biological threats. In almost all cases, in order to be fully effective, the response to these threats must incorporate several agencies and organisations. These include first responders such as the Fire Service, the Police Service and the Emergency Medical Service *(List of First Responders should be tailored to reflect the arrangements in the country)*. Effective response very often requires the active involvement of secondary responders such as the Works and Transport departments, environmental departments, and social welfare Service *(List of Second Responders should be tailored to reflect the arrangements in the country)*.

This National Policy on the Incident Command System defines the way in which responding agencies coordinate and work together in the impact zone.

4.0   Purpose

This Policy provides a framework for the multi-sectoral coordination for the on-scene management of an incident incorporating first response agencies such as *(List of First Responders should be tailored to reflect the arrangements in the country*, supported by secondary response such as *(List of Second Responders should be tailored to reflect the arrangements in the country)* services that allows for the effective mitigation of the effects of the incident and the efficient execution of the duties of the responder based on their training, equipment and mandate.

Disaster and emergency management is guided by four key priorities and these must be borne in mind at all times especially when multi agency coordination could lead to mandate and mission overlap and conflict. The priorities of action are:
   a. **Life Safety** – saving life is always the primary objective of incident management;
   b. **Incident Stability -** minimizing the effect that the incident may have on the surrounding environment;
   c. **Property Conservation and Evidence Preservation -** minimizing damage to property and safeguarding evidence while achieving the incident objectives.
   d. **Continuity of Operation -** the return to a state of normalcy

The overall objectives of this Policy are as follows:
   a. To provide guidance for effective and efficient national multi-sectoral approach to the management of an incident or event;
   b. To standardize the on-scene multi-sectoral coordination and management of an incident/event in *(Name of Country);* and
   c. To contain the effects of the incident and avoid their spread.

5.0 Applicability

The standardized ICS approach is designed to address on-the-scene coordination among multiple responding agencies and institutions in specific incidents. The Policy does not seek to change on-going administrative and institutional arrangements for disaster management. The ICS system works in tandem with the national and subnational EOCs according to the established arrangements in force.

At all times, there will be direct contact and communication between the NEOC or the EOC, as applicable, and the ICP. An ICS has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of any incident or emergency, which requires a multi-agency response.

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 Organisation
All incidents regardless of size shall have an Incident Commander. The IC shall have overall responsibility for the incident management. The IC shall be accountable for the overall management of the incident. The IC shall delegate authority for performing certain activities to others, as required and in accordance with the specific emergency functions. The IC is always at the scene of the incident.

6.2 Incident Commander

6.2.1 Designation of Incident Commander
Where a multi-agency response is required, the IC will be designated by the EOC or the NEOC as relevant. In designating the IC, due consideration will be taken of nature of the incident.

6.2.2 Assumption of Responsibility by Incident Commander
On arrival at the scene of the incident the IC shall be guided by the following checklist:
- 1.0   Inform base of arrival
- 2.0   Assume command and establish the ICP
- 3.0   Initial Assessment
  - **3.1.   If operations not yet set up:**
    - 3.1.1. What was the nature of the incident (what happened)?
    - 3.1.2. What hazards are present?
    - 3.1.3. Are here secondary hazards?
    - 3.1.4. What is the size of the affected area?
    - 3.1.5. How could it evolve?
    - 3.1.6. How can the area be isolated?
    - 3.1.7. What places could be used to locate victims and resources?
    - 3.1.8. What routes of ingress and egress are available and safe?
    - 3.1.9. What are the present and future capabilities (resources and organization)?
    - 3.1.10.   What are the most immediate needs?

  - 3.2.   **If operations have already started**:

       3.2.1. What progress has been made?
       3.2.2. What is the potential for the incident to grow?
       3.2.3. What resources are staged?
       3.2.4. What is the current plan?
       3.2.5. How could it be improved and where are you going to be assigned?

4.0   Establish the safety perimeter

5.0   Establish the objectives

6.0   Determine assignments and strategies

7.0   Determine the resources and facilities required

8.0   Prepare report necessary to transfer command:

    8.1.   Incident Status:
       8.1.1. What has happened?
       8.1.2. What has been accomplished?
       8.1.3. What has to be done?
       8.1.4. What is needed?
       8.1.5. Current Safety Situation
    8.2.   Objectives and Priorities
    8.3.   Current Organization
    8.4.   Resource Allocation
    8.5.   Resources Requested and Pending
    8.6.   Facilities Established
    8.7.   Communications Plan
    8.8.   Probable Evolution

6.3 Supporting Assignments

As required by the nature of the incident specific, Emergency Function Teams for such responsibilities as Search and Rescue, Medical Management of Mass Casualties, Fire Suppression, Traffic Control, Law Enforcement, and Transport will have designated team leaders who will liaise with the Incident Commander during response operations. The Team leaders will provide the IC with the necessary information to develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Where the scale of the incident requires the IC may establish operations heads to assist with and the coordination of the teams.

Depending on the extent of the impact of the incident, the IC may also designate operational team liaisons to assist with the coordination the teams. The number and function of the team liaisons shall be established in consultation with the leaders of the EFTs.

7.0   Policy Statements

7.1   Scope
The standardized ICS will be incorporated and applied to emergency management programmes (but not limited to) the following:
   a.   Hazardous Materials Incidents
   b.   Planned Mass Crowd events (sporting events, parties and concerts)
   c.   Emergencies caused by Natural Hazards (such as Landslides, Earthquakes, Floods and Hurricanes)
   d.   Fires
   e.   Transportation accidents
   f.   Single and multi-agency law enforcement incidents
   g.   Environmental Health Response
   h.   Public Health Emergency Response
   i.   Vector Control

7.2   Incident Command Post
An Incident Command Post shall be established from which all on-scene operations will be coordinated. This is a central location, a safe distance from the incident but close enough to allow for monitoring.

The ICP must make direct contact with the NEOC (if activated – depending on the scale of the incident). If the NEOC is not activated then the ICP will maintain contact with the internal institutional command structure. The EOC or internal institutional command post supports the operations in the field/on scene so as to avoid the relocation of the disaster. The internal command structure refers to a smaller scale incident where only one or two institutions may be involved.

7.3   Incident Action Plan
The IC will coordinate the development and implementation of the Incident Action Plan (IAP), which will state clearly the following
   a.   response goals,
   b.   operational objectives and
   c.   support activities.

Where necessary, for example in larger-scale events the IC will establish a planning team to develop such a plan. The planning team will be made up of representatives (or leads) from the specific emergency functions at the scene. The plan should be documented. The IC will strike a balance between the need to ensure urgent response and the need to ensure best use of resources in the development, documentation of and briefing on the IAP.

7.4 Levels of Emergency

7.4.1 Level I – Local or Municipal Incident
On arrival at the scene the first responding agency shall establish the ICP, and assume the role of Interim Incident Commander. On arrival the substantive IC, the Interim IC transfer command and provide a briefing. The substantive IC will follow the eight-step management sequence outlined in Section 6.2 of this Policy.

If the situation warrants it, the Sub-national EOC will be activated to support the ICP.

7.4.2 Level II – Trans-Municipal Incident
When the response required to cope with an incident/s has/have exceeded the human and resource capacity of the first response agencies as well as that of the secondary response agencies that reside within a municipality (parish, district, county etc), then additional resources will be requested from neighboring parish or municipality as appropriate.

The Incident commander continues to take charge of that incident, but as the situation grows larger or continues for an extended period of time it will be necessary to implement a rotation of staff and command.

Several sub-national EOCs may be activated to support the incidents commanders depending on the scale of operations. The sub national EOCs will have a much larger view of situation/s and will prioritize resources. When several sub-national EOCs have been activated, and the incident/s has/have exceeded their capacity to cope, the National EOC (NEOC) will be activated to access a greater range of national resources at the national level.

Higher order or lower order ranks of a level II emergency exist. This is basically distinguished according to the extent of resources required.

7.4.3 Level III – Incident Requiring External Resources
Where the national capacity to deal with the event has been exceeded the NEOC will then be responsible for accessing regional assistance[1] and overall management of the disaster. The NEOC will request the assistance of the RRM. Depending on the regional teams deployed i.e. Search and Rescue, HazMat, Mass Casualty, other Technical Teams etc, each team will report first and foremost to the NEOC where they will receive tactical support. The Incident commander continues to take charge of that incident until goals and objectives are met as per the IAP. The regional teams act in support of the IC on the scene.

The standard ICS training course (as developed by the Regional Working Group for the Standardization of ICS for the Caribbean Region) will be institutionalized and incorporated into the recruitment training for the disciplined forces and other sectors.

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[1] Procedures for the activation of the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) are captured in the Regional Coordination Plan, Regional Coordination Centre SOPs and the CU Contingency Plan

These include the Fire Service and Ministry of Health and Emergency Health Services and the Police Service.

Other agencies to include in the recruitment training are the Defense force, Ministry of Works and Transport, airports and sea ports, other critical facilities, plants, factories and others as deemed necessary.

8.0   Effective Date

This policy shall come into force with effect from …..

Incident Action Plan Outline Template

The following is a guide on the outline for an Incident Action Plan. It is not exhaustive as many other issues can be considered. The purpose of this outline is to provide the guidance to the Incident Commander or incident team on key components of the IAP.

A standardized phased approach for developing an Incident Action Plan is presented below;

> *The incident action planning process is built on the following phases[2]:*
> *1. Understand the situation*
> *2. Establish incident objectives in a particular timeframe*
> *3. Develop the plan*
> *4. Prepare and disseminate the plan*
> *5. Execute, evaluate, and revise the plan*

No	Suggested IAP Content	Explanatory notes
1	Incident:	Description of the incident: Classify according to 7.1 "Scope"
2	Location:	Address of the incident:
3	Date: From: To:	Date of the incident: State the operational period :
4	The Situation Anticipated or predicted issues /challenges	1. Current details (who is at the scene? How many persons involved, injuries, fatalities, and required resources? What are the environmental conditions i.e. wind speed and wind direction, precipitation; geo reference the site (where feasible); photos and images to aid in scene assessment; if feasible download satellite imagery and design the action plan accordingly 2. Safety and threat analysis: Are there any hazards or uncertainties that can place responders at risk?
5	Incident Objectives What is the plan of action?	1. What are the objectives of the IAP? "Priority of action" issues as documented in the Guidance Note should be applied here (Section 5.1 in the Guidance Note) 2. How will these objectives be met? Scene assessment and scene approach to be considered as a base of the plan; Field Organisation to be outline; (where necessary draw a sketch of the area; or use satellite imagery and photos if feasible) use scene assessment to set out the plan of action 3. Who will conduct the actions? List resources present and assigned tasks; list resources urgently needed ; list information communicated to the EOC or Institutional Command Centre for priority 4. What are the key constraints, safety and security issues

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[2] FEMA Incident Action Planning Guide, 2012 pg 5 http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/nsarc/FEMA%20Incident%20Action%20Planning%20Guide%20%28IAP%29.pdf

No	Suggested IAP Content	Explanatory notes
		with plan implementation? What are the contingency plans?
7	Execution	1. State how the plan will be executed 2. Identify each emergency function (on site or required) – name of function being carried out ; team leader; team members ; contact info; 3. Resources assigned on site 4. Resources required
8	Communications Plan	1. Insert communication flow diagram: from IC to and from other team members ; IC to EOC; team members to team members 2. Radio: frequency/ies being use : primary and secondary (if applicable) 3. Land line telephones (if applicable) 4. Cell phones (if applicable) 5. Satellite phones (if applicable) 6. Email addresses
9	Plan circulation	1. The IAP must be shared with those who have to implement; therefore capture how the plan has been circulated; Briefings are useful 2. Shared with EOC (if stood up)
10	Execution update	1. Status report on implementation of the Plan ; 2. Suggestion that briefings and debriefings be considered on the implementation plan. These should be done among the teams and then among the team leaders to track the progress of execution ; state frequency of the briefings 3. Revise the priorities based on accomplishment of tasks and sub tasks 4. State when objectives have been met and all tasks completed; state when the After Action Review (AAR) is scheduled; identify as early as possible recommendations and suggestions going forward.
11	Review and revise Plan	1. If the plan is not successful, i.e. objectives not met, then the plan must be revisited and revised. 2. after revision follow the same steps from 5-10
12	Sign the IAP	1. Once completed the IAP must be signed by the IC and the team leaders on site 2. Keep copies 3. At the end of the incident the IAP must be logged in the Incident Report