Training Module
Incident Response System
Area Command

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Incident Response System

Area Command Course

Participant Manual

National Institute of Disaster Management
New Delhi, India


**AREA COMMAND**

**Course Objectives:**

- Provide a description of the concept of Area Command and get Indian as well as International perspectives.
- Define the advantages and benefits of using Area Command.
- Discuss where and how Area Command can be utilized in the Incident Response System (IRS) in India.
- Provide examples of Area Command use.

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AREA COMMAND

Unit 1: Introduction and Course Overview

OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce cadre, participants, and discuss course structure, content, and other administrative details
- Review instructor and participant levels of experience with Incident Response System (IRS)

• ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

• INTRODUCTIONS

  • Introduction of Instructors
    - Each instructor introduce themselves with name, organization, and a brief statement of experience with emergency or incident response

  • Introduction of Participants
    - Each participant introduce themselves with name, organization, and a brief statement of experience with emergency or incident response

IV. AREA COMMAND COURSE OVERVIEW

- Course structure - lecture, plus visual aids; discussion; small group activities; large group activities – active participatory interactive session.
• Course content:
  o Area Command concepts – what is it
  o Relationship within the IRS system, organization, and function – how it works
  o Examples of Area Command actions – how, when, and where it has been used.

• Course Objectives:
  o Provide a description of the concept of Area Command and get Indian as well as International perspectives through illustrations and examples.
  o Define the benefits of using Area Command.
  o Provide examples of Area Command use.
  o Discuss where and how Area Command can be utilized in the Incident Response System (IRS).

V. Participants – What do you expect to gain from this session?

VI. What is Area Command?
  • Area Command is a part of IncidentResponse System (IRS): It is an extension of the Incident Response function, designed to oversee and manage incident responses at the highest complexity. A Responsible Officer usually makes the decision to establish an Area Command. It is only activated if necessary and depends on the complexity of the incident and incident management span of control.

IV. Why do we have Area Command?
  • Highest complexity incidents result in large scale and high magnitude incidents that can exceed span of control for Responsible Officers.

V. What can Area Command do for the incident response effort?
  • Bring greater order and efficiency to the response effort
    o Establish an orderly and systematic planning process
    o Define and establish a clear chain of command and supervision of response activity
IRS Area Command
Student Book

- Integrate individual agency needs and requirements into the disaster management structure and planning process
- Establish, strengthen, and maintain interagency coordination and cooperation
- Promote efficient use of resources
- Monitor response efforts and determine if directions are adequate or not

• Establish and maintain proper communications
• Prioritize response activities
• Reduce competition among response teams for scarce resources
• Allocate scarce resources based on prioritization
• Ensure disaster management objectives are being met
AREA COMMAND

Unit 2: Area Command Concepts

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a working knowledge of:
  - The definition and purpose of Area Command (AC)
  - AC relationship to Incident Response System (IRS)
  - When, where and how AC would be established.
  - Role, Mission and Function of AC.
  - 6 primary functional responsibilities of AC.

- Given a scenario, develop an AC organization.

I. INTRODUCTION

State the objectives as above.

II. DEFINITION

Extension of the IRS to oversee the management of;

Multiple incidents that are each being managed by an IRT or a very large incident that has multiple IRTs assigned.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Reporting Relationships

1. The Area Commander reports to the Responsible Official (RO).

2. The Area Command supervises assigned IRTs.

B. Primary Functions

1. Provide agency / jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents
2. Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions & constraints.
3. Establish critical resources and priorities between incidents.
4. Ensure IRTs assignments and organization are appropriate.
5. Maintain contact with RO, other agencies and groups.
6. Coordinate Demobilization or Reassignment of resources.
IRS Area Command
Student Book

7. Liaison with EOC for critical resource needs.
8. Provide strategic not tactical direction.

C. Advantages

1. Assist in Interagency coordination
2. Ensure efficient resource use
3. Ensure agency policies, priorities, constraints and guidance known to ICs
4. Reduce workload on RO
5. Clear cut chain of command

IV. ESTABLISHING

A. Early, and when:

1. Several incidents in proximity
2. Critical life saving or property values at risk
3. Long duration of incidents
4. Incidents using similar critical resources
5. Difficulties with inter-incident resource allocation and coordination

B. RO In-Briefing

1. Written delegation of authority
2. Notify ICs

C. AC Location

1. Close to incidents
2. Not collocated with an ICP
3. Sufficient Size
4. Continuous operation
5. Adequate communications
6. Backup power
7. Secure

D. Setting Priorities

1. Life and property safety
2. Allocating critical resources
3. Demobilization

**Criterium Decision Plus** is decision making software that is based on multi-criteria decision.
V. KEY TERMS

A. Multi-agency coordination centers (EOCs)
B. Command vs. Coordination
C. Unified Command vs. Area Command

VI. DEMOBILIZATION

A. Establish procedures with IRTs and EOC
   B. Incident priorities and procedures for critical resources
   C. Release instructions to IRTs
   D. Schedules from IRTs

VII. SUMMARY

Emphasize the following in the unit:

- AC oversees multiple IRTs on separate or very large incidents
- AC reports to RO
- Strategic not tactical
- Written delegation and direction
- Establish critical resources
- set priorities
- demobilization or reassignment
AREA COMMAND

Unit 3: Area Command Organization

OBJECTIVES:

This topic will provide the participants the opportunity to:

1. Develop an awareness of the potential Area Command organizational configurations.
2. Examine roles and responsibilities of Area Command team members
3. Explore internal interactions and organizational dynamics of an area command team.

NARRATIVE:

I. Area Command Configuration

a. The size, configuration, and responsibilities of an Area Command Team is often determined through negotiation with the responsible officials and involved parties and organizations.

b. The Area Command organization is normally small and the size is dependent upon the complexity of the assigned role. The intent is to minimize time and energy devoted to internal team management.

II. Area Command team organizational examples

a. “Standard” US Model – Primary Area Command Team (Figure 1.)

i. Area Commander,

ii. Assistant Area Commander Planning
b. The primary Command team positions usually have a need for functional support positions.

c. **Situational Variants** – often “technical specialists” are brought in to augment the primary Area Command Team to meet specific requirements of the event.

i. Information coordination (Figure 2.)

ii. Decision Support (Figure 3.)

iii. Financial management

III. **Area Command Team members – Roles and Responsibilities**

a. **Area Commander**

i. Negotiate with Responsible Officials to determine role, and operational parameters.

ii. Provide and display overall leadership.

iii. Set objectives.

iv. Establish priorities.

v. Approve and communicate decisions.

vi. Supervise and provide oversight of assigned operational elements.

vii. Establish, maintain, working relationships with local administrators, social entities, and operational elements.

viii. Perform on-going evaluation of success in achieving objectives and status of external relationships.

ix. Inspire strategic thinking and long term planning.

x. Provide team oversight and assess Area Command Team performance
b. Assistant Area Commander – Planning

i. Gather, display, and disseminate intelligence

ii. Assess event to assist Area Commander in developing operational strategies and resource requirements

iii. Manage process to establish operational priorities

iv. Identify critical resource needs

v. Assess and monitor operations to determine if objectives are being met

vi. Manage transitions of operational teams, and elements

vii. Facilitate internal team operations and meetings

viii. Coordinate and manage reporting requirements

ix. Document Event and Area Command Team actions

x. Assess Planning Section staffing needs

xi. Supervise section personnel

c. Assistant Area Commander – Logistics

i. Assess event to assist Area Commander in developing operational strategies and resource requirements

ii. Identify critical logistical needs

iii. Assist Area Commander in establishing priorities

iv. Facilitate movement of resources

v. Identify implementation barriers and develop solutions

vi. Identify and fill Area Command Team’s logistical needs.

vii. Assess Logistics Section staffing needs

viii. Supervise section personnel

ix. Maintain property records to maintain accountability

d. Aviation Coordinator

i. Coordinate aviation assets

ii. Identify critical aviation needs
i. Daily Meetings - Generally 2-3 meetings each day are conducted to meet these needs. It is important to focus the time and attention of the Primary Area Command Team members on the long term strategy associated with the event. Daily meetings also allow the coordination of team effort and the sharing of issues and actions associated with their closure.

ii. Event/deployment cycle transitions – These meetings are most often conducted by the Area Command Team and are an important component of the transition between incoming and exiting teams.
Area Command
Basic Organization

Organizational Configuration Expanded
Public Information Requirement
Figure 3.

Organizational Configuration Expanded

Intelligence & Analysis Requirement

Area Commander

Assistant Area Commander - Planning

Communications & Computer Support

Assistant Area Commander - Aviation Coordinator

Assistant Area Commander - Logistics

Situations (Intelligence) Unit Leader

Resources Unit Leader

Facilities Unit Leader

Office Manager

Geographic Information Systems Unit

Event Specialists (Engineering, Hydrology, Seismic, etc.)
Tungabhadra-Krishna River Flood Scenario

The Tungabhadra River which flows south east through Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh joining Krishna River before the Srisailam Reservoir is in spate. Similarly, severe weather and heavy downpour is causing flooding in river Krishna. The emergency release of water at a weakened barrage at Sunkesula has caused several major incidents along the river in Mehboobnagar and Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh. More rain and wind is expected in the catchment areas during the next several days.

The District Sub-jail and juvenile detention facility at Mantralayam in Kurnool district has suffered extensive damage. All electrical power and water is out. Population is 450 adult males, 175 females, and 250 male juveniles. Relocation may be required. Only cold meals and limited water are available. The Jail Superintendent is the Incident Commander.

Ten blocks of Alampur town have had extensive flooding. Search and Rescue and evacuations are underway. There is no electrical power and the water and sewer systems have been damaged. An incident complex has been established to cover several incidents in this area. The Mehboobnagar District Police has designated an Additional Superintendent of Police rank officer as the Incident Commander.

A southbound train was derailed at a distance of 10 km from Gadwal Junction due to a bridge being undermined. Several cars are overturned. A tank car with an unknown chemical is on its side in the river and leaking. This incident is operating under a Unified Command consisting now of the District administration and Railways and law enforcement authorities.

In nearby Gadwal town, after the rain stopped locally, a gas leak ignited, causing a fire in a major grocery chain warehouse. Several people have been injured and there is a danger of fire
spread to adjacent buildings. Water pressure is low. The Gadwal Fire Department Chief is the Incident Commander.

The old bridge on Tungabhadra River which is part of a National Highway has got severely damaged leading to a major traffic problem and a large number of vehicles are stranded. The National Highway (NH) authorities are leading the response to this under the Superintending Engineer, NH with the assistance of police for management of traffic and public order.

There is currently a major problem with sharing limited resources between these incidents. Many volunteers have come forward, and the Incident Commanders are looking for ways to organize and use them effectively. Several news media representatives are on the scene at the various incidents.
Discuss the scenario in your group and come up with an appropriate option for management of these incidents.
AREA COMMAND

Unit 4: Area Command Interactions

OBJECTIVES: This topic will provide the participants the opportunity to:

1. Develop an awareness of potential Area Command interactions
2. Examine roles and responsibilities of Area Command team members in developing interactions with other entities

NARRATIVE

1. Communications and interactions

   a. External Communications
      i. Operational Communications
         1. Objective elements
            a. Provide Information
            b. Manage and coordinate
            c. Request resources
         2. Pathways – it is important to understand the informational requirements of those you work for, those who you work with, and those who work for you.
            a. Vertical
            b. Horizontal
      ii. Identify participating (or affected) agencies and groups
         1. Transportation agencies
         2. Public works and utilities
         3. Nongovernmental organizations (Red Cross, CARE etc)
         4. Military
         5. Law enforcement
6. Search and rescue

b. Public Information –
   i. Always required (formally or informally)
   ii. May be tasked to coordinate this function
   iii. Local expertise is often useful

c. Communications considerations
   i. Determine command hierarchy information requirements
   ii. Determine your information requirements
   iii. Identify points of contact
   iv. Establish modes of communications
   v. Establish schedules and frequency of coordination.
   vi. Establish protocols, early!

d. Internal Communications (team) – never assume this occurs without effort and framework
AREA COMMAND
Unit 5 & 5A: Strategic Command & Leadership

OBJECTIVES:

1. Define the strategic leadership and its importance to Area Command.

2. Understand key concepts and processes for Area Command in providing strategic leadership.

NARRATIVE:

I. INTRODUCTION

- Response to emergency incidents varies considerably. No two situations will be the same.
- Incidents will vary in scale, both spatial and temporal, and magnitude.

II. STRATEGY

- One of the greatest challenges for Area Command Team is to clarify what the strategy is and then have it clearly understood by parties involved in the situation.
- Strategy can be defined as “a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.”
- There are many levels of strategy but Area Command should be primarily concerned with that level which is encompassed by their delegation of authority, and that externally which influences it.
- “Tactics” are the operational uses of resources to meet the strategy of an incident.
III. WHAT IS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP?

- Leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the situation.
- In influencing people, leaders must often convey a message and urgency in change. Change or movement to a new course of action cannot and will not occur without a clear vision and communication to ensure there is full understanding of that vision.
- Strategic leadership is the influence of people by communicating to them and obtaining their endorsement of a clear vision of the short, mid, and long-term goals and direction.

IV. SHIFTING ROLES FOR AREA COMMAND

- Historically, Area Command Teams focused on operations and logistics.
- Today, Area Command Teams must be flexible and adaptable and able to respond to different situations quickly. They cannot be process-bound, but must be product oriented. They must be able to think strategically and formulate a strategic vision for the incident. Most responders working for an Area Command will be tactically oriented.

V. AREA COMMAND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Area Command must foster a strategic leadership environment by:
  - Obtaining a formal delegation of authority from the RO which contains:
    - safety
    - cost thresholds
    - resource impacts to avoid
    - a sense of “equity”
    - political issues
    - societal issues (largely influenced by the media)
    - economic issues
- clear mission statement
- measures of success

- Deciding on a course of action (within delegated authority).
  - Situational elements to consider can include:
    - Unit - Consolidated Unit or Adjoining Unit Issues
    - RO - RO of large, complex Unit
      - Partner Issues
      - Agency representatives Distracted
      - Poor oversight of IC’s
      - Fatigue Present and Unmanaged
      - No Requests for Help
    - Activity - Multiple Day initial responses
      - Response activity continuing day and night
      - Rapid Unexpected escalation of incident complexity
    - Area Command Situational Risk Awareness: IC’s
    - IRT’s - Strategy and Tactics not being adjusted
      - Fatigue Present & Unmanaged
      - Risks inadequately assessed
    - Unit manager - manager in Complex Situation
      - manager “Span of Control”
      - manager with Collateral Duties
      - No Requests for Help
  - Determining appropriate timeframe for activities
    - Short Term Situation
      - Review Objectives
      - Update of Situation
      - Projects/Issues resolved past 24 hours
      - Active Projects Status next 36 hours
    - Medium Term (3-6 days)
      - Area Command Activities
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- Meetings, Briefings, Transitions, Closeouts
- Strategy and Organization
- Active issues

Extended Term (7-21 days)

- Area Command Activities
  - Meetings, Briefings, Transitions, Closeouts
  - Strategy and Organization
  - Active issues
  - Forecasting

Active Issues

- Contingency Planning
- Safety Concerns
- Political Issues
- Key items that are time dependant
  - Decision time frame

Long Term (till the end)

- Incident Activities
  - Meetings, Briefings, Transitions, Closeouts
  - Strategy and Organization
  - Forecasting

  - Negotiating with various interested or affected parties to determine mission/objectives.
  - Striving to improve management of multiple incidents to achieve those objectives.
  - Allocating resources between competing incidents based on objectives.
  - Mediating conflict and solving problems.

VI. Monitoring
Measures of Success

- Developing Measure of Success
  - Must provide an indicator of stated mission
- Developing Accomplishment Milestones
  - Must reflect progress toward objectives and be consistent with stated mission
- Needed to reflect trend in activities – may be either escalating or declining

VII. Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) Example
Other examples can be given for these incidents

Flood - Irene in Vermont 2011  
IN: Morvi Dam Failure 1979 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morvi_dam_failure  


IN: Orissa 1998, 2009  

Planned events  
IN Commonwealth Games in Delhi  
IN Festivals, elections http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_festivals

Transportation - 1996 Charkhi Dadri mid-air collision 349 Dead, just west of Delhi  

Public Health - IN: 2009 H1N1 Flu Pandemic  

Industrial accidents - Deepwater Horizon 2010  
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepwater_Horizon_oil_spill  

IN: South Asia EQ/Tsunami 2004  
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effect_of_the_2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake_on_India  