INTRODUCTION ON IRS

NDMA has issued guidelines on the Incident Response SystemIRS under Section 6 of DM Act 2005 for effective, efficient and comprehensive management of disasters in India. The vision is to minimize loss of life and property by strengthening and standardising the disaster response mechanism in the country.

The Incident Response System (IRS) is an effective mechanism for reducing ad-hoc measures in response. It envisages a composite team with various Sections to attend to all the possible response requirements. The IRS designates officers to perform various duties and get them trained in their respective roles. It also emphasises the need for proper documentation of various activities for better planning, accountability and analysis. This will greatly help in reducing chaos and confusion during the response phase. Everyone will know what needs to be done, who will do it and who is in command.

PURPOSE OF IRS

As the size and complexity of an incident grows, additional emergency services and resources are called up to respond. To maintain command and control and manage these resources operating at the incident effectively the incident response system is adopted.

Response require coordination among several different agencies –IRS is better integrate response in multi agency activities.
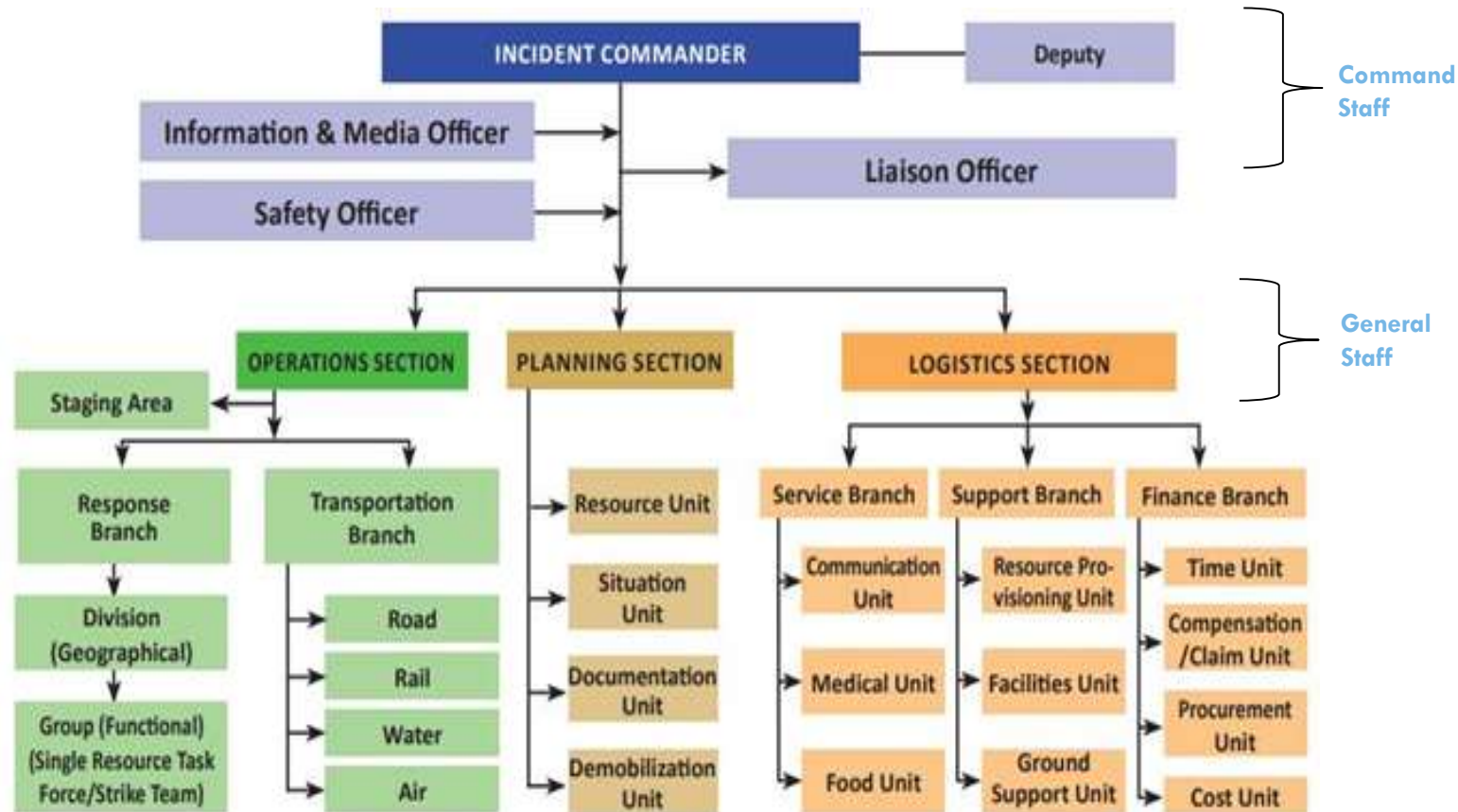
ORGANISATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

The IRS organisation is a need based, flexible organisation. All the components need not be activated simultaneously. Only those Sections, Branches and Units need to be activated that would be required for the given disaster. Each activated Section, Branch or Unit must have a person in charge to perform its role. In some cases, because of lack of personnel, a single supervisor may be made in-charge of more than one Group, Unit or Section. The organisational elements that are no longer required should be deactivated to reduce the size of the organisation and to ensure appropriate use of resources.

INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAMS

The IRT is an entity comprising of all positions of IRS organisation headed by the Incident Commander as shown in the figure below. The Operations Section helps to prepare and execute different tactical operations required in response to the disaster. The Planning Section helps in obtaining information and preparing plans as required. The Logistics Section assesses the availability and requirement of resources and takes action for obtaining them. IRTs will function at State, District, Sub-Division and the Tehsil / Block levels. The IRTs will be pre-designated at these levels and on receipt of Early Warning, the corresponding Responsible Officer will activate them. In case a disaster occurs without any warning, the local IRT will respond and contact the Responsible Officer for further support, if required.

IRS FLOWCHART:
IRS HAS TWO MAIN COMPONENTS A) COMMAND STAFF AND B) GENERAL STAFF.

IRS FEATURES: IRS FACILITIES, IRS ORGANISATION

i. IRS Facilities • Set-up Incident Command Post (ICP) – Primary command functions

• Staging Area – Resources await assignment – Possibly multiple sites • Base – Logistics and administration

• Relief Camp – Food, water/ sleeping and sanitary areas

• IRS Facilities: Heli Base /Heli Pad

ii. IRS Organization • Incident Response is built around five major functions – Command – Planning – Operations – Logistics – Finance / Admin • Small incidents - one person can do all functions • All incidents will have an Incident Commander/IC.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/ RO

Responsible Officers (ROs) have been designated at the State and District level as overall in charge of the incident response management. The Responsible Officer may delegate responsibilities to the Incident Commander (IC), who in turn will manage the incident through Incident Response Teams (IRTs).

IRS COMMAND FUNCTIONS

The command function is directed by the Incident Commander/IC. The Incident Commander (IC) is the overall director of an incident. IC can delegate authority to subordinates.

Incident Commander's Tasks • Sets Objectives and Priorities • Determine operational objectives • Ensure responder safety • Develop incident action plan (IAP).

The Command Staff to assist Incident Command/IC are Safety Officer/ Liaison Officer /Information Officer

Information Officer – Handles all media contacts – Release of information to the media – Coordinates media release with EOC •

Safety Officer – Monitors safety conditions – Develops measures for ensuring safety of all incident participants.

Liaison Officer – On scene contact for other agencies assigned to the incident – Not to be confused with local Liaison Officer

IRS GENERAL STAFF FLOWCHART FEATURES

General Staff consists of Planning Section /Operations Section /Logistics Section. Incident Command General Staff Departments are controlled by Section Chiefs.

Operations Section Chief

Planning Section Chief

Logistics Section Chief

Sections are divided into Branches. Branches can be divided into Divisions & Units.

PLANNING SECTIONS

This Section is divided into Four Units namely Resource Unit, Situation Unit, Documentation Unit and Demobilization Unit.

Planning section responsibility – Collect, evaluate and display information about the mission – Develop the Incident Action Plan/ IAP for each operational period as well as conduct long range planning – Maintain status information on equipment and personnel – Maintain incident documentation

OPERATIONS SECTION:

THIS SECTION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO MAJOR BRANCHES NAMELY I. RESPONSE BRANCH AND II. TRANSPORTATION BRANCH. {RESPONSE BRANCHES CAN BE DIVIDED INTO DIVISION (GEOGRAPHICAL) AND GROUP (FUNCTIONAL) LIKE SINGLE RESOURCE/ TASK FORCE/STRIKE TEAM}. {TRANSPORTATION BRANCH CAN BE DIVIDED INTO UNITS LIKE ROADS/RAILS/AIR/ WATER}.

- There is only one operations section chief at one time.
- Section chief may have deputy from other agencies or from the same agency
- Section chief is usually from the organization providing the most resources to the mission
- Carries out tactical operations to carry to the mission plan
- Develops tactical objectives
- Directs all resources

LOGISTICS SECTION: PROVIDES SUPPORT TO MEET THE INCIDENT'S NEEDS – MATERIAL – SERVICES – FACILITIES – PERSONNEL.

This Section is divided into Three Branches namely Service Branch, Support Branch and Finance Branch.

Service Branch can be divided into units namely Communication Unit, Medical Unit, Food Unit.

Support Branch can be divided into Resource-Provision Unit, Facilities Unit, Ground Support Unit.

Finance Branch can be divided into Time Unit, Compensation/Claim Unit, Procurement Unit, Cost Unit. {Finance Branch tracks incident costs and reimbursement accounting • Provides accounting • Records time spent on incident • Does Cost Analysis}

UNIFIED COMMAND APPLICATIONS

Incidents that affect more than one political jurisdiction B C A B D A C E A Fire Law Medical Incidents involving multiple agencies within a jurisdiction Incidents that impact multiple geographic and functional agencies