Pursuant to Section 5 of the NFPA Regulations Governing Committee Projects, the National Fire Protection Association has issued the following Tentative Interim Amendment to NFPA 1561, Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System, 2002 edition. The TIA was processed by the Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health Committee, and was issued by the Standards Council on April 3, 2003, with an effective date of April 23, 2003.

A Tentative Interim Amendment is tentative because it has not been processed through the entire standards-making procedures. It is interim because it is effective only between editions of the standard. A TIA automatically becomes a proposal of the proponent for the next edition of the standard; as such, it then is subject to all of the procedures of the standards-making process.

1. Add a new Annex F to read as follows:

Annex F
COMMAND ORGANIZATION

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND ROLES
RESPONSIBILITIES of the COMMAND and GENERAL STAFF POSITIONS within an INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Note: The Incident Command System is also referred to as the Incident Management System

Incident Management System

I. Introduction

The Incident Management System organization develops around five major functions that are required on any incident whether it is large or small. For some incidents, and in some applications, only a few of the organization’s functional elements may be required. However, if there is a need to expand the organization, additional positions exist within the IMS framework to meet virtually any need.
IMS establishes lines of supervisory authority and formal reporting relationships. There is complete unity of command as each position and person within the system has a designated supervisor. Direction and supervision follows established organizational lines at all times.

The following are the major responsibilities and duties of all IMS positions. Individual agencies may have additional responsibilities and more detailed lists of duties.

II. Incident Commander and Command Staff

A. Incident Commander

The Incident Commander's responsibility is the overall management of the incident. On most incidents, the command activity is carried out by a single Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is selected by qualifications and experience.

The Incident Commander may have a deputy, who may be from the same agency, or from an assisting agency. Deputies may also be used at section and branch levels of the IMS organization. Deputies must have the same qualifications as the person to whom they report, as they must be ready to take over that position at any time.

Responsibilities (not inclusive):
• Assess the situation and/or obtain a briefing from the prior Incident Commander.
• Determine incident objectives and strategy.
• Establish the immediate priorities.
• Establish an Incident Command Post.
• Establish an appropriate organization.
• Ensure planning meetings are scheduled as required.
• Approve and authorize the implementation of an Incident Action Plan.
• Ensure that adequate safety measures are in place.
• Coordinate activity for all command and general staff.
• Coordinate with key people and officials.
• Approve requests for additional resources or for the release of resources.
• Keep agency administrator informed of incident status.
• Approve the use of trainees, volunteers, and auxiliary personnel.
• Authorize release of information to the news media.
• Order the demobilization of the incident when appropriate.

B. Command Staff

1. Information Officer

The Information Officer is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations.

Only one Information Officer will be assigned for each incident, including incidents operating under Unified Command and multi-jurisdiction incidents. The Information Officer may have assistants as necessary, and the assistants may also represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions.

Responsibilities (not inclusive):

Agencies have different policies and procedures relative to the handling of public information. The following are the major responsibilities of the Information Officer, which would generally apply on any incident:

• Determine from the Incident Commander if there are any limits on information release.
• Develop material for use in media briefings.
• Obtain Incident Commander’s approval of media releases.
• Inform media and conduct media briefings.
• Arrange for tours and other interviews or briefings that may be required.
• Obtain media information that may be useful to incident planning.
• Maintain current information summaries and/or displays on the incident and provide information on status of incident to assigned personnel.
• Maintain Unit Log.

2. Liaison Officer and Agency Representatives

a. Liaison Officer

Incidents that are multi-jurisdictional, or have several agencies involved, may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff.

The Liaison Officer is the contact for the personnel assigned to the incident by assisting or cooperating agencies. These are personnel other than those on direct tactical assignments or those involved in a Unified Command.

Liaison Officer major responsibilities and duties (not inclusive):

• Be a contact point for Agency Representatives.
• Maintain a list of assisting and cooperating agencies and Agency Representatives.
• Assist in establishing and coordinating interagency contacts.
• Keep agencies supporting the incident aware of incident status.
• Monitor incident operations to identify current or potential interorganizational problems.
• Participate in planning meetings, providing current resource status, including limitations and capability of assisting agency resources.
• Maintain unit log.

b. Agency Representatives

In many multi-jurisdiction incidents, an agency or jurisdiction will send a representative to assist in coordination efforts.

An Agency Representative is an individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency’s participation at the incident.

Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer, or to the Incident Commander in the absence of a Liaison Officer.

Responsibilities (not inclusive):

• Ensure that all agency resources are properly checked in at the incident.
• Obtain briefing from the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander.
• Inform assisting or cooperating agency personnel on the incident that the Agency Representative position for that agency has been filled.
• Attend briefings and planning meetings as required.
• Provide input on the use of agency resources unless resource technical specialists are assigned from the agency.
• Cooperate fully with the Incident Commander and the general staff on agency involvement at the incident.
• Ensure the well being of agency personnel assigned to the incident.
3. Liaison Officer

Advise the Liaison Officer of any special agency needs or requirements.
Report to home agency dispatch or headquarters on a prearranged schedule.
Ensure that all agency personnel and equipment are properly accounted for and released prior to departure.
Ensure that all required agency forms, reports, and documents are complete prior to departure.
Have a debriefing session with the Liaison Officer or Incident Commander prior to departure.

3. Safety Officer

The Safety Officer's function is to develop and recommend measures for assuring personnel safety, and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe situations.

Only one Safety Officer will be assigned for each incident. The Safety Officer may have assistants as necessary, and the assistants may also represent assisting agencies or jurisdictions. Safety assistants may have specific responsibilities such as air operations, hazardous materials, etc.

**Responsibilities** (not inclusive):
- Participate in planning meetings.
- Identify hazardous situations associated with the incident.
- Review the Incident Action Plan for safety implications.
- Exercise emergency authority to stop and prevent unsafe acts.
- Investigate accidents that have occurred within the incident area.
- Assign assistants as needed.
- Review and approve the medical plan.
- Maintain Unit Log.

III. UNIFIED COMMAND

The standard IMS organizational framework with a single Incident Commander from one jurisdiction or agency does not create an effective organization for multi-jurisdictional incidents, or for incidents involving several agencies from the same political jurisdiction. The use of a single Incident Commander would, in some cases, not be legally possible or politically advisable.

It is recognized that every incident must have one person with the responsibility and the authority to direct tactical actions. Lacking a single authority, chaos easily prevails on multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents.

Unified Command is a team effort process, allowing all agencies with responsibility for an incident, geographical, functional or statutory, to establish a common set of incident objectives and strategies that all can subscribe to. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.

There are essentially four elements to consider in applying Unified Command:

A. Policies, Objectives, Strategies
B. Organization
C. Resources
D. Operations

In IMS Unified Command, resources stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. Operationally resources are deployed by a single Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the action plan.

The Operations Section Chief will normally be from the jurisdiction or agency that has the greatest involvement in the incident. The selection of the Operations Section Chief should be agreed upon by the Unified Command, as the Operations Section Chief will have full authority to implement the operations
portion of the Incident Action Plan. It is also necessary to agree on other general staff personnel who will be implementing their portions of the Incident Action Plan.

Unified Command represents an important element in increasing the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency incidents. As incidents become more complex and involve more agencies, the need for Unified Command is increased.

Under Unified Command, the various jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated unified team. The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.

Lack of knowledge about IMS can limit the willingness of some jurisdictions or agencies to participate in a Unified Command incident organization. **It is impossible to implement Unified Command unless agencies have agreed to participate in the process.**

Establish a single Incident Command Post and, as needed, other facilities where all agencies can operate together. Avoid the confusion created by separate command, planning, and logistical set-ups.

IV. The General Staff Positions

The General Staff consists of the following positions:

- Operations Section Chief
- Planning Section Chief
- Logistics Section Chief
- Finance/Administration Section Chief

A. Operations Section

1. Operations Section Chief

   **Responsibilities** (not inclusive):

   - Manage tactical operations.
   - Interact with next lower level of section (branch, division/group) to develop the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
   - Request resources needed to implement the operation's tactics as a part of the Incident Action Plan.
   - Assist in development of the operations portion of the Incident Action Plan.
   - Supervise the execution of the Incident Action Plan for operations.
   - Maintain close contact with subordinate positions.
   - Ensure safe tactical operations.
   - Request additional resources to support tactical operations.
   - Approve release of resources from assigned status (not release from the incident).
   - Make or approve expedient changes to the Incident Action Plan during the operational period as necessary.
   - Maintain close communication with the Incident Commander.
   - Maintain unit log.

Staging Area Manager

The Staging Area manager reports to the Operations Section Chief or to the Incident Commander if the Operations Section Chief position has not been filled.

**Responsibilities** (not inclusive):
• Establish layout of staging area.
• Post areas for identification and traffic control.
• Provide check-in for incoming resources.
• Determine required resource reserve levels from the Operations Section Chief or Incident Commander.
• Advise the Operations Section Chief or Incident Commander when reserve levels reach minimums.

• Maintain and provide status to resource unit of all resources in Staging Area.
• Respond to Operations Section Chief or Incident Commander requests for resources.
• Request logistical support for personnel and/or equipment as needed.
• Maintain staging area in an orderly condition.
• Demobilize or move staging area as required.
• Maintain unit log.

B. Planning Section

The Planning Section collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the incident. When activated, the section is managed by the Planning Section Chief who is a member of the general staff.

There are four units within the Planning Section that can be activated as necessary:

• Resources Unit
• Situation Unit
• Documentation Unit
• Demobilization Unit

1. Planning Section Chief

Responsibilities (not inclusive):

• Collect and process situation information about the incident.
• Supervise preparation of the Incident Action Plan.
• Provide input to the Incident Commander and Operations Section Chief in preparing the Incident Action Plan.
• Reassign out-of-service personnel already on-site to IMS organizational positions as appropriate.
• Establish information requirements and reporting schedules for Planning Section units (e.g., Resources, Situation Units).
• Determine need for any specialized resources in support of the incident.
• If requested, assemble and disassemble strike teams and task forces not assigned to operations.
• Establish special information collection activities as necessary, e.g., weather, environmental, toxics, etc.
• Assemble information on alternative strategies.
• Provide periodic predictions on incident potential.
• Report any significant changes in incident status.
• Compile and display incident status information.
• Oversee preparation of incident demobilization plan.
• Incorporate the incident traffic plan (from Ground Support) and other supporting plans into the Incident Action Plan.
• Maintain unit log.

C. Logistics Section
All incident support needs are provided by the Logistics Section, with the exception of aviation support. Aviation support is handled by the Air Support Group in the Air Operations Branch.

The Logistics Section is managed by the Logistics Section Chief, who may assign a deputy. A deputy is most often assigned when all designated units (listed below) within the Logistics Section are activated.

Six units may be established within the Logistics Section:

- Supply Unit
- Facilities Unit
- Ground Support Unit
- Communications Unit
- Food Unit
- Medical Unit

The Logistics Section Chief will determine the need to activate or deactivate a unit. If a unit is not activated, responsibility for that unit's duties will remain with the Logistics Section Chief.

1. **Logistics Section Chief**

   **Responsibilities** (not inclusive):

   - Manage all incident logistics.
   - Provide logistical input to the IC in preparing the Incident Action Plan.
   - Brief Branch Directors and Unit Leaders as needed.
   - Identify anticipated and known incident service and support requirements.
   - Request additional resources as needed.
   - Review and provide input to the Communications Plan, Medical Plan and Traffic Plan.
   - Supervise requests for additional resources.
   - Oversee demobilization of Logistics Section.

D. **Finance/Administration Section**

The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for managing all financial aspects of an incident. Not all incidents will require a Finance/Administration Section. Only when the involved agencies have a specific need for Finance/Administration services will the Section be activated.

There are four units which may be established within the Finance/Administration Section:

- Time Unit
- Procurement Unit
- Compensation/Claims Unit
- Cost Unit

1. **Finance/Administration Section Chief**

   **Responsibilities** (not inclusive):

   - Manage all financial aspects of an incident.
   - Provide financial and cost analysis information as requested.
   - Gather pertinent information from briefings with responsible agencies.
   - Develop an operating plan for the Finance/Administration Section; fill supply and support needs.
   - Determine need to set up and operate an incident commissary.
   - Meet with assisting and cooperating Agency Representatives as needed.
   - Maintain daily contact with agency(s) administrative headquarters on Finance/Administration matters.
• Ensure that all personnel time records are accurately completed and transmitted to home agencies, according to policy.
• Provide financial input to demobilization planning.
• Ensure that all obligation documents initiated at the incident are properly prepared and completed.
• Brief agency administrative personnel on all incident-related financial issues needing attention or follow-up.

V. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Major incidents and events can create special problems related to incident organization. The potential problems can result in the need for a larger organizational framework to effectively manage the incident.

Major incidents are infrequent but create significant management problems. Major incidents generally:

• Involve more than one agency (often many).
• May involve more than one political jurisdiction.
• Have the more complex management and communication problems.
• Require more experienced, qualified supervisory personnel.
• Require large numbers of tactical and support resources.
• Cause more injury, death, illness.
• Produce the most damage to property and the environment.
• Have extreme elements of crisis/psychological trauma that diminishes human capacity to function.
• Are longer in duration.
• Are the most costly to control and mitigate.
• Require extensive mitigation, recovery, and rehabilitation.
• Have greater media interest.
• Often times require cost recovery because of declared state for federal disaster.
  • Must have written Incident Action Plan.
• Emergency Operations Centers or Department Operations Centers may be activated.
• Incident logistical, planning, and other support needs.
• Potential for growth.

Incidents can become major in two ways:

They start as major incidents - Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tanker spills, major HAZMAT situations, simultaneous civil disorders, etc., can all produce major incident management situations, some with only minimal or no advance warning.

They become major incidents - Smaller incidents such as fires and hazardous substance spills can become major as result of wind or surface conditions, and also as a result of response time delays, lack of resources or support, or lack of adequate management.

Major incidents are often thought of as covering a large geographical area. Major incidents can also be incidents with great complexity, requiring the application of a variety of tactics and resources to successfully bring the situation under control. There is virtually no geographic location that is free from the potential of having a major incident. Smaller jurisdictions can and do have major incidents.

Many times smaller jurisdictions have training in IMS/ICS but do not have the necessary resources to effectively manage long term or major incidents. To do so requires adequate training, and planning with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies to jointly develop IMT’s to manage the overall incident.

An Incident Management Team should be capable of filling the command and general staff positions. The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) should develop qualifications of each position based on the roles
and responsibilities identified in this document. The local agency is responsible to provide training for the individuals that will fill these positions. Members should be trained together with full-scale exercises and simulations of sufficient number to develop their proficiency and maintain the necessary skills.

Filling the positions of the IMT may comprise personnel from local, regional, or national agencies. Depending on the nature of the incident the composition of the team may also be from multiple disciplines.

Staffing of an IMT should provide sufficient personnel to provide relief for continuous operation covering multi-operational periods.

The local agency should develop standard operating procedures for on call roster (to fill each position on the IMT), notification and response capability of each member and a cache of Incident Command Post supplies.

The local agency should consider the following items for an Incident Command Post (ICP):
Wall maps, including GIS if needed
Telephones
Electrical supply
Sufficient space
Restrooms
A location to keep people out of the weather
Staging and/or base area for resources
VIP access
Helicopter landing zone
Press area
Security
Desks, communications devices, chairs, lighting

*It is recommended that local agencies package and store these materials for rapid deployment to an ICP.

These guidelines are intended to provide direction to local agencies for the development of their Incident Management Teams.