

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# Area Command – An overview

Fresh Water Spills Symposium

April 30, 2009

# Definition of Area Command

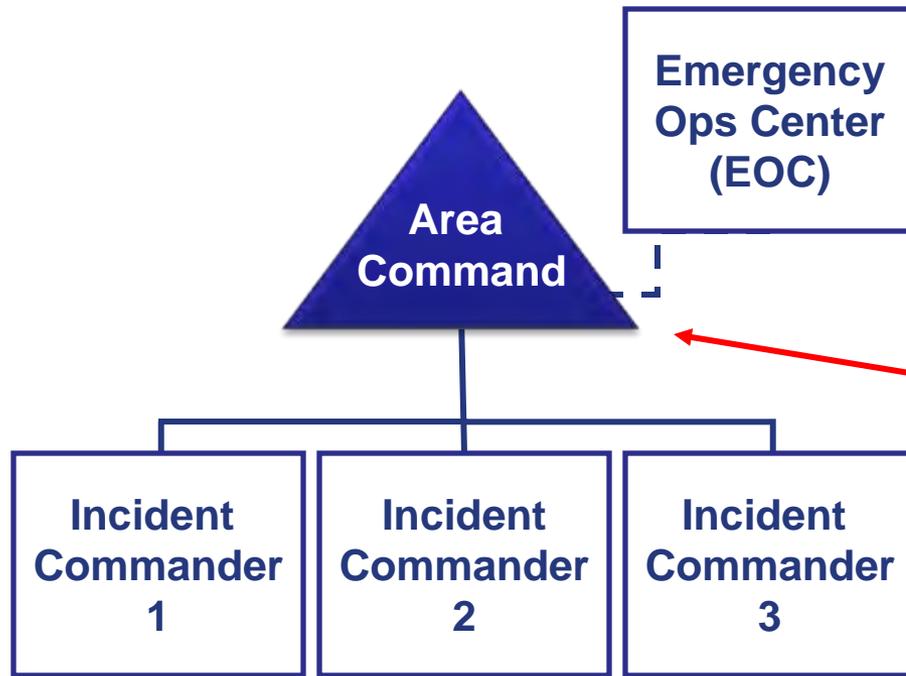
- Area Command is an organizational structure used to oversee the management of:
  - Multiple incidents that are each being handled by an Incident Command System organization; or
  - A very large incident that has multiple incident management teams assigned to it.



# **Primary Functions of Area Command:**

- Provide agency or jurisdictional authority for assigned incidents.**
- Ensure a clear understanding of agency expectations, intentions, and constraints.**
- Establish critical resource use priorities between various incidents.**
- Ensure that incident management team personnel assignments and organizations are appropriate.**
- Maintain contact with officials in charge, and other agencies and groups.**
- Coordinate the demobilization or reassignment of resources between assigned incidents.**

# Key Terms Review



**Emergency Operations Center:** Coordinates information and resources to support local incident management activities.

**Area Command:** Oversees the management of multiple incidents. Area Command may be Unified, and works directly with Incident Commanders.

**Incident Commander:** Performs primary tactical-level, on-scene incident command functions. The Incident Commander is located at an Incident Command Post at the incident scene.

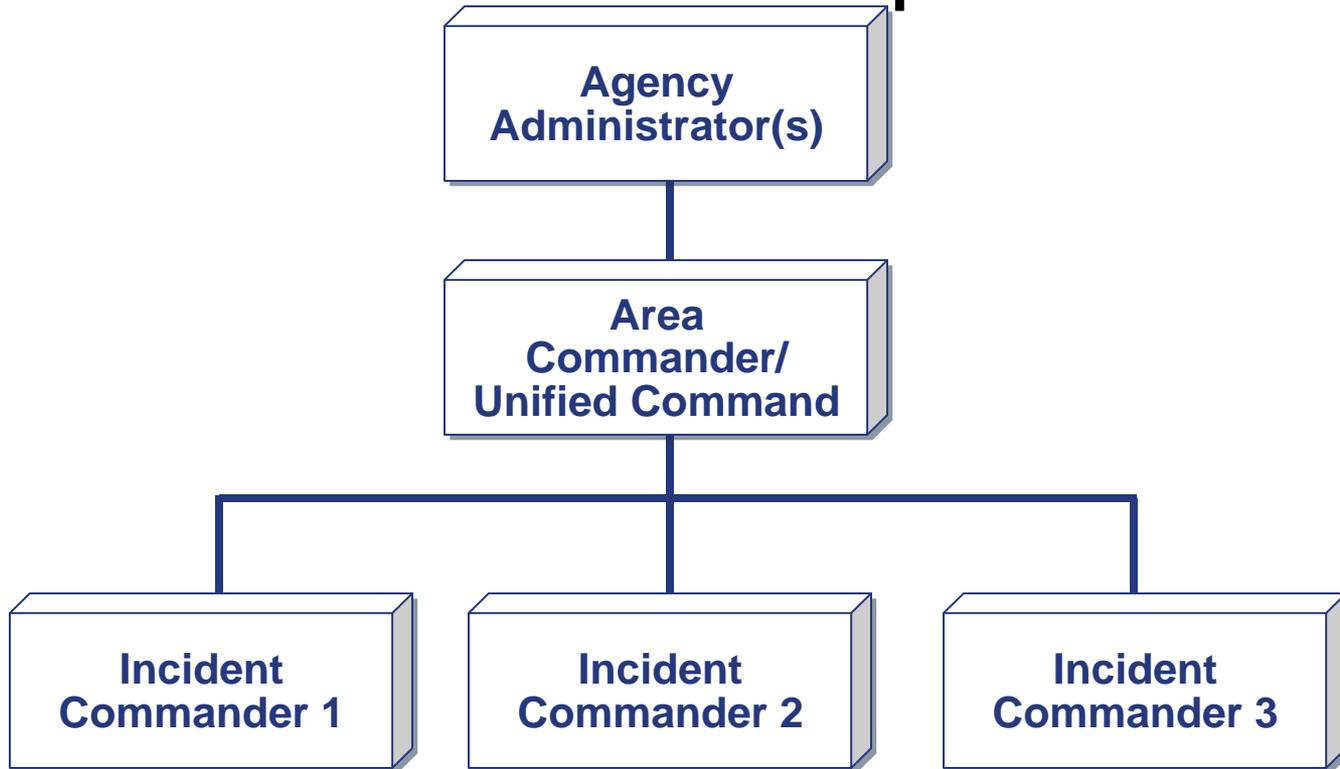
# Advantages of Area Command

## Area Command:

- Assists in interagency coordination.
- Ensures efficient resource use.
- Ensures that agency policies, priorities, constraints, and guidance are being made known to the Incident Commanders and implemented consistently across incidents.
- Reduces workload for agency officials.



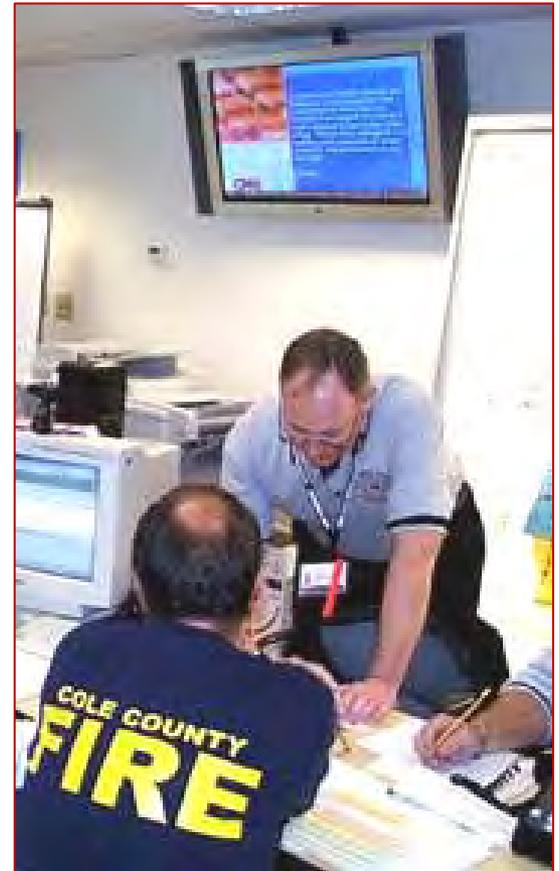
# Chain of Command & Reporting Relationships



# Area Command: Best Practices

Area Command should:

- Receive its authority through a written delegation of authority.
- Notify Incident Commanders of its authorities and roles.
- Be staffed with qualified and experienced personnel.
- Operate under standard ICS principles.
- Be kept small.



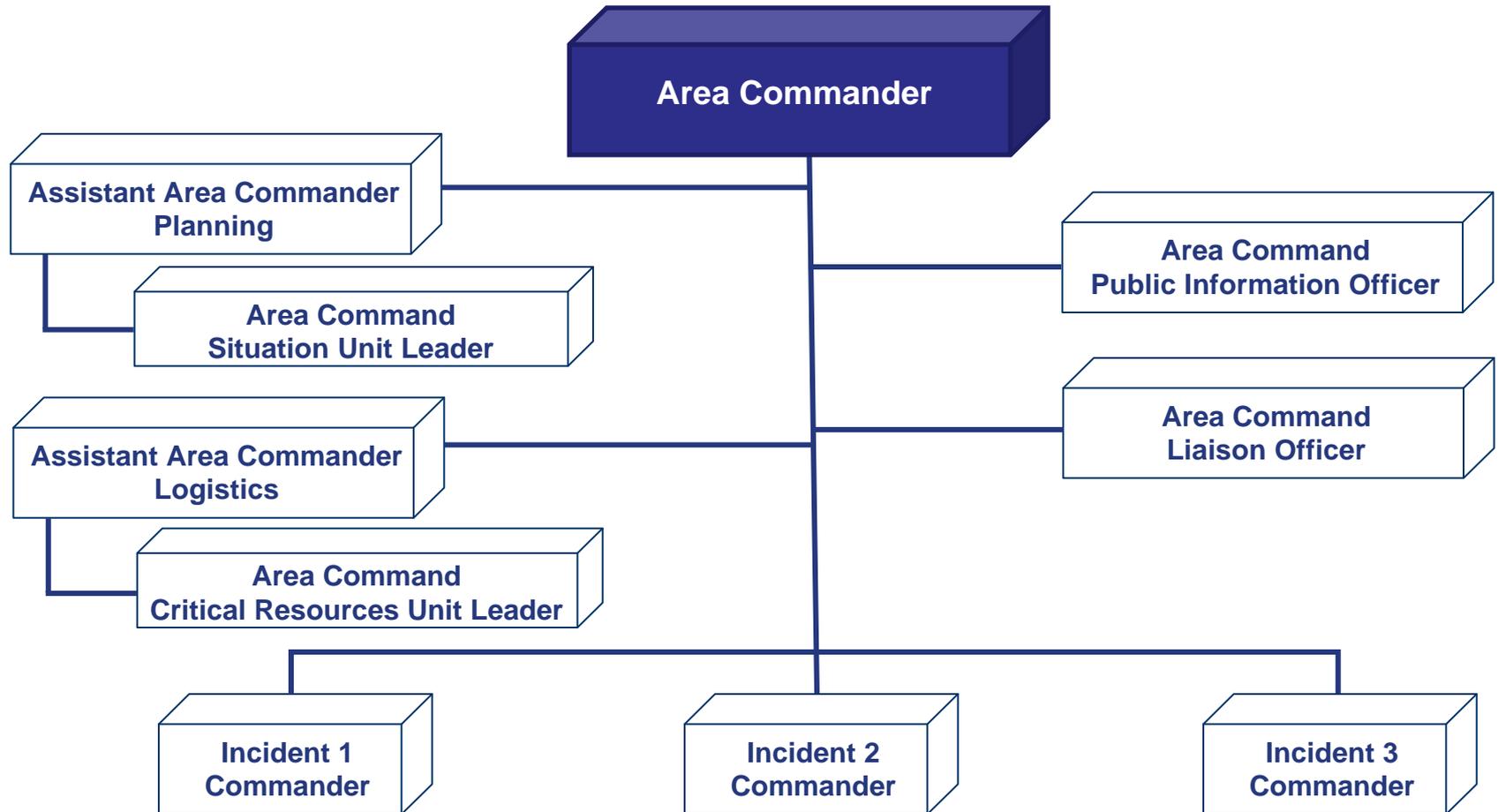
# When Should Area Command Be Established?

- As soon as possible when:

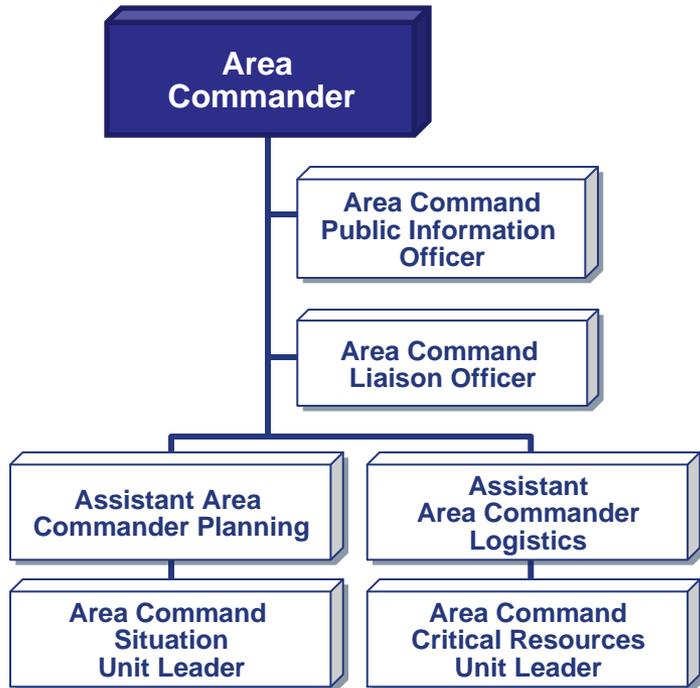
- Several active incidents are in close proximity.
- Critical life saving or property values are at risk due to incidents.
- Incidents are using similar and limited critical resources.
- Difficulties are encountered with interincident resource allocation and coordination.



# Area Command Organization



# Area Commander: Overall Responsibilities



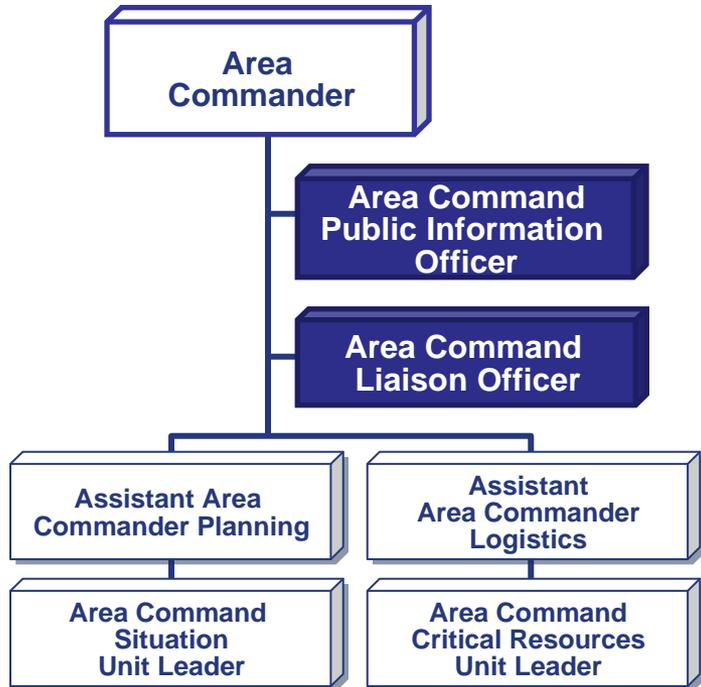
- Set overall objectives.
- Ensure incident objectives are met and do not conflict with each other or Agency policy.
- Establish incident-related priorities.
- Allocate/reallocate critical resources.
- Ensure that personnel are qualified and incidents are properly managed.
- Coordinate with Agency Administrator, EOC, other entities, and the media.

# Area Commander: Critical Activities



- **Rapidly assess each incident.**
- **Communicate priorities to Commanders.**
- **Ensure plans support priorities and policies.**
- **Allocate/reallocate critical resources.**
- **Plan resource demobilization.**

# Area Command Officers



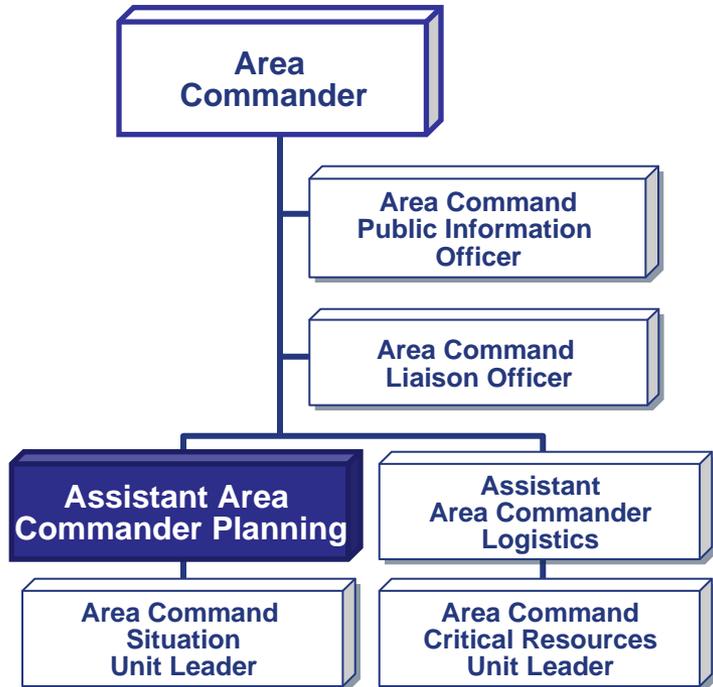
## Public Information Officer

- Provides public information coordination between incidents. Serves as the contact point for media requests.

## Liaison Officer

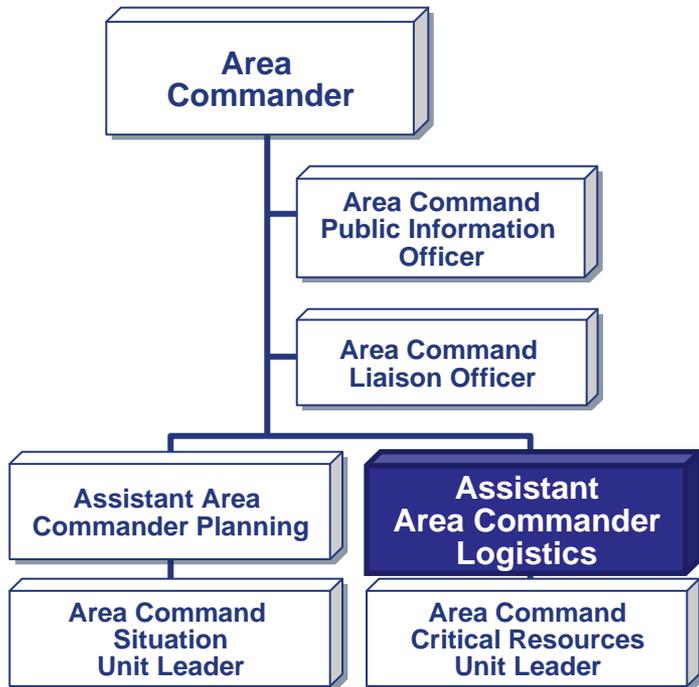
- Maintains off-incident interagency contacts and coordination.

# Assistant Area Commander – Planning



- Assembles information on individual incident objectives.
- Recommends resource allocation priorities.
- Maintains critical resources status.
- Ensures advance planning is accomplished.
- Prepares Area Command briefings.
- Reviews Incident Action Plans and completed ICS 209 forms from assigned incidents.

# Assistant Area Commander – Logistics



- Obtains briefing from Area Commander.
- Provides facilities, services, and materials for Area Command.
- Designates and coordinates ordering process.
- Ensures communications are coordinated.
- Assists in Area Command decision making.

# Area Command Technical Specialists

- Aviation Specialist
- Hazardous Materials Specialist
- Environmental Specialist
- Communications Specialist



# Agency Administrator In-Briefing to Area Commander

- ✓ General situation and incidents assigned
- ✓ Jurisdictional delegation of authority
- ✓ Assumption of command timing and notifications procedure
- ✓ Names and qualifications of Incident Commanders (indicating those under Unified Command)
- ✓ Agency advisor
- ✓ Limitations on the Area Commander's authority
- ✓ Current IAPs
- ✓ Policies, political factors, or other constraints
- ✓ Area Command facility
- ✓ Status of communications systems
- ✓ Critical resource designations
- ✓ Policy and expectations for interaction with the media
- ✓ Area Command reporting responsibility to agency
- ✓ Briefing and contact schedules

# Area Commander In-Briefing With Incident Commanders

- ✓ Concise incident briefings (including IAPs and other documentation).
- ✓ Area Command roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Policy, direction, and priorities.
- ✓ Conflict resolution procedures.
- ✓ Communication procedures, meeting schedules, etc.
- ✓ Resource ordering process.
- ✓ Critical resource needs.



# Area Command Meeting Agenda



- Incident Situation Reports
- Technical Specialists Reports
- Identify Critical Resource Needs
- Allocate and reallocate resources
- Public Information Report
- Liaison Officer Report
- Demobilization of Resources
- Unified Area Command Wrap-Up

# Demobilization Procedures

- Establish procedures with incidents and EOCs/multiagency coordination centers on demobilization.
- Determine demobilization priorities and procedure for handling critical resources.
- Provide incidents with a list of critical resources and instructions for clearing releases with Area Command.
- Incidents must provide Area Command with copies of demobilization schedules.



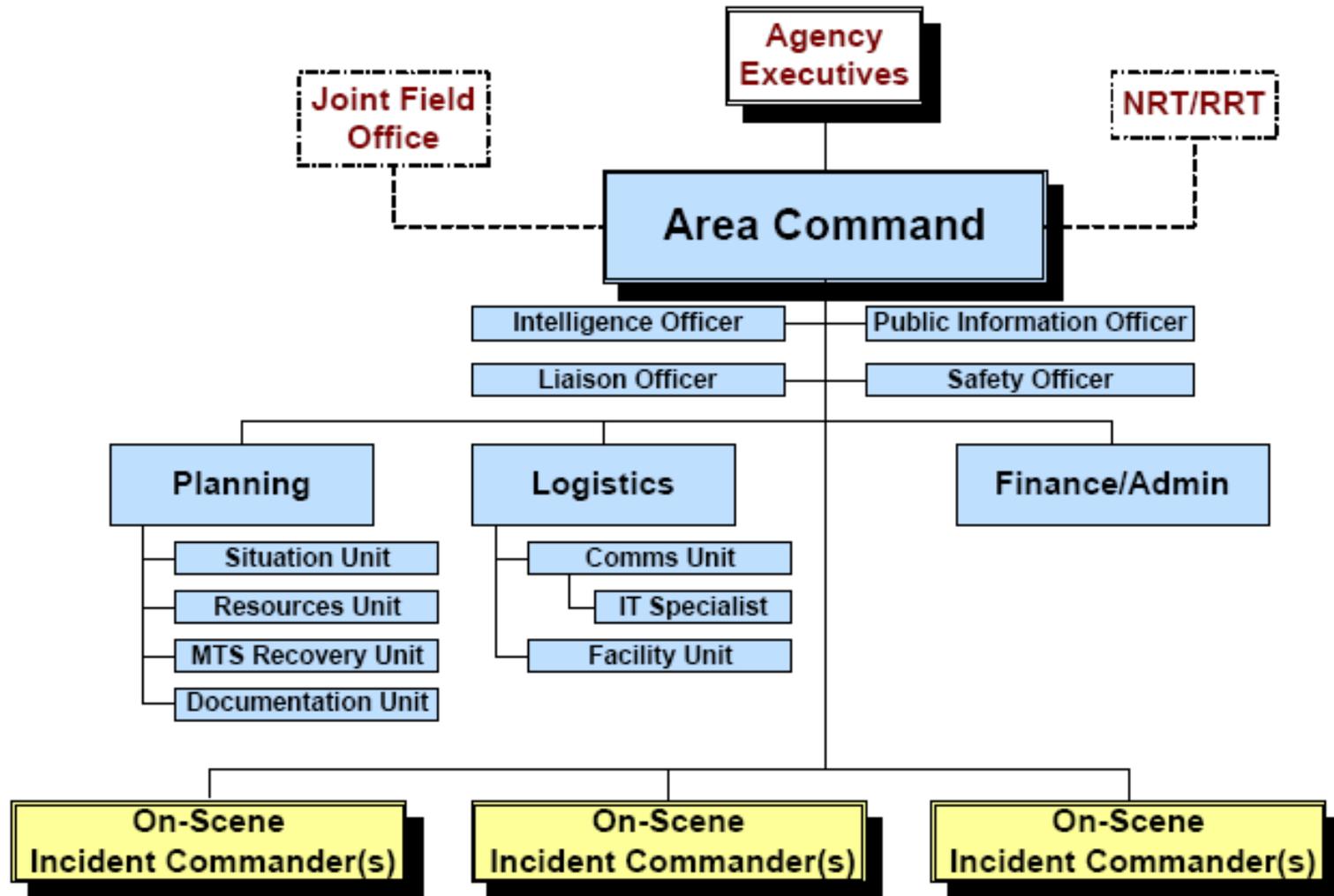


# SONS 07 Debriefing

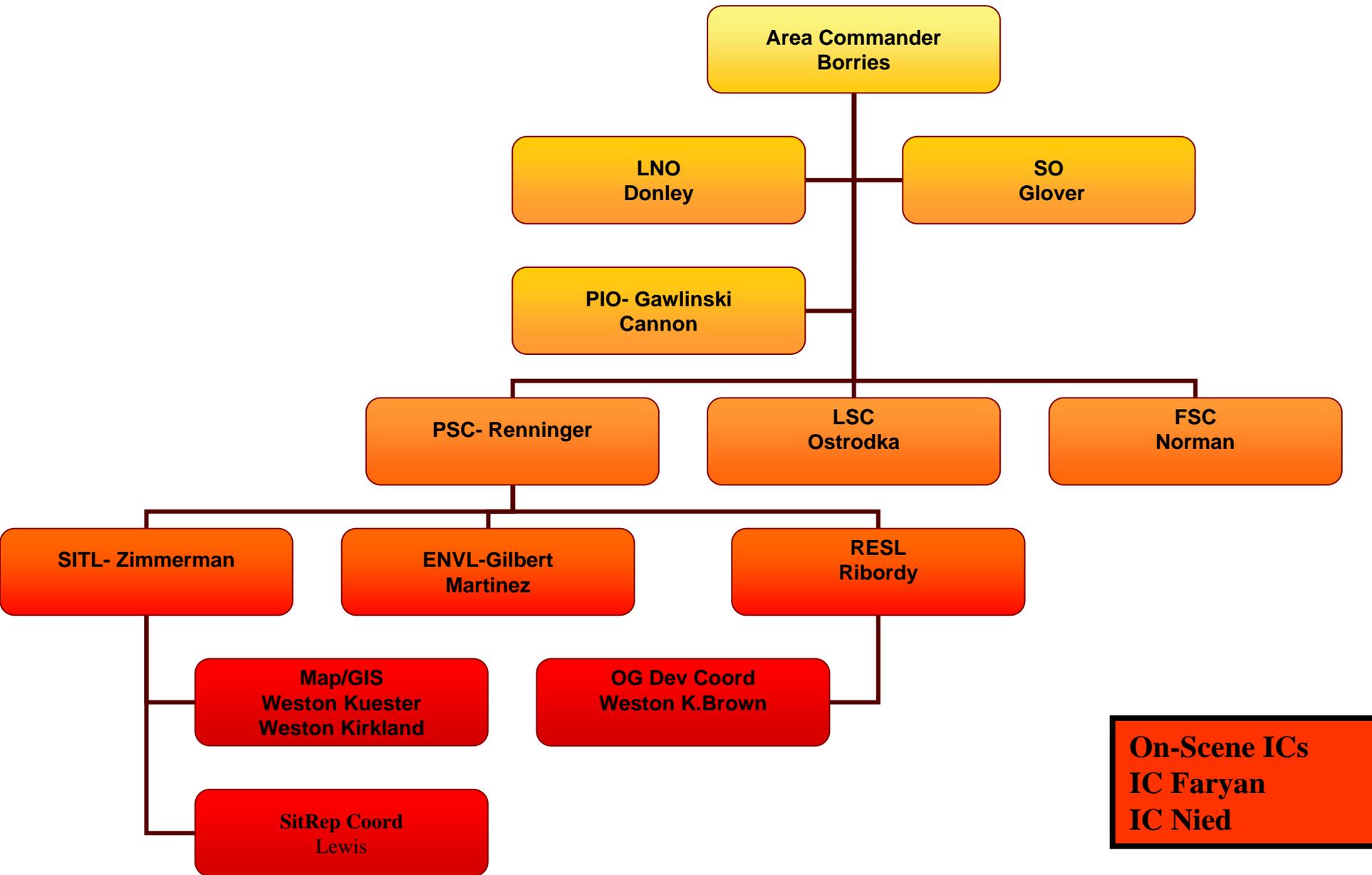
Springfield Area Command

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## Area Command Organization Chart



# Springfield Area Command





**Legend**

**Incidents by Priority**

- ◆ High
- ◆ Medium
- ◆ Low
- ◆ Unclassified

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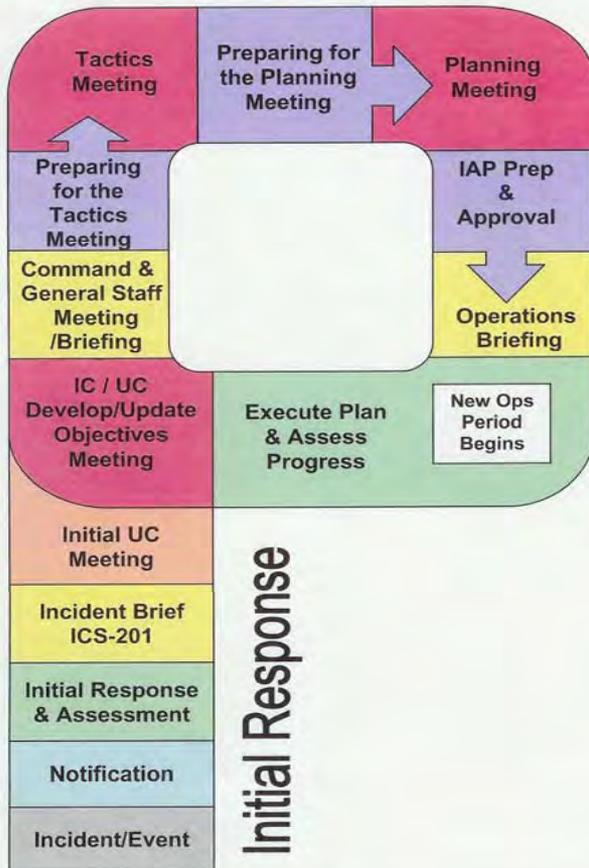
**Illinois Incidents  
by Priority**  
As of 06/21/07 11:55

SONS 2007 Exercise  
Region 5 Springfield Area Command  
For Official Use Only

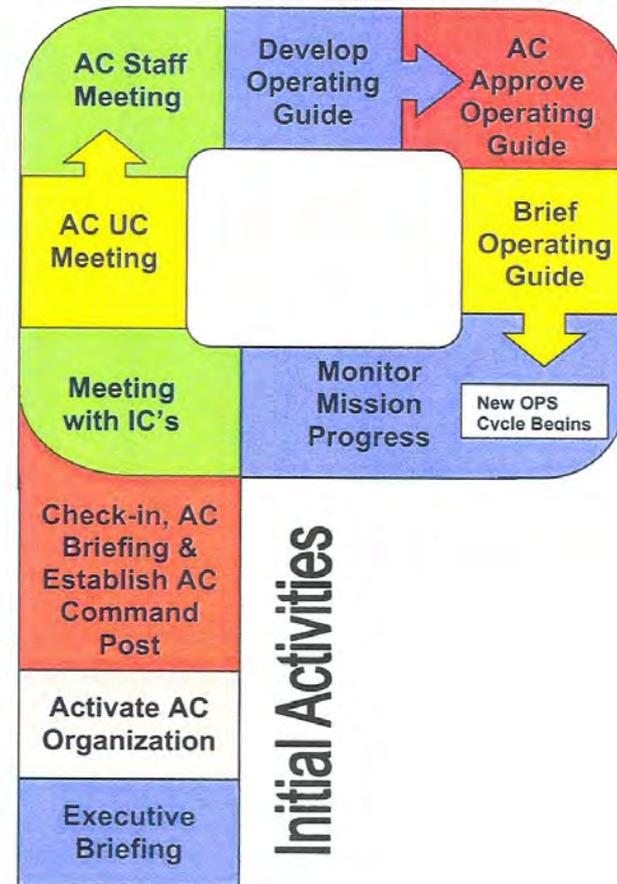
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# Planning P's

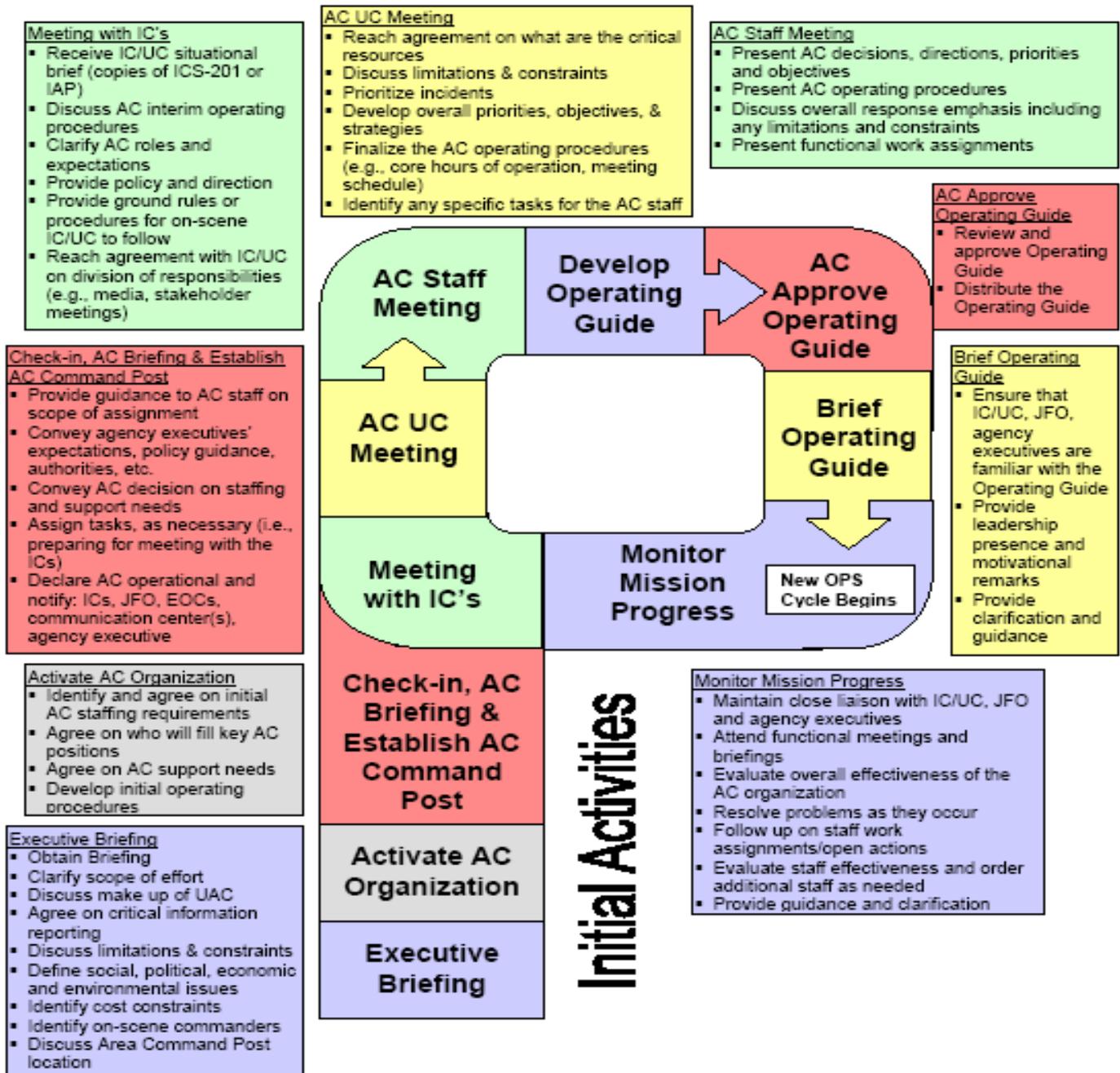
## The Operational Planning "P"



## Area Command Operating Cycle



# Area Command Operating Cycle - Command Activities



# Initial Area Command Meeting with Incident Commanders

- **Intro/Roll Call/Org Chart/Agenda** **PSC**
- **Situation Update** **SITL**
- **AC Objectives/Responsibilities**  
**AC**
- **IC Report** **ICs**
  - **Resources at Risk**
  - **Incident Priorities**
  - **Limitations**
  - **Incident Objectives**
  - **Critical Resources Needs**
  - **Consequences If Resource Requirements Not Met**
- **Critical Resource Summary** **RESL**
- **Information Reporting (SitRep Forms)** **PSC**
  
- **Ordering/Sharing Of Critical Resources** **LSC**
- **Cost Accounting/Accident Reporting** **FSC**
- **Issues/Concerns** **AC**
- **Meeting Closing** **PSC**

# Area Command Meeting Agenda

- **Intro/Roll Call/Org Chart/Agenda** PSC
- **Situation Update** SITL
- **AC Limitations/Constraints/Policy Issues** AC
- **Critical Resource Criteria** AC
- **Discuss/Prioritize Incidents** PSC
- **Develop Response Priorities** PSC
- **Develop Strategic Objectives** PSC
- **Agree on AC Operating Procedures** All
- **Information Reporting (SitRep Forms)** PSC
- **Specific Tasks for AC Staff** AC
- **Meeting Closing** PSC

# AC Staff Meeting Agenda

- **Intro/Roll Call/Org Chart/Agenda** **PSC**
- **Situation Update** **SITL**
- **Opening Remarks (Concerns/Issues)** **AC**
- **Area Command Update** **AC**
  - **Key Decisions (Critical Resources)**
  - **Priorities**
  - **Limitations/Constraints**
  - **Objectives**
  - **Assign Tasks to AC Staff**
  - **Performance Expectations**
- **Issues/Concerns** **Staff**
- **Information Reporting (SitRep)** **PSC**
- **Meeting Closing** **PSC**

# Operating Guide Meeting Agenda

- **Intro/Roll Call/Org Chart/Agenda** PSC
- **Situation Update** SITL
- **Opening Remarks (Concerns/Issues)** AC
- **Operating Guide Briefing** PSC
- **Critical Resource Status** LSC
- **Cost Tracking/Cost Accounting Status** FSC
- **Concerns/Issues** All
- **Meeting Closing** PSC