
Unit 6: Unified Command

Objectives

At the end of this unit, the you should be able to:

- Define Unified Command.
 - List the advantages of Unified Command.
 - Identify the primary features of Unified Command.
 - Describe the roles and reporting relationships between campus personnel and emergency responders under a Unified Command.
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Scope

- Unit Introduction
 - Unit Overview
 - Activity: Optimal Strategy
 - Unified Command Definition and Benefits
 - Unified Command Features
 - Unified Command Organization
 - Unified Command Strategies
 - Case Study: Unified Command
 - Quick Reference Guide: ICS Organization
 - Quick Reference Guide: Position Titles
 - Summary
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Visual 6.1



Visual Description: Unit Introduction

Key Points

The previous units covered the Incident Command Systems (ICS) fundamentals. This unit introduces you to a more advanced concept, called **Unified Command**.

Unified Command:


- Applies ICS in incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies.
- Enables institutions and agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.




Visual 6.2

Unit Objectives

- Define Unified Command.
- List the advantages of Unified Command.
- Identify the primary features of Unified Command.
- Describe the roles and reporting relationships between campus personnel and emergency responders under a Unified Command.



Visual 6.2
Unified Command



Visual Description: Unit Objectives

Key Points

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Define Unified Command.
- List the advantages of Unified Command.
- Identify the primary features of Unified Command.
- Describe the roles and reporting relationships between campus personnel and emergency responders under a Unified Command.



Visual 6.3

Activity: Optimal Strategy

Instructions: Read the scenario below and select the optimal strategy in your Student Manual.

Scenario: A political protest started on campus and has spread into the surrounding community, with student and nonstudent demonstrators defacing campus, city, and private property, setting fires, and disrupting traffic. Protestors have overturned a vehicle at the entrance to the campus, and taken hostages in a building that contains a bank on the first floor and campus administrative offices on upper floors.



Visual Description: Activity: Optimal Strategy

Key Points

Instructions: Read the scenario below and select the optimal strategy that provides the best solution.

Scenario: A political protest started on campus and has spread into the surrounding community, with student and nonstudent demonstrators defacing campus, city, and private property, setting fires, and disrupting traffic. Protestors have overturned a vehicle at the entrance to the campus, and have taken hostages in a building that contains a bank on the first floor and campus administrative offices on upper floors.

Select the optimal strategy.

- Divide the incident along geographic and functional lines so that each county, the State, and the institution can establish its own ICS organization with well-defined areas of responsibilities.
- Create a single ICS incident structure that allows for an effective multijurisdictional or multiagency approach.



Visual 6.4

Unified Command

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or organizations operating together to form a single command structure.

Fire & Rescue Incident Commander Local Law Enforcement Incident Commander Campus Incident Commander

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Visual 6.4
Unified Command

Visual Description: Unified Command

Key Points

Unified Command:

- Applies ICS in incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or organizations.
- Enables institutions and agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command make joint decisions and speak as one voice. Any differences are worked out within the Unified Command.

Unity of command is maintained. Each responder reports to a single supervisor within his or her area of expertise. Within a Unified Command the police officer would not tell the firefighters how to do their job nor would the police tell campus personnel how to notify students of a campus incident.



Visual 6.5

Unified Command Benefits

- A shared understanding of priorities and restrictions.
- A single set of incident objectives.
- Collaborative strategies.
- Improved internal and external information flow.
- Less duplication of efforts.
- Better resource utilization.



Visual 6.5
Unified Command

Visual Description: Unified Command Benefits

Key Points

In a Unified Command, institutions and responding agencies blend into an integrated, unified team. A unified approach results in:

- A shared understanding of priorities and restrictions.
- A single set of incident objectives.
- Collaborative strategies.
- Improved internal and external information flow.
- Less duplication of efforts
- Better resource utilization.



Visual 6.6

Unified Command Features

- A single integrated incident organization
- Collocated (shared) facilities
- One set of incident objectives, single planning process, and Incident Action Plan
- Integrated General Staff – Only one Operations Section
- Coordinated process for resource ordering

Visual 6.6
Unified Command

Visual Description: Unified Command Features

Key Points

The following are features of Unified Command:

- **A Single Integrated Incident Organization:** As a team effort, Unified Command overcomes much of the inefficiency and duplication of effort that can occur when agencies from different functional and geographic jurisdictions, or agencies at different levels of government, operate without a common system or organizational framework.
- **Collocated (Shared) Facilities:** In a Unified Command incident facilities are collocated or shared. There is one single Incident Command Post.
- **One Set of Incident Objectives, Single Planning Process, and Incident Action Plan:** Unified Command uses one set of incident objectives and a single planning process, and produces one Incident Action Plan (IAP). The planning process for Unified Command is similar to the process used on single jurisdiction incidents.

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The following are also features of Unified Command:

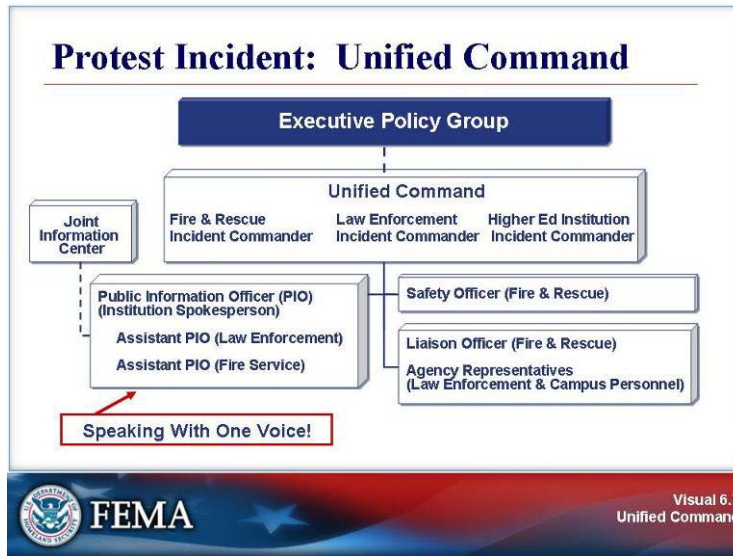
- **Integrated General Staff:** Integrating multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas may be beneficial. For example:
 - In Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction.
 - In Logistics, a Deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support.

Incident Commanders within the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs. The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the Incident Action Plan.

- **Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering:** The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command work together to establish resource ordering procedures that allow for:
 - Deployment of scarce resources to meet high-priority objectives.
 - Potential cost savings through agreements on cost sharing for essential services.



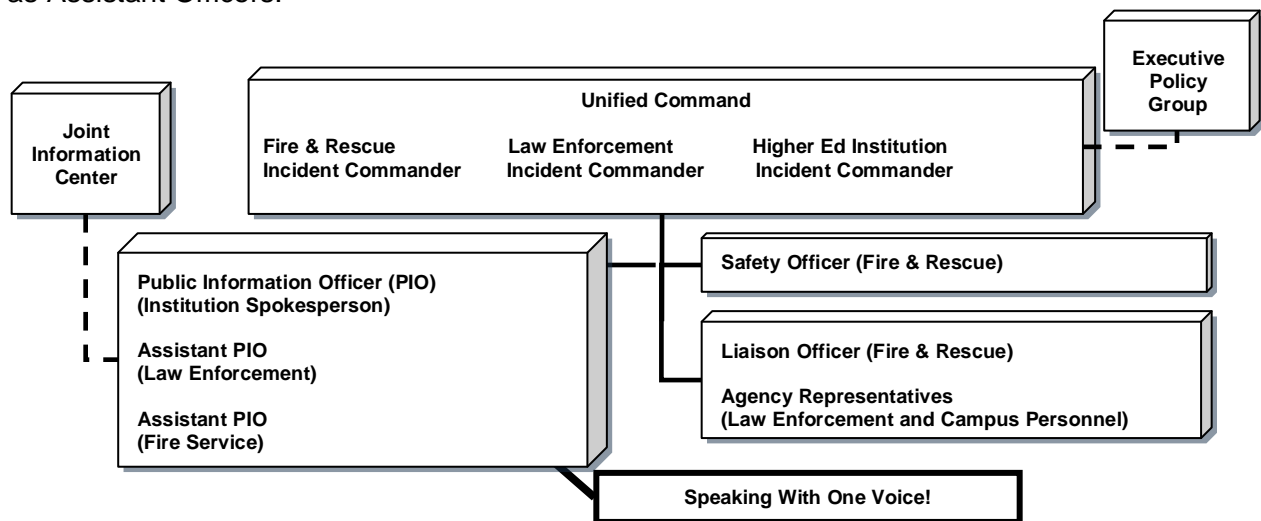
Visual 6.7



Visual Description: Protest Incident: Unified Command

Key Points

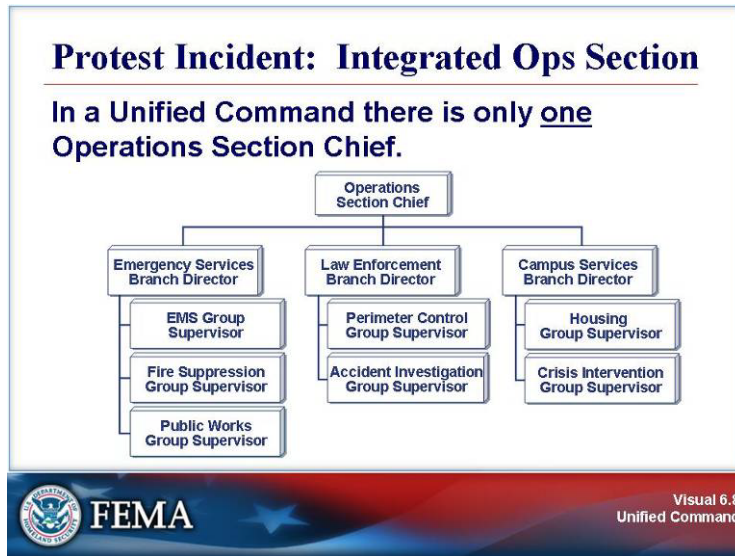
Unified Command results in a single integrated incident organization. Below is a sample Command Staff organizational chart for a political protest that started on campus and spread to the surrounding community, with demonstrations quickly developing into widespread destruction. Notice that the Unified Command is composed of the agencies involved: Fire & Rescue, Law Enforcement, and Institution, and that personnel from the different agencies often are assigned as Assistant Officers.



The combined Public Information approach ensures that the responders will speak with one voice.



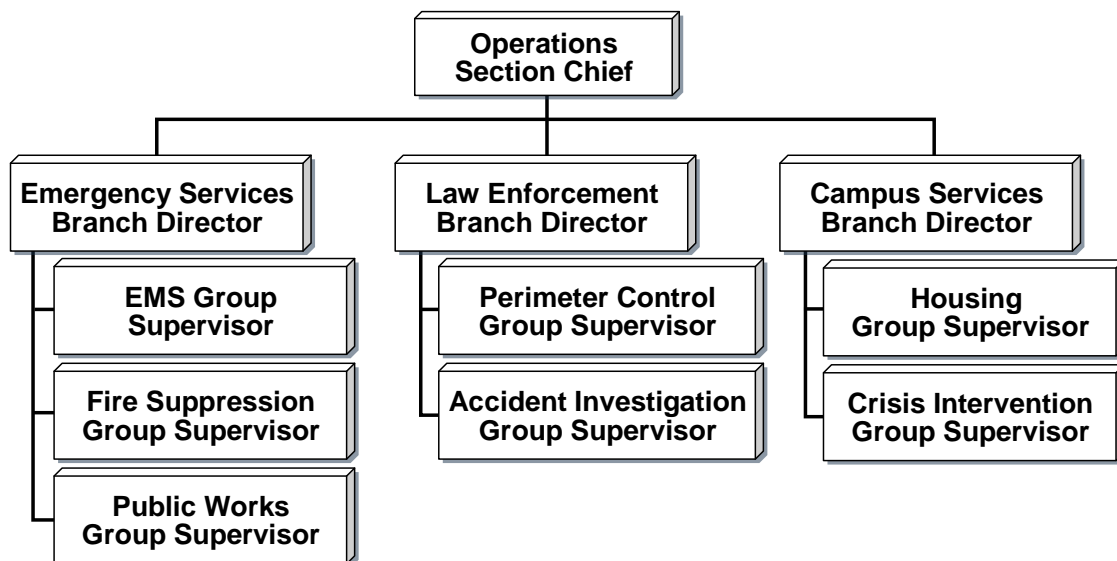
Visual 6.8



Visual Description: Protest Incident: Integrated Ops Section

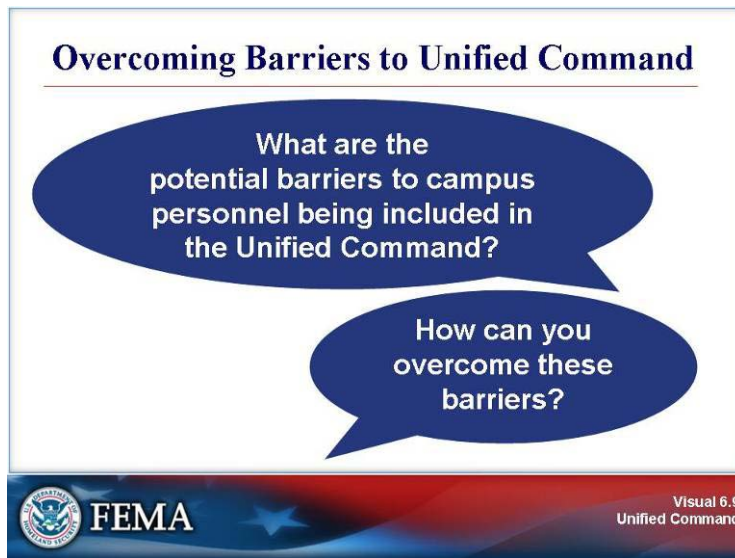
Key Points

In a Unified Command there is only one Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief should be the most qualified and experienced person available. Below is a sample Operations Section organizational chart for a campus incident.





Visual 6.9



Visual Description: Overcoming Barriers to Unified Command

Key Points

What are the potential barriers to campus personnel being included in the Unified Command?

How can you overcome these barriers?



Visual 6.10

Making Unified Command Work

- Include key community response personnel in your institution's emergency planning process.
- Make sure that first responders know what the institution's legal and ethical responsibilities are.
- Learn ICS so that you can blend into the response structure.
- Practice together during exercises and planned events.



Visual 6.10
Unified Command

Visual Description: Making Unified Command Work

Key Points

For Unified Command to be used successfully, it is important that institutions and agencies prepare by:

- Including key community response personnel in your institution's planning process.
- Making sure that first responders know what the institution's legal and ethical responsibilities are during an event.
- Learning ICS so that they can blend into the response structure.
- Practicing together during exercises and planned events.



Visual 6.11

Voices of Experience

 James K. Hamrick Assistant Chief of Police University of Maryland	 Brendan McCluskey Executive Director, Emergency Management University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey	 Frank Zebedis Chief of Police Winthrop University
		

Click icons to play audio.

 **FEMA** Visual 6.11
Unified Command

Visual Description: Voices of Experience

Key Points

Your instructor will play audio clips of “voices of experience” from three campus personnel about the use of Unified Command.

Audio Transcripts:

James K. Hamrick
Assistant Chief of Police
University of Maryland

I think that communication is a vitally important element of the Incident Command System because if you look at lessons learned from just about every major critical incident that has been debriefed around the country, you are going to find that communication is near the top of the list, some element of breakdown in communication in terms of that incident and so communication becomes an important element of the Incident Command System in being able to talk across different agencies that may be represented in the response of that and being able to manage the flow of information both down and up the incident command structure and then the flow of information to any coordinating agency such as an emergency operations center as well as a policy group, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Provost of the institution who have an interest in continuity of operations for the institution.

Audio Transcripts: (Continued)

Brendan McCluskey
Executive Director, Emergency Management
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

Unified command is somewhat of a difficult concept for people to understand because while no individual Incident Commander is giving up control over their jurisdiction or their assets. They all need to come together to work toward common goals and objectives. While we have this group of people together making decisions, essentially the unified command is acting as a conglomeration and as a single body to make decisions. Essentially they become the Incident Commander and I think that's a very difficult concept for people to understand because if you're a police officer and you traditionally command police, you wouldn't want a firefighter saying what to, what should be done, but in unified command model everybody gets together and collectively makes those important decisions.

Frank Zebedis
Chief of Police
Winthrop University

Basically you are dealing with different agencies, different disciplines coming together as the scene unfolds. You're going to have an Incident Commander who is going to be in charge but as other agencies get involved and other special entities are required or needed then that Incident Commander goes into what is called unified command, and at that point the different agencies and entities come together and they work in a very understanding environment to solve the situation or resolve the scene and nobody gives up their authority because if I'm fire, I'm the expert in the fire field. If I'm law enforcement, I'm the expert in the law enforcement field. I don't tell firefighters how to do their job; they don't tell me how to do my job as a police officer; so we look to each other for assistance and the professional in that field do what they need to do.



Visual 6.12

Case Study: Unified Command

Instructions:

1. Working as a team, review the scenario located in your Student Manual.
2. Answer the questions in your Student Manual about the Unified Command structure.
3. Refer to the quick reference guides in your Student Manuals as needed.
4. Select a spokesperson and be prepared to present your work in 20 minutes.



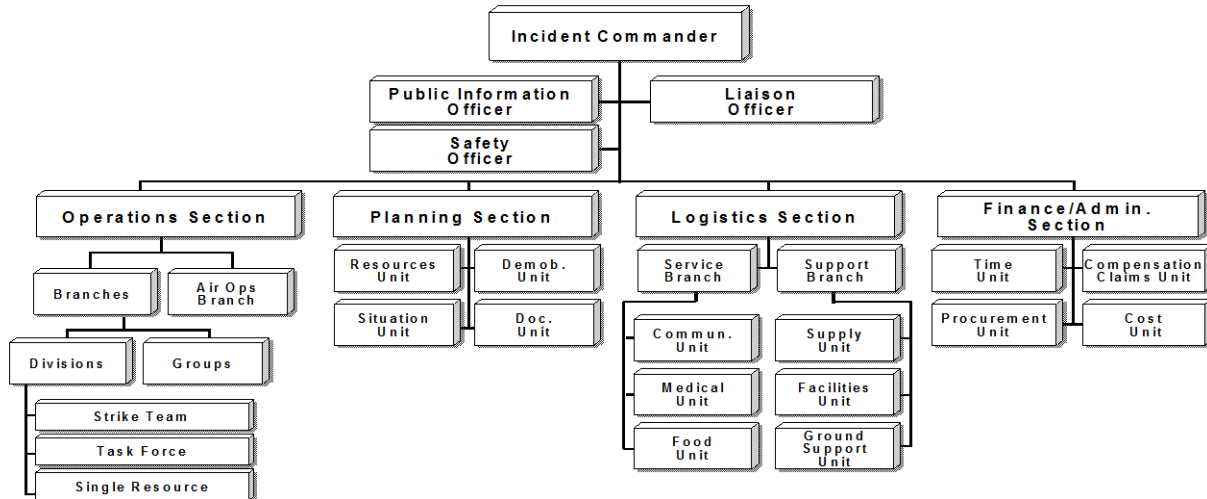
Visual Description: Case Study: Unified Command

Key Points

You'll now participate in an exercise that applies the key learning points and the objectives for this unit. The scenario involves a political protest that starts on campus and spreads to the surrounding community.

Follow the instructions presented on the visual and on the next page of your Student Manual.

- Warehime University is a large, urban campus in the middle of a major metropolitan area, with approximately 20,000 undergraduate students and 10,000 graduate students. About 5,000 students live in campus residence halls, while the rest live in surrounding neighborhoods. Two major roads to the city's downtown area run straight through the campus.
- It is midafternoon on a warm weekday in March. Classes are in session, and tour groups of high-school seniors and their parents are walking through campus before making acceptance decisions for the following fall semester.
- A student political demonstration that started calmly on the lawn in front of the student union is rapidly growing more and more disorderly. Professional protesters and members of anarchist alliances have joined the initial group of students, many of them wearing masks or handkerchiefs to obscure their identity.
- The protest spreads across campus and into the surrounding community, with student and nonstudent demonstrators defacing campus, city, and private property, setting multiple fires, and disrupting traffic.
- In an attempt to restore order, public safety officials disperse tear gas on the crowd, without anticipating that it would be sucked into the ventilation system for a residence hall that houses 800 freshmen students. Students inside have begun complaining of the effects.
- Protestors overturned a vehicle in the middle of one of the roads leading to and from downtown, and then set the vehicle on fire. The vehicle fire has blocked all traffic just as rush hour is beginning.
- A small group of armed protesters has taken hostages in a building that houses a bank on the first floor and campus administrative offices on upper floors. The protestors object to the institution's acceptance of research grants related to the U.S. military and have demanded to speak with university officials.



- **Command Staff:** The Command Staff consists of the Public Information Officer, Safety Officer, and Liaison Officer. They report directly to the Incident Commander.
- **Section:** The organization level having functional responsibility for primary segments of incident management (Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration). The Section level is organizationally between Branch and Incident Commander.
- **Branch:** That organizational level having functional, geographical, or jurisdictional responsibility for major parts of the incident operations. The Branch level is organizationally between Section and Division/Group in the Operations Section, and between Section and Units in the Logistics Section. Branches are identified by the use of Roman Numerals, by function, or by jurisdictional name.
- **Division:** That organizational level having responsibility for operations within a defined geographic area. The Division level is organizationally between the Strike Team and the Branch.
- **Group:** Groups are established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. Groups are located between Branches (when activated) and Resources in the Operations Section.
- **Unit:** That organization element having functional responsibility for a specific incident planning, logistics, or finance/administration activity.
- **Task Force:** A group of resources with common communications and a leader that may be pre-established and sent to an incident, or formed at an incident.
- **Strike Team:** Specified combinations of the same kind and type of resources, with common communications and a leader.
- **Single Resource:** An individual piece of equipment and its personnel complement, or an established crew or team of individuals with an identified work supervisor that can be used on an incident.

At each level within the ICS organization, individuals with primary responsibility positions have distinct titles. Titles provide a common standard for all users. For example, if one agency uses the title Branch Chief, another Branch Manager, etc., this lack of consistency can cause confusion at the incident.

The use of distinct titles for ICS positions allows for filling ICS positions with the most qualified individuals rather than by seniority. Standardized position titles are useful when requesting qualified personnel. For example, in deploying personnel, it is important to know if the positions needed are Unit Leaders, clerks, etc.

Listed below are the standard ICS titles:

Organizational Level	Title	Support Position
Incident Command	Incident Commander	Deputy
Command Staff	Officer	Assistant
General Staff (Section)	Chief	Deputy
Branch	Director	Deputy
Division/Group	Supervisor	N/A
Unit	Leader	Manager
Strike Team/Task Force	Leader	Single Resource Boss



Visual 6.13

Summary

Are you now able to:

- Define Unified Command?
- List the advantages of Unified Command?
- Identify the primary features of Unified Command?
- Describe the roles and reporting relationships between campus personnel and emergency responders under a Unified Command?



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Visual 6.13
Unified Command

Visual Description: Summary

Key Points

The purpose of this lesson was to familiarize you with Unified Command features. Additional ICS training is required to prepare you to implement Unified Command.

Remember that Unified Command:

- Applies ICS in incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies.
- Enables institutions and agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively.

Your Notes: