

IOSC 300322

Standardizing Incident Command System Training Internationally in the Public and Private Sector



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Abstract:
 During the wildfires in California in the 1970s, the Incident Command System (ICS) was developed to create a standardized approach for firefighters to use in order to conduct an efficient response effort. Over the last 44 years, this system evolved into an all-hazards system used all over the world to mitigate a myriad of incidents from hurricanes to terrorist attacks to oil spills. Although ICS was developed as a standard system, both internationally and within the United States, this system and the training on this system were not always implemented or conducted in the same manner. The size and scope of the response which followed the 2010 Macondo Well Blowout (Deepwater Horizon) reinforced the need for continual, standardized training in ICS. Public and private sector response organizations have all become engaged in this effort to standardize the training used to prepare responders to participate as members of an Incident Management Team. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) model for ICS is now recognized as this standard internationally. Changes in the regulatory landscape since the implementation of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 have served to increase NIMS ICS acceptance and utilization among federal, state and local government agencies, as well as U.S.-based private industry. Recently, response organizations from around the world have begun training in NIMS ICS. This global standardization will enhance the response posture of the entire response community. Examples of training and exercises conducted all around the world will illustrate the implications of international standardization of ICS.



Arctic Activities: The Way Forward
 Recent, highly publicized events have occurred in the Arctic, causing many individuals and agencies to question the ability of the response community in these areas. Through continual practice, planning and standardization, events and incidents are being handled more quickly and efficiently.



Getting a safe, tactically sound Incident Action Plan into the hands of the field responders is the primary goal of the Incident Management Team. Tactics Manuals and Field Operations Guides help to standardize the procedures and terminology between planning, training and actual response activities. In the remote Arctic region, there are challenges to conducting field response operations. Private industry, Federal, state and local agencies have collaborated to publish Field Guides and Technical Manuals to streamline and standardize the tactical planning process.

Timeline:

- 1971:** Firefighting Resources Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE) is created in response to the need to effectively coordinate interagency action on Southern California wildfires.
- 1980:** ICS formally adopted by the California Office of Emergency Services. FIRESCOPE ICS training course development begins.
- 1982:** National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) adopted nationally based on FIRESCOPE ICS.
- 1990:** International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Cooperation 1990 (OPRC 90) adopted to provide framework for facilitating international cooperation in preparation for and in response to oil pollution incidents. Standards are implemented in 1995, and OPRC Courses are created.
- 1996:** The Global Initiative (GI) joined government and industry to further prepare the international community for an oil spill response. Over the following 15 years, GI created workshops, training courses, and exercises to further this preparation.
- 2001:** U.S. Department of Homeland Security created after terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) passed creating the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and requiring the use of ICS by all U.S. federal, state, and local agencies.
- 2003:** Alaska Clean Seas Technical Manual 2012 Field Guide published.
- 2006:** International Organization for Standardization (ISO) adopted standards for Emergency Preparedness.
- 2011:** International Organization for Standardization (ISO) adopted standards for Emergency Management and Requirements for Incident Response.
- Using oil spill response cooperation as a model, international community evolves international standard for an incident management system, tactics, and training based on NIMS principles.**



International Collaboration
 Oil Spill Response Organizations from around the world have begun training to respond using ICS. Partnerships like the Global Response Network (GRN) have enabled the mutual aid partners to fully integrate their procedures, position titles and responsibilities for international responses.

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